



# READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL

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## Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils Policy

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The School's aim is to provide an orderly atmosphere in which effective teaching and learning can take place. However, there may be rare occasions on which school staff will need to use 'reasonable force' in order to control or restrain pupils. The power to use reasonable force applies whether pupils are on school premises or elsewhere, as long as they are in the lawful control or charge of a staff member. This includes school visits. This policy does not support the notion of no physical contact in a situation that requires restraint or control of a pupil.

### 2. When is it reasonable to use force?

2.1 Factors influencing this judgement include:-

- the seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder that is likely to result if force is not used
- the chances of achieving the desired result by other means
- the relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies.

2.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use "such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do" any of the following:-

- When a pupil attacks a member of staff
- When a pupil attacks another pupil
- When a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of, committing deliberate damage or vandalism
- When a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects (for example in the classroom or on the playground or sports field)
- When a pupil absconds from class or tries to leave the school, especially where the child could be at risk if not kept there
- When a pupil's behaviour prejudices the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school
- When a pupil is, or is attempting to hurt themselves or others.

2.3 The Act defines who can use 'reasonable force' as:-

- Any teacher who works at the school
- Any other person whom the Headmaster has authorised to have control or charge of pupils
- Any support staff, teaching assistants, learning support assistants

### 3. Guidelines on using control or restraint

- 3.1 Ideally early identification of a hostile situation will provide the member of school staff time to assess the situation, remove onlookers from the area and alert colleagues for assistance, preferably a senior teacher. It is important to remain calm and not take the situation personally as this will potentially affect your decision making and responses.
- 3.2 Use your voice first: verbal instructions should be given before and during any physical intervention. The surprise effect of a sudden noise i.e. a whistle or distraction can be more effective than the use of force.
- 3.3 Use force only when necessary to resolve the incident: this should be the minimum force required, lasting for the shortest practicable time - the purpose should be restraint and the reduction of risk and may include the following responses:-
- Physically interposing between pupils
  - Blocking a pupil's path
  - Holding (but never round the neck or collar)
  - Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
  - Shepherding a pupil away by placing your hand in the centre of the back
  - In extreme cases (such as self-defence) more restrictive holds – this is not recommended even for staff with specialist training
- 3.4 Do not strike blows or retaliate against pupils: to do so would exceed your authorisation to intervene, may cause injury and create a significant risk of an allegation of assault being made. Actions of this nature include:-
- Holding round the neck
  - Restricting a pupil's ability to breathe
  - Slapping
  - Punching
  - Kicking
  - Throwing objects
  - Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
  - Holding or pulling by the hair or ear
  - Holding face down on the ground
  - Do not touch in a way that might be considered indecent
- 3.5 Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use the minimum force required to achieve the desired result). Such situations could include preventing a pupil running off the pavement onto a busy road or preventing a pupil from hitting someone with a dangerous object.

## 4. Recording of a Control or Restraint Incident

4.1 To ensure a culture of professionalism and openness all incidents of restraint and control must be reported as soon as practicable to the Second Master. The Second Master is responsible for interviewing a member of staff who has exercised control or restraint on a pupil and recording the incident in writing as soon as possible. When restraint of a pupil has been used, the parents of the pupil(s) involved will be contacted as soon after the incident as is possible. The report should include:-

- The names of everyone involved in the incident
- Time and place of the incident
- Names of any other witnesses
- What triggered the incident and how it progressed
- Details of the relevant pupil(s) behaviour
- What everyone said, as near as possible
- What steps were taken to defuse the situation and the response to that action
- The degree of force used, how it was applied and for how long
- How the situation was brought under control

4.2 If for any reason there is a time lapse between the end of the incident and meeting with the Second Master it is essential that the member of school staff records the above information as soon as possible to ensure the best possible evidence is obtained. Similar to when staff are recording a disclosure of abuse or child protection concerns the emphasis is on the accuracy of the information as opposed to the neatness in which it is presented.

THIS POLICY DOES NOT AUTHORISE THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, WHICH IS UNLAWFUL.

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