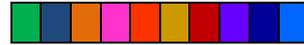


Reasonable Force



The term ‘reasonable force’ covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils:

- **‘Force’** is used either to control or restrain; e.g. breaking up a fight, or restraint to prevent violence or injury
- **‘Reasonable in the circumstances’** means using no more force than is needed
- **‘Control’** is either passive, e.g. standing between pupils, or active, e.g. leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom
- **‘Restraint’** means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control

Who can use reasonable force?

- All staff can legally use reasonable force
- Volunteers or parents accompanying students on an education trip, if authorised by the Head

Staff should use their professional judgement to make a decision to physically intervene or not and avoid causing injury, pain or humiliation.

Settings do not require parental consent to use force on a student.

When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from:

- hurting themselves or others
- damaging property or causing disorder

Some examples of this are:

- Removing disruptive pupils if they have refused an instruction to leave class, or
- Preventing pupils from:
 - Disrupting an event, trip or visit
 - Leaving the classroom where this would risk their safety or disrupt others
 - Attacking someone
- Restraining a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- Stopping a fight

Governors should ensure that staff, volunteers, parents, carers & pupils understand the settings’ behaviour policy, including the use of reasonable force.

Governors and staff should ensure they make appropriate adjustments in this policy for pupils with special education needs or disability.

All education settings should:

- Speak to parents and carers about serious incidents involving the use of force & consider how to record them, taking into account the:
 - Pupil’s behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
 - degree of force used
 - effect on the pupil and member of staff
 - pupil’s age
- Risk-assess all situations where a pupil has behaved disruptively
- Develop strategies to manage the behaviour, involving parents and carers
- Brief the staff and ensure that additional support is available
- Consider the needs of pupil’s when deciding whether staff require training to carry out their responsibilities
- Understand there are occasions when physical contact with a pupil is proper & necessary e.g.
 - providing comfort, praise or congratulation
 - demonstrating the use of a musical instrument
 - showing techniques during PE lessons
 - giving first aid

Education settings cannot use force as a punishment – this is always unlawful

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, DfE 2014 states that you must always record physical interventions used for a child under 5 years old and inform parents and carers on the same day if practicable.

For further information:

- [Use of reasonable force - Advice for Head Teachers, staff and governing bodies, DfE 2013](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2016](#)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, DfE 2017](#)