

WEXHAM COURT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Use of Reasonable Force Policy

2017 - 2019



Date Approved: November 2017

Date for Review: November 2019

Responsibility: Head Teacher

WEXHAM COURT PRIMARY SCHOOL

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the DFE non-statutory advice Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2013), DFE guidance: Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (January 2016) and with reference to the school's Behaviour Policy.

Introduction

At Wexham Court Primary School we aim to offer a welcoming, secure and safe environment in which our children will flourish. We also aim to create an environment in which the use of force in relation to a pupil is unlikely. However, in the circumstances where physical restraint may be needed to secure the safety of a pupil or staff member, or where there is a serious breach of school discipline, or to prevent serious damage to property, this policy will apply. Physical restraint will be considered in the following situations:

- The prevention of a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility).
- Searching for prohibited items.¹
- A pupil injuring themselves or others.
- A pupil causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property).
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline.

Objectives and targets

The objectives of this policy include:

- Maintaining the safety of pupils and staff.
- Preventing serious breaches of school discipline.
- Preventing serious damage to property.
- Preventing criminal offences (or if under the age of criminal responsibility, from committing what would be a criminal act for an older pupil).

Action plan

We aim to minimise the need to use force by:

¹ Prohibited items include: knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco & cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, any article that has been or is like to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property. Any item banned by the school rules which has been named in those rules as something for which staff will search.

- Creating a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require using force.
- Using social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) approaches to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
- De-escalating incidents if they do arise.
- Only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.
- Risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils.

Staff authorised to use force

The head teacher and all members of the teaching staff have the statutory power to use pupil restraint/force at all times.

In addition, those members of school staff authorised by the head teacher, including support staff, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors and office staff may be authorised by the head teacher. The head teacher has the responsibility to ensure that staff are fully informed of the school's policy and understand what authorisation entails.

Temporary authorisation will be given to others who do not normally supervise children, for example, volunteers and parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits.

Staff will only use force when:

- The potential consequences of not intervening are likely to be sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force.
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low.
- The risks associated with not using force outweighed those of using force.

Wherever possible these judgements will take account of the particular characteristic of the pupil, including age, SEN or disability.

Before taking steps to restrain pupils, all members of staff will tell the pupil to stop misbehaving and what will happen if they do not. The member of staff will communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident.

Schools do not require parental consent to use reasonable force on a child.

Training

Staff will receive training in pupil restraint from their colleagues and from reputable training agencies. They will be informed about:

- How to deal with pupils who present particular risks to themselves or others (as a result of SEN and/or disabilities and/or other personal circumstances, such as domestic violence).
- How to minimise the highest risks, for example, by calling the police if a pupil suspected of having a weapon seems likely to resist a search.
- Types of restraint that could be used, for example:
 - Standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path.
 - Leading a pupil by the hand or arm.
 - Ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.
 - Using appropriate restricting holds in more extreme circumstances.

Any form of restraint that is likely to injure a pupil (particularly anything that could constrict breathing) will only be used in extreme emergencies and where there is no viable alternative.

There are some types of restraint that are unacceptable because they present an unacceptable risk. These 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.
- The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.

Staff will also be advised that, as far as possible, they should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

Recording incidents

It is important that there is a detailed, contemporaneous, written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where force is used so the incident record form (see the appendix) will be completed as soon as possible after any incident has occurred. Similarly, all injuries will be recorded in accordance with the school's health and safety policy. In considering whether an incident needs to be recorded, the following will be taken into consideration:

- The level of risk presented at the time of the incident.

- The degree of force used.
- Any effect on the pupil or member of staff.
- The child's age.

Reporting incidents

Parents/carers will be informed of any recordable incident and given an opportunity to discuss the incident with the head teacher, assistant head teacher or appropriate class teacher and given a copy of this policy. Afterwards arrangements will be made for supporting staff and pupils involved in the incident, including meeting immediate physical needs and rebuilding relationships, to ensure that lessons are learned from the incident.

However, if it is considered that it is likely to result in significant harm to the pupil then parents will not be informed of any recordable incident.

In some cases, the appropriate external agencies (for example, local authority children's services, the local children's safeguarding board, the health and safety executive, youth offending teams and the police) will also be informed.

Complaints and allegations

Should there be any complaint or allegation following an incident, then the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints and allegations of misconduct will be followed. However, suspension will not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

Monitoring and evaluation

The head teacher will make an annual report to the governing body of the recordable incidents after which the impact of the policy will be considered and the policy changed if necessary.

Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed annually. Additionally parents will be invited to comment on the policy if their child is involved in an incident involving restraint.

Definitions

Force as a means of control

Control can mean either:

- Passive physical contact (for example, standing between pupils, blocking a pupil's path).
- Active physical contact (for example, taking a pupil by the arm or hand, or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back).

Force as a means of restraint

This usually means physically preventing a pupil from continuing what they are doing after having been told to stop. The circumstances are generally more extreme than control situations, for example, when pupils are involved in a fight.

APPENDIX

Use of force to control or restrain pupils: incident record

Details of pupil on whom force was used by a member of staff.	Name Class
Date, time and location of incident.	Date time Location
Names of staff involved (directly or as a witness).	
Details of other pupils involved directly or as witnesses, including any pupils involved who were vulnerable – SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.	
Description of incident by staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings that force might be used.	
Reason for using force and description of force used.	
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid required.	
Reasons for making a record of this incident.	

<p>Follow up, including post-incident support, any disciplinary action against pupils.</p> <p>Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies.</p>	
<p>When and how parent/carer informed and any views expressed.</p>	<p>When</p> <p>How</p>
<p>Has any complaint been lodged?</p>	

Report compiled by:

Name:

Role:

Signature:

Date:

Report countersigned by:

Name

Role

Signature

Date

Note. The names of pupils should be removed before the completed form is sent to parents and the names of members of staff should only be included with their consent.

This is a true version signed by

Mr J. Reekie, Chair of Governors

Signed:

Date:

Miss N Mehat Head Teacher

Signed:

Date:

Review date:

November 2019