



# Physical Restraint and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Approved by the Headteacher (date):	Summer 2025
Signed (Headteacher):	Anne Rennie
Next Review Date (term/year):	Summer 2026

## Physical Restraint and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Edmund Waller Primary School fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This policy is a whole school policy and applies to all pupils including those in EYFS, KS1, LKS2 and UKS2. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following the guidance in this policy.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school including governors.

This policy has been written using advice taken from Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies DfE 2013.

The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND). Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

### For the Purposes of this Policy Document:

- Reasonable force is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances.
- Physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.
- Injury means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning.
- We follow the guidance from the DfE's Use of reasonable force document - July 2013: [DfE advice template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281222/Use_of_reasonable_force_document_-_July_2013.pdf)

### 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.
- **In exceptional circumstances** it can also apply to people whom the Head has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying children on a school organised visit. **However, this should only happen when it is not possible for a trained member of staff to take over and make a professional judgement.**
- The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

### When can Reasonable Force be used?

Reasonable force can be used:

- to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, from committing an offence, or from causing disorder;
- to control pupils or to restrain them;
- 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;
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts;

**When can Reasonable Force NOT be used?**

**Reasonable force can never be used as a form of punishment.**

Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint

**Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed.**

- Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this policy.
- Staff should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues.
- In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation.
- Help should be summoned from colleagues; pupils should never be involved in restraint.

**What to do in circumstances when the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed**

- Approach the pupil calmly but firmly.
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout.

**Method of Restraint**

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following:

**Restraint must not:**

- Involve hurting the pupil
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict the pupil's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas
- Involve locking the pupil on their own in a room

**During any incident the person restraining should:**

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury
- Cease the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the pupil such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting

**Physical restraint can be:**

- Partial – restricting and preventing particular movements
- Total – as in the case of immobilisation

**Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff:**

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

**Do:**

- Summon help immediately. A pupil can be sent to get another adult.
- Ensure a free passage of air through airways
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil that could cause injury
- Monitor the pupil's respiration, circulation, and state of consciousness

**Don't:**

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Push their arms up their back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck)
- Use facedown holds

**Recording Incidents**

- Minor or everyday use of reasonable force does not need to be recorded. For example, very young children running off in the playground and being guided back to the line by the teacher or assistant.
- All more serious incidents involving the use of physical restraint must be reported to the **headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher as soon as possible after the incident**. These must be recorded on CPOMs using the relevant category: Use of Reasonable Force. Subcategories: Use of Reasonable Force to Control; Use of Reasonable Force to Restrain.

### **Telling parents when force has been used on their child**

- Staff need to alert the SLT to incidences where force has been used on a child and SLT will use their professional judgement on whether to inform a parent, depending on the seriousness of the incident.
- In a serious incident where a member of staff has had to physically restrain a pupil, the parent will be informed on the day.

### **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.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

### **Training**

- All staff members authorised to carry out physical restraint must undergo comprehensive, accredited training prior to engaging in any physical intervention. This training includes theoretical and practical components covering de-escalation techniques, legal and ethical considerations, approved restraint methods, and post-incident procedures. Refresher training will be available annually, or more frequently as needed, to ensure competency is maintained. No staff member shall perform a physical restraint unless they have successfully completed the required training.

### **Risk Assessments**

- Staff must, whenever feasible, conduct a dynamic risk assessment to evaluate the potential risks to the individual, staff, and others present. This includes assessing the individual's physical and mental health, the nature of the threat, environmental factors, and possible outcomes of intervention versus non-intervention. The least restrictive method must always be used, and restraint should only be implemented when there is an immediate risk of harm that cannot be managed through less intrusive means.

**Designated Safeguarding Leads are:**

Sue Greenbank, Assistant Headteacher [Primary Lead]  
Anne Rennie, Headteacher [Secondary Lead]  
Dan Absolom, Deputy Headteacher [Deputy]  
Daisy Moon, Senior Teacher for Inclusion [Deputy]  
Lea Kohlbeck, HLTA  
Lesley Price, Family Liaison & Pastoral Support [Deputy]  
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