

## **FORCE AND RESTRAINTS POLICY**

The Governors of Fletewood school have drawn up this policy with regard to the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools document (July 2013).

This policy, which forms part of our whole school Discipline & Behaviour policy, must be adhered to by all members of staff in order to safeguard all pupils and themselves.

### **AIM:**

**The aim of this policy is to identify what forms of physical contact are allowed, to make all staff aware of the circumstances in which physical intervention might be appropriate and to identify factors that staff should bear in mind when deciding whether to use physical force. It also serves as a mechanism for informing parents of the legal situation surrounding the use of force in school.**

### **RATIONALE**

#### **Corporal punishment**

The school does not authorise, in any way, the use of corporal punishment to discipline children. As the above document states, 'It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.'

#### **Authorised use of force.**

Wherever possible, staff should attempt to use 'verbal' strategies for dealing with difficult situations. There are, however, certain instances when the use of physical force may be the only option to ensure the safety of both individuals, or groups of pupils, or to maintain discipline and behaviour. Teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Headteacher may be allowed to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- 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.

To be consistent with our Behaviour policy, all members of staff are authorised by the Headteacher and Governors to use reasonable force under the above circumstances. Parents and voluntary helpers who may be helping either in school or on educational visits, must only use reasonable force in situations where there is a significant risk of injury either to an individual child, other children or themselves.

Physical force is not justified to prevent a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that could be resolved without force.

### **Reasonable force.**

There is no legal definition of reasonable force, so it is not possible to set out conclusively when staff are justified in using force or the degree of force that should be applied. However, any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result and should also be in relation to the age and physical size of the pupil.

### **Application of Force**

Once again, it is impossible to establish set rules regarding what type of contact is justified in different situations, however the following are the types of contact that are warranted, subject to the principle of reasonable force being used.

- Physically intervening between pupils who may be fighting
- Blocking the path of a pupil who may be about to commit a criminal offence
- Holding a pupil by the upper arm using a 'Friendly C'\* if they are in physical danger or are causing severe disruption
- Leading a pupil away from a conflict situation by holding the hand or using a 'Friendly Hold'\*
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

Under no circumstances should staff or authorised personnel act in a way that might deliberately cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil by the neck, collar or any other way that might restrict breathing
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

### **Recording incidents**

It is important that staff immediately report any incident of physical contact that takes place between themselves and a pupil, to the Headteacher or most senior member of staff in school at the time. This should be followed by completing a full report of the incident, using the proforma in Appendix A. Parents will also be informed of any incident involving their child on the same day, and will be given an opportunity to discuss the incident at the earliest possible convenience.

### **Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances**

There are inevitably some other occasions when physical contact with children is necessary. In particular, physical contact may be necessary during P.E or D.T lessons, or if a member of staff has to give First aid. All staff should be aware of the possible misinterpretation of actions such as this, so wherever possible any such contact should only be used where another member of staff is present, or the contact made in such a

way that it cannot not be misinterpreted. Staff should be particularly aware of cultural and gender issues around physical contact.

- *\*Friendly Hold – Link arms with the pupil and both people’s elbows should be bent, adult holding the lower arm*
- *\*Friendly C – Adult shaping their hand in a C shape holding the upper arm without gripping .ie keeping the fingers straight*

Policy Date: February 2022

Review Date: February 2026

## **Appendix A:**

## **Record of an incident of force to control or restrain a pupil**

Name of pupil involved:

When did the incident take place?

Where did the incident take place?

Name of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident:

The reason that force was necessary:

How the incident began / progressed:

Details of pupil's behaviour:

What was said by different parties:

Steps taken to defuse or calm the situation:

The degree of force used / how it was applied / for how long:

What was the parents' response and the outcome of the incident:

Signatures from Staff and Parents:

Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil or a member of staff and or damage to property