



Pupil Restraint Policy

"Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the Lord our God."

Psalm 20:7

This scripture speaks about the physical strength of the child being restrained and their reliance on God to pass the challenging moment they find themselves in.

Introduction

At Saint Cecilia's Church of England School, we aim to offer a welcoming, secure and safe environment in which our children will flourish. We also aim to create an environment in which the use of force in relation to a pupil or student is unlikely. However, in the circumstances where physical restraint may be needed to secure the safety of a pupil, student or staff member, or where there is a serious breach of school discipline, or to prevent serious damage to property, this policy will apply. This policy follows the Department for Education (DfE) guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

Objectives

The objectives of this policy include:

- Maintaining the safety of pupils, students and staff.
- Preventing serious breaches of school discipline.
- Preventing serious damage to property.
- Preventing criminal offences (or if under the age of criminal responsibility, from committing what would be a criminal act for an older pupil or student).

What is reasonable force?

The DfE defines the term as 'reasonable force' and 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 or students. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil or student 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. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils or students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or students or blocking a pupil's or student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil or student by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil or student 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 or student.

The DfE states 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 or student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil or student leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil or student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil or student from attacking a member of staff or another pupil or student, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil or student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

As a result of this guidance, physical restraint will be considered in the following situations:

- The prevention of a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil or student were not under the age of criminal responsibility).
- Searching for prohibited items.
- A pupil or student injuring themselves or others.
- A pupil or student causing damage to property (including their own property).
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline.

The DfE also allows schools the power to search pupils or students without consent. In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers 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 and cigarette papers
- 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.

We aim to minimise the need to use force by:

- Creating a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require using force. De-escalating incidents if they do arise.
- Only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

- Considering risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils or students.

Staff authorised to use force:

- The headteacher and all members of the teaching staff have the statutory power to always use pupil restraint/force.
- In addition, those members of school staff authorised by the headteacher, including support staff, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors and office staff may be authorised by the headteacher. The headteacher has the responsibility to ensure that staff are fully informed of the school's policy and understand what authorisation entails.
- Temporary authorisation will be given to others who do not normally supervise children, for example, volunteers and parents accompanying pupils or students on school-organised visits.

Staff will only use force when:

- The potential consequences of not intervening are likely to be sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force.
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low. The risks associated with not using force outweigh those of using force.
- Wherever possible these judgements will take account of the particular characteristic of the pupil or student, including age, SEN or disability.
- Before taking steps to restrain pupils or students, all members of staff will tell the pupil or student to stop misbehaving and what will happen if they do not. The member of staff will communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident.

Training

Staff will receive training in pupil restraint from their colleagues and from reputable training agencies. They will be informed about:

- How to deal with pupils or students who present particular risks to themselves or others (as a result of SEN and/or disabilities and/or other personal circumstances).
- How to minimise the highest risks, for example, by calling the police if a pupil suspected of having a weapon seems likely to resist a search.
- Types of restraint that could be used, for example:
 - Standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path. Leading a pupil by the hand or arm.
 - Ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back. Using appropriate restricting holds in more extreme circumstances.
- Any form of restraint that is likely to injure a pupil (particularly anything that could constrict breathing) will only be used in extreme emergencies and where there is no viable alternative.
- Staff will also be advised that, as far as possible, they should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

Recording incidents

It is important that there is a detailed, contemporaneous, written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where force is used will be completed as soon as possible after any incident has occurred. Similarly, all injuries will be recorded in accordance with the school's health and safety policy. In considering whether an incident needs to be recorded, the following will be taken into consideration:

- The level of risk presented at the time of the incident. The degree of force used.
- Any effect on the pupil, student or member of staff. The child's age.

Reporting incidents

Parents/carers will be informed of any recordable incident and given an opportunity to discuss the incident with a member of The Leadership Team and given a copy of this policy. Afterwards arrangements will be made for supporting staff and pupils or students involved in the incident, including meeting immediate physical needs and rebuilding relationships, to ensure that lessons are learned from the incident.

However, if it is considered that it is unlikely to result in any significant harm to the pupil or student then parents will not be informed of any recordable incident.

In some cases, the appropriate external agencies (for example, local authority children's services, the local children's safeguarding board, the health and safety executive, youth offending teams and the police) will also be informed.

Complaints and allegations

Should there be any complaint or allegation following an incident, then the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints and allegations of misconduct will be followed. However, suspension will not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

DfE states:

All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily, and appropriately investigated. Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.

- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff' guidance (see the 'Further sources of information' section below) where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher.

The DfE guidance makes clear: that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought. Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate. If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the

teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support. Governing bodies should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether to take disciplinary action against the teacher. As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

Monitoring and evaluation

The headteacher will make an annual report to the governing board of the recordable incidents after which the impact of the policy will be considered, and the policy changed if necessary.

Action	Committee	Date
Delegated to the Headteacher	Curriculum & Standards	Summer 2023
Next Review	Headteacher	Summer 2026

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