



# Handling and Use of Reasonable Force Policy



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<b>Review Cycle</b>	Reviewed and approved by the full governing board annually.		

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## Introduction

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At Bowlsh Infant School we are committed to supporting and keeping safe all members of the school community: pupils, staff members, volunteers and parents.

We have a Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy and recognise that behaviour is a means of communication. We know that children have varying needs in relation to their social and emotional awareness and for some children managing their emotions and behaviour can be a challenge for them.

We also recognise our duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND and actively do so.

Our aim is always to support and guide pupils through making alterations to their provision and working to meet their individual needs.

We focus on trying to prevent challenging situations and reasonable force will only ever be used when deemed necessary and in the best interests of the pupil and others.

This policy has been written to reflect the DfE guidance 'Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013'. The policy has been approved by the governing body and will be reviewed annually.

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## Reasonable Force

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The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent.

The DfE guidance defines 'reasonable force' as:

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.

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## Use of Reasonable Force

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### Staff Training

Dynamis Positive Handling training is completed by staff members every three years, using an accredited trainer. This training puts a high importance on understanding crisis behaviour, duty of care, injury risk awareness, non-escalation and de-escalation. However, we recognise that for some children the use of reasonable force may be required to ensure safety.

### Who can use reasonable force?

Reasonable force can be used by any member of staff if the force is reasonable and necessary to prevent harm and they have the legal power to do so. The same power can 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. Pupils for whom there are known needs which may lead to the use of reasonable force, would not be left in the charge of unpaid volunteers or parents. However, these adults could be responsible for children in a group and may need to use reasonable force to prevent an accident happening, such as a child about to walk out into the road.

### When can reasonable force be used?

The DfE guidance states that:

- 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 to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

As already stated, a lot of support will be given to a pupil to try and prevent the use of reasonable force being required however there will be situations when it is needed such as:

- To prevent a pupil from putting themselves into harm such as leaving the site or walking out into the road from school or on an external visit.
- To guide or remove a disruptive pupil from the classroom if their continued presence disrupts the learning of others or their behaviour is causing anxiety to others in the room or poses a risk to them.
- 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 or to prevent them causing harm to others.
- To prevent a child from damaging school property.



### Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

... for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

- (a) committing any **offence**,
- (b) causing personal **injury** to, or **damage** to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or
- (c) prejudicing the maintenance of **good order and discipline** at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Other situations may occur where reasonable force is warranted, and the adult/s involved must risk assess the situation to ensure that they are acting reasonably and in the best interest of others at the time.

Whilst managing a situation where restraint or physical intervention is being used, the adults involved must keep considering whether the intervention proportionate and still required. The aim must always be to resolve the situation and release the physical intervention as soon as possible through trying to calm the pupil.

Use of force will only be used with the intention to improve a situation and maintain safety it will **never** be used as a form of punishment.

Staff use 'scripts' to support the child and other staff member to avoid physical intervention and during. See the school's Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy.

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### **Definitions of Physical Intervention and Restrictive Physical Intervention**

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We will only use guides and restraints that have been covered in the Dynamis Positive Handling training (unless to not use an alternative action would risk causing more harm to the pupil or others):

#### **Definitions**

Restricting physical liberty is not depriving them of physical liberty and is used for the shortest amount of time necessary. Physical Intervention is used as a last resort; it is always reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

<b>Physical Intervention</b>	<b>Restrictive Physical Intervention</b>
Where staff have physically intervened but not restrained. E.g., using their body to shield or guiding walking.	Restrictive physical intervention involves using force or techniques to restrict a person's movement or freedom to prevent harm to themselves or others.

#### **Guiding:**

Techniques for safely and respectfully guiding individuals to a different location or activity. This involves using physical prompts, like a hand on the back or an arm guide, to encourage someone to move in a desired direction, while they are generally compliant.

