

Waterside Primary School



The use of reasonable force

At Waterside our primary purpose is to keep children safe, in order that they can learn and thrive. This document works alongside our Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy and is adapted from the DFE's advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2013).

What is reasonable force?

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. 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.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using **no more force** than is needed.
4. 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.
5. 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.
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.

Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have the 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.

When might we use reasonable force?

- to remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- to 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;
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

We will not use force as a form of punishment. It is always unlawful to use force in this way.

This policy recognises that we have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN). When considering the use of reasonable force we should consider the individuals involved and make a professional decision as to how best handle the situation. Safeguarding will always remain the primary concern.

Staff training

This policy will form part of the induction of any new member of staff alongside the Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

The use of reasonable force will be covered within the annual safeguarding update and specific training will be provided where and when required.

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