



# Use of Reasonable Force and Physical Restraint Policy

## Alwyn and Courthouse Federation

<b>Owned by:</b>	Executive Headteacher	<b>Date:</b> Spring 2024
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	September 2021	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	Spring 2026	

- **1. Scope**

This policy applies to all school staff and agency staff.

- **2. Purpose and Aim**

In order to maintain the safety and welfare of our children, it may sometimes be necessary to use reasonable force on a child, as permitted by law.

Both using force and deciding not to can incur significant risks for children and staff. This policy sets out mandatory requirements for all staff when considering use of reasonable force and physical restraint to ensure that it is used:

- only when absolutely necessary; and
- in a manner that will protect the safety of both our staff and our children.

- **3. Regulation and Legislation**

This policy is an important part of minimising these risks and has been written in accordance with the Department for Education guidance [\*Use of reasonable force: advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies\*](#).

- **4. Use of reasonable force**

Any use of force by staff will be reasonable, proportionate and lawful. Reasonable force will be used only when immediately necessary and for the minimum time necessary to prevent a child from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property, including their own
- engaging in highly disruptive behaviour that undermines good order and discipline among any of its children, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere

Force should never be used as a punishment.

- **5. Minimising the need to use force**

Leaders strive to create a calm environment, which minimises the risks of incidents that might require using force, by:

- Supporting staff in learning how to de-escalate incidents before they become serious or confrontational
- Assemblies, and PSHE programmes, through which children are taught how to manage conflict and are supplied with mechanisms for managing their emotions
- Only supporting the use of force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using force
- Identifying children that present as a significant risk and putting in place risk assessments and individual behaviour plans

- **6. Staff authorised to use force**

All staff, as part of their role, are in charge of children and automatically have statutory powers to use force. Agency staff, or staff on temporary contracts should seek support from a permanent member of staff if they feel that restraint of a child is needed.

Temporary authorisation can be given to staff whose jobs do not normally involve supervising children. This can be done if these members of staff are temporarily in charge of children, i.e., supervising vaccinations.

## **7. Deciding whether to use force**

Staff should only use force when:

- the potential consequences of not intervening are serious enough to justify using force, i.e., if the child or another person are at significant risk of harm
- the chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low, therefore the risk for not using force outweighs the need to use force

If staff are made aware that a child may pose a risk to themselves or others, a risk assessment should be completed by the SENDCo in partnership with the DSL. This information will then be shared with relevant staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child and staff

## **8. Using Force**

It is vitally important that staff only use the minimum amount of force necessary in order to de-escalate the situation.

Before any force is carried out, the staff member involved should give a clear oral warning to the child to inform them that if the behaviour that they are displaying continues then force may be used.

When restraint has to be used on a child, it should not involve the following:

- pulling limbs
- pulling hair
- hitting
- anything could cause asphyxia

Staff should ensure that they use movements that are protective towards themselves and the child and to minimise the child using their limbs to cause harm to anyone.

As far as possible, staff should not use force unless another responsible adult is present to support and call for assistance.

## **9. Staff training**

All members of staff will receive training about the use of reasonable force appropriate to their role to enable them to carry out their responsibilities:

- The Executive Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy within the school, ensuring the policy is accessible on the school website and modelling the standards set out in this policy to the staff.
- All staff are responsible for ensuring they have read, understand and comply with the standards and expectations set out in this policy.
- The DSL is responsible for ensuring that all staff's accredited training is up to date.

## **10. Recording Incidents**

All incidents where reasonable force has been used should be formally recorded immediately after the incident. Staff should write a full and accurate account of what took place, and share with the Executive Headteacher and DSL so that they can make a decision on any further actions that may need to be taken.

## **11. Reporting incidents**

While the school is not required to obtain the consent of parents to use force on a child, parents will be informed on the same day of serious incidents involving the use of force. They will be invited into the school for a meeting to discuss the incident in detail.

Depending on the severity of the incident and the level of restraint used, the school may contact the borough's Children's Social Care Services or the police.

### **12. Post-incident support**

Support will be provided by the school for staff and children involved in a serious incident where restraint has had to be used. This will be provided by a member of the senior leadership team or via external support services.

In the first instance, any immediate injuries sustained will be looked at by a first aider. If deemed necessary, an ambulance / paramedic will be asked to attend.

### **13. Complaints and Allegations**

Any complaints about the use of force will be investigated in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.

### **14. Special educational needs and disabilities**

Those exercising the power to use reasonable force will take into account any Special Educational Needs or disabilities (SEND) a child may have. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that a child with a disability is not treated less favourably than other children because of his / her disability.

The SENDCo will discuss the needs of such children with the parents and the members of staff who work with them to ensure that clear guidelines are in place as to the child's needs and when physical intervention may be necessary.

If physical restraint is likely to be necessary because of a child's disability or Special Educational Needs, a risk assessment will be put in place following consultation with the parents, setting out the techniques that should normally be used, taking into account the child's statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care plan where appropriate.

The school will ensure that all members of staff involved with such children have received the appropriate training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities safely.

## Appendix A: Use of reasonable force incident reporting form

The purpose of this form is to gain a comprehensive report about the incident that has taken place. The member of staff who used reasonable force will need to complete sections 1 & 3 as fully as possible and sign the. Once completed a copy of this form needs to be given to the member of SLT investigating the incident, and also the DSL.

Section 1 to be completed by the person using reasonable force	
Your name	
Your role	
Location of incident	
Time of incident	
Child's name and DOB	
Child's gender	
Does the child have SEND? If yes give details	
Details of incident	

Section 2 to be completed by the Executive Headteacher	
Names of staff witnesses	
Are witness accounts attached?	
Summary of action taken (including reporting to other agencies if necessary)	

Signature of person completing section 1		Print name		Date	
Signature of Executive Headteacher		Print name		Date	

A copy of this form needs to be given to your Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the school's reporting procedures, and the Executive Headteacher.