



Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School
Teaching and Living the Christian Way of Life
Building Our Lives on Jesus

Use of Force Policy

January 2025

Signed

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Principles

We believe that in line with our ethos of Teaching and Living the Christian Way of Life, all people should be treated with respect and dignity. We understand there are occasions when normal routines for ensuring a calm and peaceful atmosphere can be disrupted by an individual or where an individual may act on impulse and put themselves or others in danger. For these incidents, as a last resort, it may be necessary to use minimum force to keep and/or restore order.

Purposes

The following purposes underpin Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School's policy and practices to:

- create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe;
- protect every person in the school community from harm
- protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful; and
- develop and implement guidance for staff (teaching and non-teaching) so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied

Links With Other Policies

This policy dovetails into the school's existing behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, safeguarding policy, special educational needs and disabilities policy, health and safety policy and complaints policy. It also takes account of the teaching and learning policy, assessment, recording and reporting policy and curricular policies.

Definition of Reasonable Force

The working definition of "reasonable force" is the **minimum force necessary** to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

All schools need to consider:

- planned intervention in which staff employ, where necessary, pre-arranged strategies based upon a risk assessment and recorded within the pupil's education plan; and
- emergency or unplanned use of force / intervention, which occurs in response to unforeseen events, e.g. pupil fights

Other definitions :

Escorting - Accompanying for protection or guidance. The nature of the child's response and the degree of physical force being used by the member of staff will determine whether this act should be considered as a restraint

Holding - To assert authoritatively. The degree of force used in relation to the level of co-operation and compliance displayed by the child determines when holding becomes restraining. The higher the level of force the more likely the action will be deemed restraint

Restraint - Physical control as defined by the application of force with the intention of preventing the child from harming themselves or others or damaging property

PRACTICES

Preventative Strategies

The school actively promotes positive behaviour management strategies thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention, except in emergency situations. Preventative strategies for inappropriate behaviour(s) are in **Appendix 1** and also in our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is one of our preventative strategies to minimise the risk of an incident escalating unnecessarily and will be a normal practice for our school where a pupil or a small number of pupils are known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour (EBD). Risk assessment will be considered only for those pupils where there is a foreseeable risk and enable the school to plan and train accordingly. Risk assessment will be considered from two perspectives (a) environmental risk assessment or (b) individual risk assessment. This should form part of the pupil's education plan. The SENCO is responsible for carrying out the relevant risk assessments and identifying associated training needs. (**Appendix 2**)

Procedures - Support Structures

The following procedures have been agreed by the staff and adopted by the governors.

Members of staff will call for assistance from the next nearest adult by sending a child to fetch them.

Roles and Responsibilities

Reasonable force / safe handling can be used by any member of staff who is authorised by the head teacher to have lawful control or charge of pupils, e.g. teachers, classroom assistants, dinner supervisors.

Reasonable force / safe handling can be used by a teacher or other authorised person(s) on the school premises or when authorised elsewhere e.g., supervision on a residential visit, on other authorised out of school activities such as a sporting event or educational trip. Reasonable force should be limited to emergency situations and **used only as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted and where:**

- action is necessary in self defence or because there is imminent risk of injury to another pupil or person
- there is a developing risk of injury to another pupil or person, or significant damage to property
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline

Examples that fall into the above categories are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- pupils are fighting
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in which s/he might cause an accident likely to injure her / himself or others

- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (Note: this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)
- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

Forms of Reasonable Force

When other behaviour management strategies have failed - it should be the **minimum intervention or force** that should reasonably be employed depending on the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical condition and any special needs of the pupil and used in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned. The use of reasonable force / safe handling should involve a **calm and measured approach** at all times appropriate to the particular pupil and be in accordance with the schools agreed strategies and the following procedures:

- tell the pupil to stop the inappropriate behaviour
- ask the pupil to behave appropriately, clearly stating the desired behaviour
- tell the pupil that physical intervention will take place if inappropriate behaviour continues
- during the incident repeatedly reassure the pupil and tell him / her that physical contact will stop as soon as he / she is ready to behave appropriately
- if the teacher, classroom assistant or supervisory assistant feels at risk, e.g. from a large or older group of pupils, send for the nearest staff support

The forms of reasonable force the school will use will depend on the individual circumstances and include;

- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- holding
- pushing
- pulling
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by;

- holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a pupil
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Health and Safety

When using reasonable force / physical intervention / restraint / safe handling, the pupil's health and safety must always be considered and monitored.

Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the pupil.

The use of reasonable force is only to be employed in **exceptional circumstances** or an emergency where a pupil appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and whose behaviour is presenting a threat to himself / herself or others. A member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help if there is a risk that he / she may be injured or may endanger his / her life.

Record Keeping

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded in the schools agreed pro-forma "Record of the use of Reasonable Force". The school will keep an accurate up-to-date record of all such incidents. Immediately following any incident the member of staff concerned must inform the head teacher or other member of the senior management team and provide the contemporaneous written report. (**Appendix 3** "Record Of the Use of Reasonable Force")

The Governors (Health and Safety Committee) and the head teacher will review annually (in the spring term) the entries in the incident book.

Contacting Parents

Parents / carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This must also be recorded in the "Record of the use of Reasonable Force" (**Appendix 3**).

Complaints

Any complaint from a parent will be dealt with within the school's complaints policy.

In the event of a subsequent complaint made against a member of staff either by or on behalf of the child, this will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy and in accordance with the Circular 1999/10, Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection.

Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault should be supported, as appropriate. All Staff are encouraged to join a union to support them.

Training and Development

The headteacher will ensure that all staff have regular awareness raising of issues relating to the use of reasonable force / safe handling, procedures and practices relating to behaviour management and child protection policy and procedures as necessary.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Preventative Strategies

Appendix 2 Risk Assessment

Appendix 3 Record of the Use of Reasonable Force

Appendix 1

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation. The strategies listed below as examples will be influenced by the age of the pupil(s) and the context in which they are applied.

1. Move calmly and confidently
2. Make simple, clear statements
3. Intervene early
4. Try to maintain eye contact
5. If necessary summon help before the problem escalates
6. If possible, remove audience from the immediate location

ACTION STEPS

1. Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and tell him/her the possible consequences of failure to do so
2. If possible, summon another adult
3. Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident
4. Make it clear that physical intervention will cease as soon as it is no longer necessary
5. Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:
 - providing medical support
 - providing respite for those involved
 - accessing external advice / support

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

Appendix 2

Risk Assessment

A small number of pupils may exhibit disturbed or distressing behaviour which may require some form of physical intervention by staff. To minimise the risk of incidents escalating unnecessarily due to lack of foresight, planning and training, schools should carry out a risk assessment from two perspectives:

1. Environmental risk assessment
2. Individual risk assessment

Environmental Risk Assessment

- Identify situations or locations where there are increased risks of incidents happening
- Analysis of past incidents to identify medium to high risk locations
- Staff and pupils consulted
- Individual pupil consulted
- Decide the appropriate type and level of supervision
- Principal and SMT to make recommendations to Board of Governors on type and level of supervision to minimise risk
- Implement plan
- Review plan

Individual Risk Assessment

Where a school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force / safe handling, the school should plan its response by:

- consulting the pupil, as appropriate
- consulting the parents - specific action the school may need to take
- briefing staff - what action they should be taking (may require training or guidance)
- managing the pupil - e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned wherever possible
- implementing plan and review
- reviewing Plan

Risk Reduction

Risk reduction should include:

- proactive measures to support the child effectively and prevent difficulties emerging
- early interventions to help the child in difficult situations and avert problems
- planned measures to manage the child and others safely, when unavoidable difficulties arise

Appendix 3

Record of the Use of Reasonable Force

Date of Incident	Time of incident
Pupil Name	Staff member(s) involved
Adult witnesses to incident	Pupil witnesses to incident
Outline of events leading to incident, including location, description of pupil behaviour and steps taken to defuse situation other than physical intervention	
Outline of incident including reason for use of reasonable force, how it was applied and duration	

Measures taken following incident e.g. respite for pupil, support for staff member	
Description of any injury sustained, subsequent treatment, damage to property	Date parent/carer contacted and outline of their response
Signature of staff member completing report	
Date	