



**CORE**  
EDUCATION  
TRUST

## Physical Intervention Policy

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CORE Education Trust is committed to ensuring all staff act in accordance with its core values of collaboration, opportunity, respect and excellence. Central to all that is done by the Trust is a commitment to excellence in safeguarding.

This policy outlines the parameters within which staff should act in relation to restraint and the legal/statutory requirements. Any practical application of this policy must be made in line with the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and any related statutory/non-statutory guidance on restraint and the use of force. This policy is in line with the DfE guidance 'Use of reasonable force' July 2013.

### **1. 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 students.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a 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 in any given situation.
- 'Control' means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a room.
- 'Restraint' means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in extreme circumstances where to not restrain would endanger the individual and/or others: for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate.
- Where physical contact or restraint is deemed necessary, 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 injury.

### **2. Who can use reasonable force?**

While all members of staff have a legal power of use of reasonable force, the aim wherever possible is to avoid the need to use physical intervention. This power applies to any member of staff and can also apply to any people whom the Headteacher puts in charge of students.

### **3. Using reasonable force**

The default position for all staff is that physical contact is not made with students. However, there are exceptional circumstances when reasonable force may be unavoidable in order to maintain the safety of people or property. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgment of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. The member of staff should wherever possible aim to consider alternatives to physical intervention. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where (if verbal intervention has not worked) the application of reasonable force may be necessary.

- To remove a disruptive student from a classroom where they have refused to follow the instruction to do so.
- To prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or visit and they have refused to follow or have not responded to a verbal instruction to do so.
- To prevent a student leaving a classroom or school site where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- To prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or stop a fight where verbal intervention has not halted the action of the student.
- To restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Force must never be used for the purposes of punishment and it is always unlawful to do so.

Where a member of staff is having to intervene physically, they should accompany this with a verbal explanation as to why they are doing this.

Immediately afterwards, they should report their use of physical intervention and its nature to the designated senior leader for behaviour and safety. The use of force must be logged and recorded in line with the school's recording procedures.

Staff do have the right of search with consent and this should take place in the presence of two members of staff, one being a member of SLT (or in exceptional circumstances someone designated by them). In addition, where the items are on the following 'prohibited items' list, a search can be conducted without consent and reasonable force may be used. In these circumstances, the Headteacher must direct the search to take place. A record of such a search must be made in line with the school's recording procedure.

Prohibited items list:

- 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.

A search without consent cannot take place, merely because items are on the school's internal banned items list.

## **5. Pupils with SEND**

Reasonable force can be used on students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Any decision made to use force will be made with the full knowledge and understanding of the needs of the student concerned.

For student who display a pattern of behaviour that means reasonable force is used repeatedly, a risk assessment will be carried out. Staff will work with families to formulate a behaviour plan that sets out the types of physical interventions that will be used in extreme circumstances.

## **5. Communication**

The possible need for the use of physical intervention (reasonable force) is communicated within the school's behaviour policy and refers all stakeholders to the Physical Intervention policy.

Complaints received about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated. Where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defence to any criminal or civil public law action. The onus is on the person who is complaining to prove that the allegation is true and not the staff member to show that they acted reasonably.

## **6. Training**

Each school will ensure that staff are regularly updated on the protocols related to this policy. Training and advice on strategies to avoid the need for physical force will be central to the approach, but also guidance on what is reasonable force in a practical context.

## **7. Other forms of physical contact with students**

There may be other occasions when physical contact is made with students by staff and is necessary or proper:

- When a student is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument or machine.
- To give first aid.
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.
- When comforting a distressed student.
- With younger children, holding their hand at the front/back of a line when going to a destination such as assembly.

## **8. Frequently asked questions**

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

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

**Q How do I know whether using a physical intervention is ‘reasonable’?**

A 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.

**Q What about school trips?**

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

**Q Can force be used on students with SEN or disabilities?**

A Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on circumstances of the case but also on information about the student concerned.

**Q I am a female teacher with a Year 10 class – there is no way I would want to restrain or try to control my students. Am I expected to do so?**

A 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 students and it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty.

**Q Are there any circumstances in which a teacher can use physical force to punish a student?**

A 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.

## **9. Associated Resources**

- [DfE Guidance on the Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- CORE Education Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

- Ministry of Justice advice on self-defence (when published) and Home Office PACE codes
- <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/operational-policing/pace-codes/?view=Standard&pubID=810826>
- Legislative links
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>