



HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

RESTRAINT OF PUPILS POLICY

Statement

The school recognises that on rare occasions it may be necessary, in the interests of all children and for the safety of all children, to physically restrain a child who is in danger of hurting themselves or others. The School has developed a policy on physical restraint which is in line with Government guidelines, including the Department for Education [the 'DfE'] advice on Screening, Searching and Confiscation 2011, the DfE advice on Behaviour and Discipline in Schools 2011 and the DfE advice on the Use of Reasonable Force 2011. Parents will be informed of any incident where it has been necessary to restrain their child.

**Staff who have undergone safer handling training in situations requiring restraint:
Kate Spoor, Head of Junior Department, Laura Stevenson, Head of Pre Prep, May 2016**

Introduction

1.1. S. 93 *Education and Inspections Act 2006* enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing any offence, or
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself/herself), or
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.

1.2. This policy recognises that there is a need to be sensitive to cultural and religious expectations of parents, pupils and staff

1.3. This policy is made available to all parents via the website and in hard copy upon request to the School Office. In addition, a copy of the policy may be inspected at any point in the School day in the School Office.

1.4 This Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related School Policies, including the following: Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour and Sanctions Policy.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

To inform Governors, staff, and parents of pupils of the powers of staff in circumstances where a pupil may need to be restrained and to describe other circumstances in which physical contact with a pupil may be required.

To ensure that the School has regard to DfE non-statutory guidance "The Use of Reasonable Force in Schools".

To comply with Standard 12 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

Restraint of pupils

This policy has been drawn up with reference to guidance issued by the Department of Education (see link below)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools

Policy

Holmewood policy follows advice given by the DfE:

‘A member of the staff of a school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is **reasonably necessary** in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely –

- (a) Committing any offence,
- (b) Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or
- (c) Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.’

Situations identified in guidance from the DfE in which physical intervention might be appropriate or necessary include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are fighting
- A pupil who is engaged in, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- A pupil who is running in a corridor or on a stairway in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure himself or others.
- A pupil who persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- A pupil who is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson;
- A pupil who absconds from class or tries to leave school (but note that this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

The guidance provides examples of '**reasonable force**' which include 'touching, holding, pushing, leading a pupil by the arm, or shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.'

A teacher must **not**, 'except in the most exceptional circumstances where there is no alternative':

- Hold a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe;
- Slap, punch or kick a pupil;
- Twist or force limbs against a joint;
- Trip up a pupil;
- Hold or pull a pupil by the hair.

Teachers are reminded also that they should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. Staff are reminded of the need to follow current school safeguarding procedures in keeping pupils and themselves safe.

Teachers are reminded that any use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with SEN.

Members of staff should always use other strategies before employing force and **must adopt a calm and measured approach to a situation**. There must be a detailed, contemporaneous, written report of any occasion where force is used. Immediately after such an incident there must be an oral report to the head or a senior member of staff and a written report must be provided as soon as possible afterwards.

An unreasonable use of force will be treated as a disciplinary offence, but all the circumstances of the event will be taken fully into account in assessing the reasonableness or otherwise of the action taken.

Policy revised November 2011, reviewed January 2016, January 2017

Appendix

Key Points

School staff have a legal power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.

Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

Senior Leaders should support their staff when they use this power subject to its legal use.

What is reasonable force?

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.

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.

'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. 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.

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?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

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?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.

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;
restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

use force as a punishment – **it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.**

Communicating the school's approach to the use of force

Every school is required by law to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents and pupils. The governing body should notify the head teacher that it expects the school behaviour policy to include the power to use reasonable force.

There is no legal requirement to have a policy on the use of force but it is good practice to set out, in the behaviour policy, the circumstances in which force might be used. For example, it could say that teachers will physically separate pupils found fighting or that if a pupil refuses to leave a room when instructed to do so, they will be physically removed.

Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with SEN.

Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student.

Schools should **not** have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.

By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils and parents are clear about when force might be used, the school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

Using force

A panel of experts identified that certain restraint techniques presented an **unacceptable risk** when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:
the 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing;
the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest; and the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.

Staff training

The head teacher should consider whether members of staff require any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and should consider the needs of the pupils when doing so.

Some local authorities provide advice and guidance to help schools to develop an appropriate training programme.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

It is good practice for schools to speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force and to consider how best to record such serious incidents. It is up to schools to decide whether it is appropriate to report the use of force to parents.

In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers should use their professional judgement and also consider the following:

- o The pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- o The degree of force used
- o The effect on the pupil or member of staff
- o The child's age

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

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 in order 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 where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This 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 or not 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.

What about other physical contact with pupils?

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- a. Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
- b. When comforting a distressed pupil;
- c. When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- d. To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- e. To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- f. To give first aid.

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm worried that if I use force a pupil or parent could make a complaint against me. Am I protected?

Yes, if you have acted lawfully. If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations.

How do I know whether using a physical intervention is 'reasonable'?

The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. School staff should expect the full backing of their senior leadership team when they have used force.

What about school trips?

The power may be used where the member of staff is lawfully in charge of the pupils, and this includes while on school trips.

Can force be used on pupils with SEN or disabilities?

Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil concerned.

I'm a female teacher with a Year 8 class - there's no way I'd want to restrain or try to control my pupils. Am I expected to do so?

There is a power, not a duty, to use force so members of staff have discretion whether or not to use it. However, teachers and other school staff have a duty of care towards their pupils and it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty.

Are there any circumstances in which a teacher can use physical force to punish a pupil?

No. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, which is illegal.

Associated Resources

Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working

Holmewood House Restraint of Pupils Policy 2017

with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders (2002)

Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (2003)

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/sen/types/clneeds/a0013105/guidance-on-the-use-of-restrictive-physical-interventions>

Link to Searching Guidance

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/f0076897/screening>

Link to Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff – guidance for local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f0076882/ensuring-goodbehaviour-in-schools/allegations-of-abuse-against-staff>

Ministry of Justice advice on self defence (when published) and Home Office PACE codes

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/operational-policing/pacecodes/?view=Standard&pubID=810826>

Legislative links

Education and Inspections Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>