



# Stebbing Primary School

## Use of Reasonable Force and Physical Restraint

### Policy & Procedures 2023

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## 1. Introduction

Stebbing Primary School recognises that schools have a duty to promote good behaviour and discipline. To this end the school has a robust [Discipline and Behaviour Policy](#) that sets out how positive behaviour is promoted through a system of rewards and consequences. The policy includes a reference to use reasonable physical force and gives more detailed guidance on how physical force may be used at the school. The school's governing body also has the duty to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in schools so far as is reasonably practical. (Section 175, Children's Act 202). 1.3. There is a range of legislation and national guidance that informs the duties set out above. This document draws largely on DFE guidance [Use of Reasonable Force](#) (July 2013, reviewed July 2015). This policy should be considered alongside other relevant school policies, specifically [Discipline & Behaviour](#), [Anti-bullying](#), [Child Protection](#) and [Health and Safety](#).

## 2. What is Reasonable Force?

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in our setting to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means us 'using no more than is needed'. Our use of force may involve 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 the classroom.

We will always follow the advice for schools on the Use of [Reasonable Force in Schools](#). We will also have regard to additional guidance [Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention](#) for children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties in health and social care services and special education settings.

- 2.1. 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.

- 2.2. It does not include other physical contact with children which is proper and necessary and might include:
- 2.2.1. Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
  - 2.2.2. When comforting a distressed pupil;
  - 2.2.3. When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
  - 2.2.4. To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
  - 2.2.5. To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
  - 2.2.6. To give first aid.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- 2.5. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them.
- 2.5.1. **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.
  - 2.5.2. **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.
- 2.6. 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.

### 3. Who can use reasonable force in schools?

- 3.1. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006)

- 3.2. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.
- 3.3. The use of force is a power, not a duty, 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.

#### **4. When can reasonable force be used?**

- 4.1. Reasonable force can be used to (this list is not exhaustive and provides examples of where reasonable force can and cannot be used - taken from DfE guidance):
  - 4.1.1. remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
  - 4.1.2. prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
  - 4.1.3. 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;
  - 4.1.4. prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
  - 4.1.5. restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. The use of physical force as a punishment will never be used and is unlawful.
- 4.4. Reasonable force is only be used to avoid harm to the child or other and where all other strategies have been considered or attempted

## 5. Our practice regarding restraint

## 6. Use of isolation or seclusion

- 6.1. An isolation which prevents a child from leaving a room of their own free will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. It is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order except in an emergency, for example where the use of a locked room is a temporary measure whilst seeking assistance. Locked also includes holding a door shut, or someone standing against a door.
- 6.2. An emergency is a genuinely unforeseeable event, for example, when a child acts out of character. Any planned restriction of liberty must be legally justifiable, should be agreed by a multi-disciplinary team and form part of the pupils' behaviour support plan.
- 6.3. Internal exclusions, where children are educated for a short period of time out of their classrooms as a sanction or to minimise disruption, are not a form of seclusion.

## 7. Training

- 7.1. At least one member of our staff will attend relevant training on physical intervention and will keep this training updated. Other staff may receive this training as appropriate.
- 7.2. Staff are aware of the potentially serious risk of injury and even danger to life from the use of non-approved approaches and means of restraint. In particular, a panel of experts (Physical Control in Care Medical Panel, 2008) identified that certain restraint techniques presented an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:
  - 7.2.1. 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
  - 7.2.2. the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest;
  - 7.2.3. and the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.

7.2.4. These techniques, and any other techniques that impact on the airway, breathing or circulation, will not be used in school

## **8. Recording and reporting of incidents**

- 8.1. All incidents involving the use of physical force to restrain will be recorded in detail using the form in Appendix 1.
- 8.2. Notes will be made immediately following, or as soon as possible after the incident (i.e. before the end of the day of the incident) by the staff member involved in the original incident.
- 8.3. Notes will also be made in the same way by any other members of staff involved (i.e. as witnesses or additional providers of support). The notes will be signed and dated on the same day.
- 8.4. Pupil witnesses may also be asked to provide a written account if appropriate.
- 8.5. Parents/ carers will be informed after all incidents where restraint is used. Staff, in consultation with the headteacher, will make a judgement about whether parents are informed about incidents where other use of force has been used for control.
- 8.6. Where children have known challenging behaviour and a risk assessment and behaviour support plan is in place, if possible, this will be done in consultation with parents.

## **9. Post incident support**

- 9.1. We will ensure that the pupil and the member of staff have immediate access to first aid for any signs of injury. This must be recorded following the school's first aid recording policy.
- 9.2. We will give the pupil time to become calm while staff continue to supervise him/her. When the pupil regains complete composure (this may be up to several hours after the incident or the next day), a senior member of our staff (or his/her nominee) will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence.
- 9.3. The pupil will be given an opportunity to explain things from his/her point of view. We will take all necessary steps to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.

- 9.4. All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. The headteacher (or his/her nominee) will provide support to the member of staff involved.
- 9.5. The circumstances of the incident will be discussed with the headteacher in a supportive manner and behaviour support plans or risk assessments will be written or amended as needed, in consultation with the class teacher. Dissemination of any revised information will be included as part of the school's normal schedule of meetings, by email or on the staff noticeboard.

## **10. Responding to complaints**

- 10.1. Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff, including any use of force.
- 10.2. If a specific allegation is made against a member of staff then the school will follow procedures set out in the school's Complaints Policy.



# Appendix 1: Record of Use of Reasonable Force



## Stebbing Primary School Use of Reasonable Force Report Form

Name of pupil(s) restrained	
Date of the incident	
Time of the incident	
Location of the incident	
Name of the person who restrained	
Name of other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident	
The reason the use of reasonable force / physical restraint was necessary	
Details about the incident: Please include information about the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What was the behaviour of the pupil which led up to the incident?</li><li>2. What attempts were made to resolve the situation?</li><li>3. What was said by staff and pupils?</li><li>4. What degree of force was used?</li><li>5. How it was applied?</li><li>6. How long it was used for?</li><li>7. What was the pupil's response and the eventual outcome?</li><li>8. Give details of any injuries suffered by either staff or pupils</li><li>9. Give details of any damage to property</li><li>10. Give details of any medical treatment required (an accident form must also be completed)</li><li>11. Details of any follow-up, including contact with the parents/carers of the pupil(s) involved</li><li>12. any other relevant details e.g., the involvement of any other agency, e.g., the Police</li></ol>	
Details of any injuries suffered to pupil / another pupil / member of staff:	

Details of any damage to property	
Name and role:	
Signature	
Date:	