



CP

## Reasonable Force Policy

Policy- Document Status			
Date of Policy Creation	Summer 2025	Named Responsibility	Headteacher Mrs. H. Kumar
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body		Summer 2025	
Review date:		Summer 2028	

## Statement of Intent

Holmer Lake Primary believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, managing violence through control and restraint may be necessary.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use positive handling, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to manage conflict when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that actions such as use of reasonable force are used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Legal framework: this policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behavioural Policy

## Roles and Responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Evaluating the use of reasonable force to analyse how and when use of reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.
- Deciding whether any staff require training to use reasonable force.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of reasonable force.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Allegations of Abuse Policy.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force records this onto CPOMS.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle pupils with SEND (de-escalation strategies/through in-school professionals meetings).
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable pupils and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the headteacher.

## **Behaviour Safety Plan**

Where a pupil demonstrates undesirable behaviour, a behaviour safety plan may be put in place. This plan will be discussed with the pupil and their parents. This plan will outline the de-escalation strategies that may be used to support the pupil to regulate his/her emotions.

***Parents will also be referred to the reasonable force policy.***

## **What is positive handling?**

For the purpose of this policy, 'positive handling' is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting pupils and limiting damage to property.

Legal framework and national guidance often refers to the 'use of force' – this policy uses the term 'positive handling' whenever possible.

Use of positive handling/reasonable force is used in the school to:

- Restrain a pupil who has lost emotional self-control until the situation is diffused.
- Limit the amount of harm that the pupil involved can do to themselves or others.
- Demonstrate to pupils that they are within a safe environment in which adults can contain pupils' anger and other erratic emotions.
- Protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.

Use of positive handling/reasonable force will be limited to emergency situations and used only as a measure of last resort.

Where use of reasonable force is required, the school will abide to the following guidance:

- Initial intervention will always be without force (de-escalation strategies).
- Any physical intervention will follow other appropriate actions.
- Staff will take a calm and measured approach.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who subsequently gets injured, or injures another pupil, could lead to an accusation of negligence.

Use of positive handling/reasonable force will never be invasive, humiliating, flirtatious in nature or take a form which could be seen as punishment.

Use of positive handling/reasonable force will be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control.

### **What is reasonable force?**

There is no statutory definition of reasonable force; it will always depend on the circumstances of the case.

The use of reasonable force is only acceptable to control pupils or restrain them.

- 'Control' refers to either passive physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm.
- 'Restraint' refers to physically bringing a pupil under control, such as holding them back. This is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as to separate two pupils fighting.
- The degree of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. age.
- Staff members will always use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances of the incidents.
- All incidents that involve the use of reasonable force will be reported to the headteacher and recorded on CPOMs.

The school is able to use reasonable force in situations when (please note these are examples and not an exhaustive list):

- Disruptive children must be removed from a room and have previously refused to leave.
- Members of staff need to control disruptive pupils on school trips, during school events or similar.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving a room when doing so would lead to a risk to their safety or the safety of others.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.

Physical intervention will never be used as a punishment in accordance with the school's Behavioural Policy.

## Use of Reasonable Force

- All members of staff will be permitted to use reasonable force where they believe it to be appropriate, as long as all necessary precautions are taken.
- The power to positively handle pupils also applies to any individual whom the headteacher has identified as temporarily in charge, such as volunteers/student teachers.
- The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances.
- Staff will always calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it was necessary in a non-threatening manner.
- Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the child.
- All staff members will develop strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations, which they will use to diffuse and calm a situation – our school use CPI Safety Intervention in line with the Local Authority.
- In non-urgent situations, staff will always try and deal with a situation through other strategies before using force (de-escalation strategies).
- Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, dependant on the circumstances, this may not always be possible.
- Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, such as where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without help and assistance of another staff member.
- Emergency intervention is necessary when there is a high risk of pupils being injured or property being damaged.
- Following the event, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.
- Where necessary, external agencies, such as the LA or the police if a crime has been committed, will be informed of the incident.

Use of reasonable force techniques which present an unacceptable risk and are therefore in question include:

- The 'seated double embrace' where two staff members force a pupil into a sitting position and lean them forward whilst a third staff member monitors their breathing.
- The 'double basket-hold' in which a pupil's arms are held across their chest.
- The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the pupil's nose.
- The 'Prone Floor Hold' technique which involves holding down a child to the floor.

## Reporting Incidents

- Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the headteacher and provide a written record of the situation as soon as possible, using CPOMs.
- The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, and describing any injuries incurred due to the event.

The headteacher will make the decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents of the details of an incident. If it is appropriate, the following will be adhered to:

- Parents will be informed of the reason why intervention was needed.
- Parents will be informed that there has been an intervention.

## Complaints

- All members of staff will be made fully aware of the consequences and legal retributions that can occur following the incorrect use of reasonable force and force.
- All complaints regarding the use of reasonable force will be investigated in a thorough and speedy manner.
- The person making the complaint is responsible to prove that their allegations are true, and therefore, it is not for the member of staff to prove that their actions were made reasonably.
- In extreme circumstances, parents may take civil action or pursue a criminal prosecution.
- In the case where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defence to any civil or criminal prosecution.
- Members of staff accused of using excessive force will not be automatically suspended as a response to the allegations. The following procedure will be adhered to:
- Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Council's Whistleblowing Policy / Allegations Against Staff Policy.
- The headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils and staff about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.
- Careful consideration will be given to whether the case warrants a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved. Advice can be sought from the LADO.
- The headteacher will always take into account whether a staff member has acted within the law when considering whether or not to take disciplinary action against a staff member involved in an incident.
- Where a member of staff is suspended, the school will ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact that can provide support and guidance.

- The school will provide pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation.

If the complaint is against the headteacher, then the chair of governors will investigate the complaint.

### **Staff Training**

Members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Pastoral Team may be further trained in CPI Safety Intervention.

### **Further Reading**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>