- Hand on the back
- Palm/s on the back of the arm/s
- Holding a hand to lead

Restraining and Escorting can be used to maintain safety and prevent harm, focusing on minimal force proportionate to the risk.

- Fix and stabilize hands / from climbing
- Guiding hold
- Wrist hold
- Fist hold
- Leg hold
- Advanced leg hold

Both the fist-hold and the wrist-hold can be adapted for standing, sitting and can incorporate the leg-hold or advanced leg-hold.

#### **Bearing the weight of a child**

Working with young children (incl. some Early Years), there are times when it is appropriate, if possible, to bear the weight of a child. This should only be done if staff are confident and physically able to do so. We avoid this wherever possible due to the risks involved.

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## Staff Personal Safety

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Staff have the right to work in a safe environment and as a school we adhere to and are committed to safe working practices.

Dynamis training ensures staff have strategies to ensure they can respond appropriately to:

- hair holds
- bites
- holding dangerous items
- hitting
- arm grab
- pinching, whole hand
- pinching, finger
- clothing grab

If staff are physically assaulted by a child, they report this to the Office Manager. All physical assault is reported to the Headteacher.

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## Recording PI and RPI

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All notable (not guiding) incidents of PI and RPI are recorded on CPOMS. In recording, staff are:

1. Truthful, factual, concise and subjective
2. using ABC
3. listing what de-escalation strategies were used
4. stating if the incident was witnessed
5. Stating the duration of time the intervention was in place for

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## Notifying Parents

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All incidents of Restrictive Physical Intervention are reported to parents, who should be informed using the following process:

- Email notification sent by the School Office
- In person conversation or phone call the same day

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## Positive Handling Plans

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Whilst parental consent is not required for reasonable force to be used it is good practice to develop a positive handling plan with the parent if Intervention is needed 'regularly' or as part of a Risk Assessment. If a Positive Handling Plan is required, parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or SENCo to complete and agree a Positive Handling Plan and Pupil Passport.

This plan will detail:

- The current risks and behaviours which are causing concern that reasonable force may be required
- Strategies and support that are being used to try and prevent situations escalating to the point where reasonable force may be required.
- What kind of reasonable force is likely to be used.

- What will happen in the aftermath of reasonable force being used; including support and guidance for the pupil and staff members involved.

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### **Risk of Injury**

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All actions are taken to improve situations but in using physical intervention it is possible that minor injuries such as scratches may be caused. These must be recorded on the handling record and communicated to parents as soon as possible.

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### **Risk of Complaint**

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Concern that a complaint may be made about reasonable force being used is not a reason to not use it if the action was reasonable and lawful. If a pupil or parent wishes to make a complaint, they should be advised of the school process through the complaint procedure. It is hoped that through the involvement of parents in agreeing a Positive Handling Plan the risk of complaints will be reduced.

School staff have a power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.

- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

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### **Physical Contact with Pupils**

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It is not appropriate for any school to have a no-contact policy.

Bowlsh Infant School recognises that contact may be required as stated above for reasonable force to be used to protect pupils and staff.

There are other circumstance in which physical touch is appropriate and are permitted, due to the importance of developing positive relationships with pupils such as:

- When greeting the pupil into school through their selected greeting – some children may select a hug, hi-five, pat on the arm or back etc.
- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school.
- When comforting a distressed pupil.
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.
- To give first aid.
- To help regulate a child who is sensory seeking and may want a hug.

We educate our children regarding consent/permission and adults ask children if they are ok with being touched and what the reason for the touch is. Children are encouraged to always ask each other for permission to touch also.

Adults in school need to ensure that their conduct with pupils is open and that all behaviour is appropriate. When lone working with pupils, adults need to ensure that they are visible either through glass panels in doors or by having the door at least partially open. Every adult should only exhibit behaviour towards children in the school that they

would be comfortable with anyone witnessing and anyone witnessing would be comfortable with. Any behaviour seen to be inappropriate must be referred immediately to the Headteacher. If the behaviour concern was regarding the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors.