



**HEART**  
EDUCATION TRUST

## **Reasonable Force and Restraint Policy**

13 February 2019

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**Adopted by:** The Board of Trustees on 13 February 2020



**Heartsease**  
Primary Academy



**Lingwood**  
Primary Academy



**Henderson Green**  
Primary Academy



**Valley**  
Primary Academy

The HEART Education Trust Documents Review Record:

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The HEART Education Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 08286818. Registered office address: Heartsease Primary Academy, Rider Haggard Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 9UE.

## REASONABLE FORCE AND RESTRAINT POLICY

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the DCSF guidance published in April 2010, “The use of force to control or restrain pupils” which has been shared with all staff and “Use of Reasonable Force Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies”

### Aims

The aims of this policy are to enable the staff working in the HEART Education Trust:

- To create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe.
- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To put in place guidance for staff so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such reasonable force might be applied.

### Legal Framework

All Academy staff members have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- a) committing a criminal offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil); or
- b) causing personal injury or damage to property; 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.

The staff to which this power applies are:

- i. any member of staff at the school;
- ii. any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits); and
- iii. does **not** include any pupils (including those in positions of authority, such as advocates).

The power may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on the school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of the staff member (for example on a school visit).

Staff members can sometimes be worried that using force will lead to false allegations of unreasonable or unlawful conduct in the form of a complaint or legal action. But if the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations. This policy and related use of force guidance is intended to help staff feel more confident about using force when they think it is right and necessary.

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**It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.** This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, which is illegal.

### **Reasonable force**

Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case and the test is whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent.

This means the degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

In schools, force is generally used for two different purposes – to control pupils and to restrain them.

- Control can mean either passive physical contact (e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path) or active physical contact (e.g. leading a pupil by the hand or arm, or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back).
- When members of staff use "restraint" they physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing after they have been told to stop. The use of restraint techniques is usually used in more extreme circumstances, such as when two pupils are involved in a fight and physical intervention is needed to separate them.

### **Judging whether to use force and what force to use**

The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use will always depend on the circumstances of each case and – crucially in the case of pupils with SEN or disabilities – information about the individual concerned.

The school will develop an individual risk assessment where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil, such as a pupil whose SEN and/or disability is associated with extreme behaviour.

Based on this legal framework, our 'working' definition of 'reasonable force' is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned. The use of reasonable force will always depend on the circumstances of the case and staff should take the following into consideration:

- whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, given the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical conditions and any special educational needs of the pupil.
- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanor, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.
- the degree of force employed should be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to diffuse the situation.

**Some examples of situations where reasonable force might be used are:**

- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, or another pupil, or to stop a fight between two or more pupils;

- to prevent a pupil causing deliberate damage to property;
- to prevent a pupil causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or object;
- to ensure that a pupil leaves a classroom where the pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so;
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson; or
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.

**Prevention should be the primary consideration.**

Steps to avoid these situations should be taken and the adult should be able to demonstrate that those steps were taken. Physical restraint should always be the last resort.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of their pupils. They are in a particular position of trust (in loco parentis).

The following should be applied in all cases:

- Staff should delay if at all possible. (However, in some circumstances e.g. a child running out onto the road, you might be deemed negligible if you do not intervene.)
- An 'on the spot' risk assessment for each occasion that you feel reasonable force or restraint may be necessary should be made.
- Consideration should be given to the environment, the medical circumstances and the clothing.
- Action being taken should always be for the good of the child, trying to keep them safe.
- Assure the child that the restraint is not a punishment.
- Never use other children in the restraint.
- Restraint or reasonable force should be witnessed by another responsible adult. Staff should use the *red card* system to call for another adult if restraint or reasonable force is needed and another adult is not available in the area.

**Reasonable force might be used:-**

- in self defence, where risk of injury is imminent;
- when there is developing risk of injury to the person deemed in need of restraint or others.

Physical intervention in these circumstances may take several forms, e.g.:-

- physically interposing between pupils;
- blocking a pupil 's path;
- holding;
- 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.

The law strictly prohibits the use of force, which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment. The use of force as a punishment, or to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation, such as the examples below, (which are not exhaustive) should not be permitted under any circumstances:

- holding around the neck;

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- any hold that might restrict breathing;
- kicking, slapping or punching;
- forcing limbs against joints;
- tripping;
- holding by the hair; and
- holding the pupil face down on the ground.

Physical intervention may involve staff in:-

- holding
- pushing
- pulling

Staff must always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Where a pupil has caused actual harm or injury, details will need to be recorded in the school accident book.

### **General principle of behaviour management**

Because the use of force should only be a last resort, staff in the HEART Education Trust recognise that they should minimise the possibility of force being needed by creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. The HEART Education Trust's Behaviour Policy is followed by all staff to ensure consistency of approach. The HEART Education Trust follows the IKON Training holistic approach to Positive Behaviour Management.

### **De-escalation and Physical Intervention**

The HEART Education Trust is committed to using the IKON Training holistic approach to positive handling. Positive handling describes a broad spectrum of strategies to manage behaviour; these include policy, guidance, environment management, staff deployment, personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation. Physical intervention is only a small part of this framework.

- Use of space
- Safe environments
- Comfortable environments
- Diversions
- Calm Stances and Postures
- No- threatening Facial Expressions
- Low Tone, Volume and Pace in Communication
- Careful use of words
- Physical Reassurance and Prompts
- Effective Guides and Escorts
- Releases and holds with minimum drama and effort

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It is envisaged that non-physical intervention will constitute at least 95% of all behaviour management intervention. It is an integral part of the IKON approach to physical intervention that all staff share responsibility for assisting and supporting. It is undesirable and counter-productive that the responsibility for physical intervention is left to particular individuals.

### **Staff Training**

Teaching staff and ancillary staff employed by the HEART Education Trust will be trained in de-escalation techniques and physical intervention if deemed appropriate. The HEART Education Trust is committed to providing this training at the earliest opportunity to safeguard the welfare of both pupils and staff. It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to arrange the required training.

### **Recording the use of significant incidents**

From September 2010, governing bodies must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, and for reporting these incidents to the pupil's parents as soon as practicable after the incident. Our staff will use the Incident Report form set out in Appendix A. The Trustees of the HEART Education Trust will take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff follow the procedure. This is to ensure that parents are kept informed of serious events at school concerning their child. If reporting the incident to a parent would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil, then the incident must be reported to the local authority where the pupil normally lives.

Whether an incident is significant will vary on a case by case basis, but in determining whether it is, staff will need to consider factors such as the pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time, the degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour, together with the effect on the pupil or member of staff. Members of staff should not put themselves at risk. An individual would not be seen to be failing in their duty of care by not using force to prevent injury, if doing so threatened their own safety.

Such records may be required for future reference. Immediately following any such incident, the member of staff concerned should inform the Headteacher or a senior member of staff and provide a written report. Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action will also be recorded in the incident log.

Staff should keep their own copy of any written report.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The school will endeavour to ensure that all staff know and understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of pupils. Legislation allows 'members of staff' to use 'reasonable force' and defines a member of staff as 'any teacher who works at the school and any person who, with the authority of the Headteacher, has lawful control or charge of pupils at the school'. The Headteacher will confirm with all staff whether they meet the terms of this definition.

Regular training will be given to staff and new staff should be given a copy of the policy as part of their induction.

Staff should be made aware of individual pupils who are considered likely to pose serious behavioural problems or violence.

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The Pastoral Manager/SENCo will keep staff informed about pupils with special educational needs who may require special attention with regard to their physical management. Staff will consult with the Pastoral Manager/SENCo regarding any concerns that they have about the physical management of pupils with special educational needs.

### **Preventative Strategies**

All staff in school need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation. The strategies listed below as examples will be influenced by the age of the pupil(s) and the context in which they are applied.

- 1) Move calmly and confidently;
- 2) Make simple, clear statements;
- 3) Intervene early;
- 4) Try to maintain eye contact;
- 5) If necessary summon help before the problem escalates; and
- 6) If possible, remove the audience from the immediate location.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- 1) Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and tell him/her the possible consequences of failure to do so.
- 2) Summon another adult. (Another adult should be present if physical restraint of any kind needs to be applied.) Use the 'red card' or send another pupil / message to alert a member of the senior leadership team.
- 3) Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident.
- 4) Make it clear that physical intervention will cease as soon as it is no longer necessary.
- 5) Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:
  - a. providing medical support;
  - b. providing respite for those involved; and
  - c. accessing external advice/support.

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem. Whilst limiting damage to property and/or persons, it is advisable not to 'corner' or give the child a feeling of being 'trapped' in any way as this can often inflame reactions. Where possible, allow the child space to move.

### **Dealing with complaints and allegations regarding the use of force**

Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff, including any use of force.

If a specific allegation is made against a member of staff then the school will follow procedures set out in

- the HEART Education Trust's Complaints Policy;
- the HEART Education Trust's Dealing with Allegations Against Staff Policy;

with reference to the following DCSF Guidance:

- The use of force to control or restrain pupils April 2010
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education January 2007

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## **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**

It is unnecessary and unrealistic to suggest that teachers should only touch children in emergencies. Particularly with younger children, touching them is inevitable and can give welcome reassurance to the child. However, teachers must bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. It is important for teachers to be sensitive to a child's reaction to physical contact and to act appropriately. It is also important not to touch children, however casually, in ways, or on parts of the body, that might be considered indecent. Therefore, teachers should only touch children if absolutely necessary.

Where a teacher has concerns that their actions may be misconstrued, it is essential that incidents are reported to the Headteacher immediately.

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**APPENDIX A: INCIDENT RECORD FORM**



Details of pupil on whom force was used – name, class and any Special Educational Needs, disability or other vulnerability
Date, time and location of incident
Names of staff (or volunteers) involved (directly and as witnesses)
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons

Description of incident by the staff involved including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used

Reason for using force and description of the force used

Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention required

Reasons for making a record of this incident