

Appendix to Behaviour and Discipline Policies:

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

What is reasonable force?

- Ø The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Ø Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- Ø 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them.

- Ø Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Ø Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Who can use reasonable force?

- Ø All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (2.2 Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- Ø This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Ø Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder.
- Ø In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- Ø The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

N.B. Schools cannot use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Power to search pupils without consent:

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, head teachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items":

knives and weapons

alcohol

illegal drugs

stolen items

tobacco, cigarette papers, lighters or matches

fireworks

pornographic images

any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the school rules. (Aerosols – including deodorant; mobile phones- without prior arrangement; electronic games)

N.B. If reasonable force is used, the parents will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable.