



Pattishall Primary is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

This policy is based on DfE guidance 'The use of reasonable force in schools' 2013. The key objectives of this policy include

- Maintaining the safety of pupils, staff and visitors
- Preventing serious breach of school discipline
- Preventing serious damage to property.

Minimising the need to use force

Staff will view physical intervention or restraint of pupils as a last resort. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent the need for restrictive physical intervention.

Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk.

Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents/Carers are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

What is reasonable force?

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.

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of Pattishall CE School staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. If the Headteacher deems it appropriate, the power can also apply to people 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 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 or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006)

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used. Staff can use reasonable force to:

- 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.

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items" (Section 550ZB(5) of the Education Act 1996): knives and weapons; alcohol; illegal drugs; stolen items; tobacco and cigarette papers; fireworks; pornographic images; any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property. Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

Communicating the school's approach to the use of force

This policy is linked to the Pattishall CE Primary School behaviour policy.

Staff training

There is always a number of staff who have received Team-Teach training. The training needs of staff are monitored to ensure that the most up-to-date practice is followed.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

Pattishall CE Primary School will speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force and will record these in the school's Bound and Numbered Book.

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

Pattishall CE Primary School will follow safeguarding procedures on "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff"

What about other physical contact with pupils?

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- 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; and
- To give first aid.