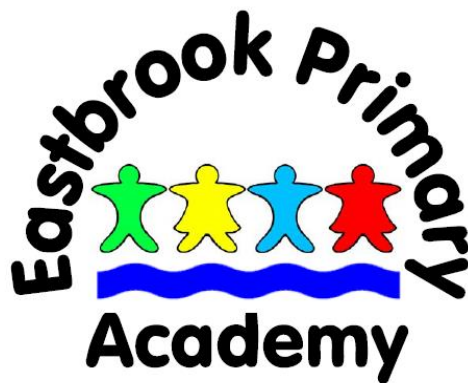




Use of Reasonable Force and Restraint Policy



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Guidance for staff on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils

(Ref : DfE Guidance: Use of Reasonable Force, July 2013 and Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 93)

The guidance answers the following questions:

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 pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm 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 and for the least amount of time.
- 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.
- 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 a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- The power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher 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 doing or continuing to do any of the following (it should always be proportionate to risk):
 - Committing any offence
 - hurting themselves or others
 - Causing serious damage to property
 - prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.
- 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.

The guidance continues to define when schools can use reasonable force, the list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive pupils from the classroom when they have not followed 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.

Schools cannot:

- Use force as a punishment.

Power to search without consent

- In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for certain prohibited items, although it cannot be used to search for items merely banned under the school rules.

Staff training

All staff are trained regularly on de-escalation techniques to try and minimise the number of occasions that the use of force is required. In addition, key members of staff receive full TEAM TEACH training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and to ensure they use the correct holds. This prevents staff from using unacceptable restraint techniques:

A panel of experts¹ 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.

Informing Parents

¹ Physical Control in Care Medical Panel - 2008

The school believes it is important to work with parents on all aspects of behaviour. If a pupil has been involved in a Significant Incident that has involved the use of force parents will be informed. In deciding what is a significant or serious incident teachers will use their professional judgement and consider the:

- 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; and
- the child's age.

If there are any complaints about the use of force these will be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated. The first point of contact would be the headteacher, or if the complaint involved the headteacher, the chair of governors.

Should staff have other physical contact with pupils?

The DfE emphasises that it is not illegal to touch a pupil, and that there are occasions when physical contact with a pupil is 'proper and necessary'.

These may include:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- Giving first aid

If you need any further information with regard to this policy please make an appointment to see the headteacher.