

Canonium Learning Trust



Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Adopted: 2019/2020

Next review: 2022/2023

What is reasonable force?

The term 'reasonable force' is 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 pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

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. 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.

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 staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

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.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Staff can use reasonable force to:

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

Staff cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Power to search pupils without consent

Staff can use force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items": knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

If reasonable force has been used you must speak to parents and record such serious incidents detailing on the Pink Child Protection Form:

- pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident;
- degree of force used;
- effect on the pupil or member of staff;
- all details on the Pink Child Protection Form
- in some circumstances; an individual care plan could be used for a recurrent situation.

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.

Appendix A

Using force

- A panel of experts identified that certain restraint techniques presented an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:
- 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;
- the ‘double basket-hold’ which involves holding a person’s arms across their chest; and
- the ‘nose distraction technique’ which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.

Appendix B - Use of reasonable force Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013

Please refer to this document for advice as and when necessary.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf