



# St Dominic's School **BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

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# Behaviour policy

## Introduction

This policy sets out how behaviour is understood and managed at St Dominic's School. All St Dominic's School staff, pupils/students, apprentices, families and stakeholders should have ownership of and a commitment to the policy.

This policy is written with reference to legislation and government guidance including:

- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - 2022](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice.](#)
- [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Anti-Bullying Policy, which is available from the Policies page of our website: [www.stdominicsschool.org.uk](http://www.stdominicsschool.org.uk).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and Articles of Association.

## Vision

At St Dominic's our vision is "To be an outstanding school that gives every child and young person the best chance to fulfil their potential, achieve ambitious goals and live life to the full".

St Dominic's School recognises the importance of a **whole school approach** to behaviour management. We also recognise the importance of understanding and being alert to pupil/student behaviour as part of effective safeguarding practice.

All those who are part of the school community should demonstrate an unfailing commitment to the values and expectations of St Dominic's, such as:

- Being respectful to each other.
- Making safe choices.
- Trying our best.
- Self-discipline, self-management of behaviour and a sense of responsibility for oneself.
- Learning from our mistakes.
- Honesty and fairness.

Pupil/student behaviour, both appropriate and inappropriate, should be managed with sensitivity and professionalism. Staff and other adults within the school's community need to constantly review and reflect upon their own values, attitudes and behaviours in order to appreciate the messages that they are giving pupils/students.

### Our Mission:

We are a school for children and young people with complex needs. We specialise in giving everyone a pathway to achieve ambitious goals and live life to the full.

### Our Ethos:

Our ethos is shaped by our six core values: I am me, I matter, I am unique, I belong, I am safe and I am prepared. We aspire to these values through our individual and collective behaviour.

**I am me:** We provide a needs-led curriculum that focuses on the individual's qualities, interests and developmental needs and enhances and supports confidence in academic subjects.

**I matter:** We are a pupil-centred school, listening to and valuing the views of pupils, students, staff and families and enable them to participate in decision making.

**I am unique:** We accept, celebrate and understand our unique identities and support individuals to flourish.

**I belong:** We are a team that respect and value each other and what we can achieve in partnership with families, communities and professionals.

**I am safe:** We protect pupils and students through a culture of trust in which everyone is supported to be responsible, make safe choices and take safe risks.

**I am prepared:** Everything we do is to inspire, empower and secure positive outcomes for all pupils and students so that they can take the next steps into the wider world equipped to achieve their potential and live life to the full.

Our staff, pupils and students and stakeholders will be engaged through a positive culture of commitment, respecting every child's unique journey, in order to achieve our strategic aims set for 2026 and beyond.

### Aims

This policy aims to:

- Establish our ethos and framework for promoting and nurturing positive behaviour among all members of the school community.
- Provide a consistent approach to understanding and managing behaviour at St Dominic's School.
- Define what we consider to be positive behaviour, including behaviour for learning.

- Define what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and discrimination.
- Outline our expectations for pupil/student behaviour.
- Summarise the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school community with regards to behaviour management.
- Outline our system of rewards and sanctions.

The principles of high quality learning behaviour are paramount. This is behaviour that most ably supports young people to engage most purposefully with their learning. This will include social communication skills, such as turn taking, active listening, responsiveness to adults and peers and high levels of engagement. In many cases, such behaviours will need to be actively taught, promoted and modelled by key adults within the overall framework of good and outstanding teaching.

At St Dominic's School we will:

- Understand that positive behaviour promotes high quality learning experiences.
- Maintain a culture and ethos that has respect for the child or young person at its centre.
- Provide an environment of calm and good order.
- Have positive expectations that pupils/students will behave well, with courtesy and with self-discipline, and that staff uphold strong professional and personal values towards each other.
- Embed effective systems and procedures to encourage and maintain positive behaviour, with a set of strategies to help staff prevent and respond to behaviours of concern.
- Recognise behaviour as communication and always treat it as such.
- Provide relevant training, structures and support for all, including families.
- Work in close partnership with families and other stakeholders to ensure that pupils/students are well supported.

### **Understanding and promoting positive behaviour**

At St Dominic's School we promote and facilitate positive behaviour by:

- Establishing a respectful learning community in which the general environment is calm, well ordered and disciplined.
- Leading by example through modelling expected behaviour, values and ethos, promoting high quality attitudes to learning in the process.
- Being proactive by highlighting and praising positive behaviour.
- Ensuring that pupils/students' voices are regularly heard and valued as part of school culture, so that they feel valued as part of the school community.
- Working together to plan individualised intervention in order to minimise behaviours of concern and create a safe and cohesive environment.
- Ensuring key information is shared and part of secure planning so that staff can avoid becoming a precipitating factor to any behaviours of concern.
- Ensuring that all stakeholders are clear with regards to the values and expectations of the school and its community.

- Introducing planned activities that are matched to pupils/students' strengths and weaknesses, with high expectations and a belief in their learning potential in order to develop the very best attitudes to learning.
- Focusing upon teaching positive communication strategies such as the 'Social Communication Programme' to aid pupils and students in their future approaches.
- Being consistent in both our approach and daily routine in order to enhance and maximise understanding and minimise any anxiety.
- Providing and creating consistent opportunities for positive feedback.
- Ensuring that adults respond to all pupil/student behaviour in a consistent, fair and cogent manner.
- Ensuring that individual Risk Assessments, Support Plans and other written support strategies for pupils/students are kept up to date and that all relevant staff are familiar with them.
- Providing regular access to high quality CPD so that all staff are trained to meet the needs of our cohort, creating an entirely child centred and empathetic approach in the process.
- Using positive behaviour support to enhance and modify pathways where appropriate and where the school can accommodate them.
- Scrutinising data to identify patterns, trends, antecedents and consequences to closely inform future planning.
- Providing structured, safe and purposeful environments and routines for pupils and students who can benefit from them and the consistency and cohesiveness they provide.
- Teaching pupils and students the appropriate strategies to be able to self-manage whilst supporting them to develop the skills of empathy, tolerance, respect for individual differences and reparation.
- Incorporating an expectation of positive behaviour across the curriculum.

## Rewards

Any system of rewards should recognise that the long-term aim must always be to encourage children and young people towards positive behaviour because of their sense of right or wrong and/or because of their self-esteem and self-satisfaction.

Across the whole school, staff encourage and support positive behaviour, by making sure that all pupils and students are aware of what is expected of them, and how they achieve their rewards. In every classroom there is a copy of the **POINTS** system and how to achieve them, and there is also a copy of the classroom rules. The classroom rules state how pupils and students should behave in a classroom and the consequences of negative behaviours. There are many visual cues for the pupils and students all around the school.

A **POINTS** system has been put in place which works by rewarding pupils/students in a lesson. In every lesson the pupil/student has the opportunity to gain 6 points for the following:

- Polite – Respect and Consideration for others
- On Task – Willing to work including Homework

In on time – Ready to work with the right equipment  
Never give up – Keep on trying  
Talk it out – Sum up your lesson  
Staying Safe – Showing safe choices and behaviour

At the end of each half term, all the **POINTS** are counted towards a reward.  
Rewards work as follows:

- Bronze Bonus– Gain an extra lesson of Leisure Curriculum
- Silver Screen – Watch a newly released Film and enjoy snacks in the Performing Arts Block
- Gold Goodies – Choose from a wide selection of small gifts from books to 3D printed toys
- Platinum Parties – All of the above plus a trip to the VIP room for gaming, treats and socialising

### **Positive Slips**

Pupils/students can receive a positive slip under the following 6 categories:

- If they are **Respectful** to others
- If they are **Responsible** for their own actions
- If they keep **Safe** by doing the right thing
- If they **Show Support** towards another pupil
- If **Above and Beyond** work is produced
- If they are **Trying Something New**

Accumulating Positive Slips counts towards other rewards at St Dominic's such as the positive slip winner of the week and a weekly entrance to VIP club.

### **Positive slip winner**

The pupil/student with the most positive slips for the week in both upper and lower school receives a £5 Amazon voucher in their respective good news assembly.

### **VIP Club**

The top ten winners of positive slips for both upper and lower school can attend the school's VIP club on Friday where they have access to a variety of games, activities, snacks and socialising. To be eligible for VIP club, pupils/students must also have **no** negative slips recorded against their name for that particular week.

Both positive and negative slips are recorded via Sleuth, which all staff have access to. The promotion of positive slips is highly reinforced from staff to pupils/students to help create an overall positive culture of achievement.

Rewards are monitored by the engagement team along with SLT and in conjunction with the school's Student Voice. Any possible amendments made to reward systems go

through a consultation process and period with both the Student Voice and the wider student body. Recommendations for improvements to reward systems are also forwarded by the medium of the Student Voice.

### **Leisure Curriculum**

Pupils and students who are up to date with their work may access the school's leisure curriculum after lunch on a Friday. The leisure curriculum aims to provide a wide range of enriching activities (sports, model making, Dungeons and Dragons, etc) for our cohort as a direct result of the hard work and input pupils and students have put in during the working week. Pupils and students who have missed some academic work will attend a catch up session before entering the leisure curriculum.

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions must be employed with due regard to the purpose, short-term and long-term implications. It is important that sanctions do not undermine a pupil/student's sense of worth. **We firmly believe that it is the behaviour that must be subject to censure and not the person.**

Sanctions will be realistic, sensitive and applied as soon as possible after the behaviour they are designed to address. They are explained fully and sensitively to the pupil/student and are relevant to the age, understanding and general aims for the person. Wherever practicable, sanctions should not be disruptive to other pupils/students.

### **Approved sanctions**

The school may use one or more of the following sanctions in response to unacceptable behaviour:

- Verbal reprimand, using the appropriate tone, volume and cadence to establish the immediate wrongdoing and constructive next steps.
- Reparation, eg undertaking a task to compensate for the poor behaviour (such as cleaning up an area that has been deliberately disrupted). The task will be relevant to the situation and appropriate to the pupil/student. Tasks will not be demeaning or futile.
- Detention. A pupil or student may be 'kept in' (eg from break time) for a reasonable period to discuss behaviours of concern and, more importantly, to formulate alternative plans and strategies to use in future scenarios that may appear to derive from a similar origin.
- Catch up. A pupil or student may be "kept in" (eg from break time) for a reasonable period to catch up on work they have missed during lesson time.
- Removal of privilege. The loss of an activity or possible reward, usually due to an increase in a pupil or student's risk assessment.
- Emails or phone calls home to parents/carers in order to discuss the behaviour and agree constructive next steps. Meetings in person may take place as a direct result from this correspondence.

- Internal Inclusion. A pupil or student may need to be removed from the general circulation of the school for a period of time in order to safely manage risk and ensure good quality education for all.
- Suspension. Judicious use of suspensions, in line with OHCAT's Exclusions Policy, may be made as necessary.

In certain situations, for example where there is an immediate safeguarding risk to pupils/students or staff as a result of a behavioural incident or where safeguarding issues come to light as a result of a behavioural incident, it may be necessary to involve outside agencies such as CAMHS, MASH or the police. St Dominic's School staff will work with police, families and pupils/students to ensure the safety of everyone within the school community.

St Dominic's has a 5 tier system for levelling behavioural incidents. The 5 tiers are as follows:

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Low Level Haptic Response
- Team Intervention

**(See appendix 2, Behaviour Levelling Matrix)**

Individual incidents are discussed during the daily behaviour debrief with a certified 'Safety Interventions' Instructor and an appropriate level of behaviour is allocated to each recorded incident. An appropriate sanction, consequence or outcome will also be recorded for each incident.

### **Forbidden sanctions**

The following sanctions towards pupils/students are **always** prohibited, either on or off the school premises:

- Corporal (i.e. physical) punishment in any form, including rough handling.
- Excessive shouting.
- Deprivation of food or drink.
- Restriction or refusal of contact with friends or familiar adults, except where it is an agreed plan or for protection.
- Wearing of distinctive or inappropriate clothing as a punishment.
- Use of or withholding medication or medical treatment.
- The locking of a pupil/student in a room at any time even when accompanied by an adult.

### **Physical intervention**

Where restrictive physical interventions are concerned, there are clear guidelines from central government regarding the use of reasonable force (see Appendix 1). These guidelines state that reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils/students hurting



themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, as well as 'people whom the Principal has temporarily put in charge of pupils/students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils/students on a school organised visit'.

St Dominic's uses the "Safety Interventions" programme from "CPI" to ensure that behaviours of concern are managed appropriately. The training aims to give staff the skills to build an effective culture of safety within the organisation. Safety interventions training is a safe, non-harmful behaviour management system designed to help professionals provide the best possible care, welfare, safety and security of individuals presenting a range of crisis behaviours. The focus of the programme is to build the knowledge and skills staff need to recognise and manage crisis behaviours. Managing these behaviours effectively using skills from the programme establishes a consistency, common philosophy and culture of safety within St Dominic's.

All new staff to St Dominic's undertake the two day 'Safety Interventions' training at foundation level and are subsequently refreshed on a yearly basis.

All incidents involving a physical intervention at St Dominic's are monitored by certified, 'Safety Interventions' trained instructors and a member of SLT. These incidents form a significant part of the engagement team meetings and inform all future planning with regards to the individual needs of the pupils and students and the interventions they may require to aid prevention in the future.

When an incident involving physical intervention has occurred, all pupils/students are given a debrief, offered a medical check (which may be refused) and parents/guardians are contacted. Staff involved must also take part in a debrief which is held by a certified, 'Safety Interventions' trained instructor at the end of each school day. During all debriefs, patterns, trends and triggers will be identified in order find the best and most cohesive working practice for any future interventions, to assist in gaining the best possible therapeutic rapport between all individuals and perhaps most importantly; prevent any further incidents involving physical intervention.

- All staff must follow St Dominic's policies and procedures related to safety interventions.
- All physical intervention should be reasonable, proportionate and least restrictive to maximise safety and minimise harm.
- Staff must consider the following legal and professional considerations before entering into any physical intervention.
  - Duty of care.
  - Best interests
  - Reasonable and proportionate.
  - Last resort and least restrictive.
  - The risk of doing something and the risk of doing nothing.
  - Human rights.

All incidents involving a physical intervention are logged on "Sleuth" at the end of each day during debrief with certified instructor present.

## **Pupil/student support systems**

At St Dominic's School pupils/students understand expectations around behaviour and what the school will do to ensure that they feel and are safe. Positive behaviour is modelled by all staff at all times and it is taught and promoted as part of the curriculum, including lessons, assemblies and tutor time. Student Voice opportunities such as Student Council enable regular discussions around what positive and unacceptable behaviours are (eg bullying, sexual harassment). Pupils/students are consulted on the type of rewards they wish to see within the school, and have worked with staff to draw up a student-facing code of conduct/behaviour policy.

The school's Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer gives details of the universal, targeted and specialist provision that is available to support pupils/students' safety and wellbeing, including interventions to support positive behaviour and effective behaviour for learning. This may include therapeutic input, targeted curriculum delivery or involvement from external agencies as appropriate.

All pupils/students are made aware of safeguarding arrangements and who they can talk to if they have concerns. There are safeguarding posters throughout the building with details of the Safeguarding team; the school has a Worries and Concerns Procedure that clearly sets out options for pupils/students to raise concerns and seek support. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is clear and is regularly discussed with pupils/students and families.

## **Transition**

At St Dominic's, we are acutely aware that behaviours of concern can happen at any point and transition times are no exception. In order to support the values and expectations of the school consistently, support staff transition with their classes around the school to ensure that vigilance is kept at all times. In addition to this, senior staff are timetabled to be present in particular areas of the school to reinforce good order when moving from class to class.

## **Off-site behaviour**

This policy also applies when pupils/students are:

- Taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity, eg school trips.
- Travelling to or from school.
- Wearing school uniform.
- In any other way identifiable as a pupil/student of our school.

St Dominic's School will also consider any behaviour incidents outside of school which:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school.
- Pose a threat to another pupil/student, staff member or member of the public.
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

In the event that sanctions are applied for any such behaviour, these will only be given out within school jurisdiction eg on school premises or on a school-organised trip.

### **Online behaviour**

Please refer to the Online Safety Policy and our Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer for full details of how St Dominic's supports our pupils/students to stay safe and develop positive behaviour habits in their online lives.

There may be occasions when a pupil/student's online behaviour requires intervention by the school. These includes behaviours that:

- Pose a threat or causes harm to themselves or another pupil/student.
- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school.
- Adversely affect the reputation of the school.
- Identify the pupil/student as a member of the school.

In such circumstances, St Dominic's will work with the pupil/student, parents/carers and any other affected parties to address the behaviour. This may include sanctions and/or supportive measures as set out above.

### **Searching, screening and confiscation**

Searching and screening pupils/students is conducted in line with the DfE's [latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

Prohibited items include (but are not limited to):

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco, cigarette papers, vapes
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images

Any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil/student) found in pupils/students' possession will be confiscated. These items will not be returned to pupils/students.

We will also confiscate any item which is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items will be returned to pupils/students after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

Daily screening of an individual may be put in place by the school's SLT for a fixed period of time if the risk posed by an individual or object meets the threshold within the school's risk assessments. Searching or screening may be conducted by any staff member once given jurisdiction by the Principal. However, all attempts will be made to

ensure that any individual staff member carrying out these duties has an established rapport with the individual in question.

## **Safeguarding**

At St Dominic's School we understand behaviour as communication and remain alert to the possibility that changes in a pupil/student's behaviour, including behaviour that falls outside of positive expectations, may indicate a safeguarding concern or other unmet need relating to the pupil/student's SEND. Where a pupil/student displays behaviour that is unusual, concerning or potentially harmful, we will both address the behaviour (through appropriate intervention including sanctions as detailed above) and seek to explore the possible cause in order to effectively support the pupil/student and the school community. Please refer to our Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy for further details.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful.
- Repeated, often over a period of time.
- Difficult to defend against.

Bullying can include:

TYPE OF BULLYING	EXAMPLE(S)
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial</li> <li>• Faith-based</li> <li>• Gendered (sexist)</li> <li>• Homophobic/biphobic</li> <li>• Transphobic</li> <li>• Disability-based</li> </ul>	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (eg gender, race, sexuality)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

TYPE OF BULLYING	EXAMPLE(S)
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

Details of our school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying are set out in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Sexual harassment and sexual violence**

St Dominic's School will ensure that all incidents of sexual harassment and/or violence are met with a suitable response and never ignored.

Pupils/students are encouraged to report anything that makes them uncomfortable, no matter how 'small' they feel it might be. Please see our Worries and Concerns Procedure for further details.

The school's response to all allegations or incidents will be:

- Proportionate
- Considered
- Supportive
- Decided on a case-by-case basis

Please refer to our Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy for more information: <https://stdominicsschool.org.uk/key-information/policies/>

### **Managing false allegations against pupils/students or staff**

Where a pupil/student makes an allegation against another pupil/student or member of staff and that allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the school will apply appropriate sanctions in line with this policy. We also recognise that deliberately invented allegations can indicate that the accuser is in need of help themselves, and will work to support all those involved in the allegation in line with our Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

### **Staff development and support**

Staff at St Dominic's undergo a full induction package, which the previously mentioned "Safety Interventions" training is part of. In addition staff will be introduced to the school's 'Social Communication Programme', 'What is Autism' training and a full safeguarding programme to ensure a cohesive approach and positive culture throughout the school.

Extra CPD is also regularly available through the weekly education meetings, Friday afternoon training, ELSA training and Drawing and talking amongst others. Staff are regularly encouraged to seek training that they feel would be beneficial for them and the

school as a whole and forward it to their line managers to be put through the school's ongoing CPD programme.

Additionally, staff at OHC&AT Academies are able to access Trust-wide training and CPD, which contributes to the organisational culture of positive behaviour CPD focusing on e. mental health and wellbeing, specific types of SEND, positive behaviour and communication, as well as effective SEND-focused safeguarding training.

## **Responsibilities**

The Local Governing Body will:

- Review and approve this policy not less than annually.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of this policy.

The Principal will:

- Promote a culture of mutual respect, trust between pupils/students and staff and the fostering of a positive learning environment.
- Review and update this policy and any attendant procedures on an annual basis.
- Implement this policy to ensure that behaviour is supported and managed consistently throughout the school.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant, high quality CPD including (Safety Interventions) training at induction and via regular refreshers, in order to support and promote positive behaviour.
- Regularly analyse behaviour data in order to discern trends, risks etc. and report on these to the OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team as part of regular key risks monitoring.

All staff will:

- Promote a culture of positive behaviour within the school.
- Ensure they are familiar with and adhere to all relevant behaviour programmes and risk assessments.
- Undertake required and relevant CPD to ensure that they are able to effectively support pupils'/students' needs and communication preferences, including understanding and responding to behaviours that may challenge.
- Report and record any incidents promptly via the correct channels.

Pupils/students will:

- Be supported to understand and fully participate within the school's values and expectations at induction and throughout their time with us.
- Have opportunities to feed back on our behaviour culture, including reward systems, via Student Voice, student surveys and tutor time.
- Be expected to model and uphold our core values of respect, safety, trying our best, self-discipline, honesty and the responsibility to learn from our mistakes throughout their time at St Dominic's school.

Parents/carers will:

- Work with the school to support their child's engagement in effective behaviour for learning.
- Inform the school of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child's behaviour.
- Discuss any concerns with the class teacher promptly.

### **Monitoring and implementation**

This policy will be updated by the Principal and reviewed and approved by the Local Governing Body not less than annually.

### **Related policies and procedures**

Anti-Bullying Policy  
Attendance Policy  
Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy  
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy  
Online Safety Policy  
Exclusions Policy  
Families and Visitors Code of Conduct  
Health & Safety Policy  
Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer  
Relationships and Sex Education Policy  
Risk Assessment Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Staff Mental Wealth, Health and Wellbeing Policy  
Student Mental Wealth, Health and Wellbeing Policy  
Substance Misuse Policy

## **APPENDIX 1: Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for Principals, Staff and Governing Bodies**

### **About this guidance**

This is non-statutory advice from the Department for Education. It is intended to provide clarification on the use of force to help school staff feel more confident about using this power when they feel it is necessary and to make clear the responsibilities of head teachers and governing bodies in respect of this power.

### **What legislation does this guidance relate to?**

Education and Inspections Act 2006.

### **Who is this advice for?**

This advice is aimed at governing bodies, Principals and school staff in **all schools**

### **Key points**

- School staff have a legal power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

“All schools” include Academies, Free Schools, independent schools and all types of maintained schools.

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

- i. 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/students.
- ii. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil/student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a pupil/student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- iii. ‘Reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed.
- iv. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils/students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils/students or blocking a pupil/student’s path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil/student by the arm out of a classroom.
- v. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil/student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils/studentd are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.



- vi. 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/student.

### Who can use reasonable force?

- i. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- ii. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Principal has temporarily put in charge of pupils/students, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils/students on a school organised visit.

### When can reasonable force be used?

- i. Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils/students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- ii. In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils/students or to restrain them.
- iii. 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.

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

Schools 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/student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- Prevent a pupil/student leaving the classroom where allowing them to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- Prevent a pupil/student from attacking a member of staff or another pupil/student, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- Restrain a pupil/student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- Use force as a punishment – **it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.**

### Communicating the school's approach to the use of force

- i. Every school is required by law to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents/carers and pupils/students. The governing body should notify the Principal that it expects the school behaviour policy to include the power to use reasonable force.
- ii. There is no legal requirement to have a policy on the use of force but it is good practice to set out, in the behaviour policy, the circumstances in which force might be used. For example, it could say that teachers will physically separate

- pupils/students found fighting or that if a pupil/student refuses to leave a room when instructed to do so, they will be physically removed.
- iii. Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with SEN.
  - iv. Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a pupil/student.
  - v. Schools should **not** have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil/student, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil/student causing harm.
  - vi. By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils/students and parents/carers are clear about when force might be used, the school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

### **Using force**

A panel of experts identified that certain restraint techniques presented an **unacceptable risk** when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:

- The 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing;
- The 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest; and
- The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.

### **Staff training**

Schools need to take their own decisions about staff training. The Principal should consider whether members of staff require any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and should consider the needs of the pupils/students when doing so. Some local authorities provide advice and guidance to help schools to develop an appropriate training programme.

### **Telling parents when force has been used on their child**

It is good practice for schools to speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force and to consider how best to record such serious incidents. It is up to schools to decide whether it is appropriate to report the use of force to parents. In deciding what a serious incident is, teachers should use their professional judgement and also consider the following:

- The pupil/student's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident.
- The degree of force used.
- The effect on the pupil/student or member of staff.
- The pupil/student's age

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

- i. All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- ii. Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- iii. When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is **not** for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- iv. Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff” guidance where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.
- v. Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- vi. If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- vii. Governing bodies should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.
- viii. As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

### What about other physical contact with pupils/students?

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

- When comforting a distressed pupil/student;
- When a pupil/student 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.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I'm worried that if I use force a pupil/student or parent/carer could make a complaint against me. Am I protected?**

Yes, if you have acted lawfully. If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations.

### **How do I know whether using a physical intervention is 'reasonable'?**

The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result.

### **What about school trips?**

The power may be used where the member of staff is lawfully in charge of the pupils/students, and this includes while on school trips.

### **Can force be used on pupils/students with SEN or disabilities?**

Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil/student concerned.

### **I'm a female teacher with a Year 10 class - there's no way I'd want to restrain or try to control my pupils. Am I expected to do so?**

There is a power, not a duty, to use reasonable force so members of staff have discretion whether or not to use it. However, teachers and other school staff have a duty of care towards their pupils/students and it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty.

### **Are there any circumstances in which a teacher can use physical force to punish a pupil/student?**

No. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, which is illegal.

## Associated Resources

The latest DfE guidance can be found here:

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

**Appendix 2: Behaviour Levelling Matrix**

	Behaviours requiring Non-physical interventions			Behaviours requiring physical Interventions	
<b>Behaviour levels</b>	<b>Level 1 –</b> This is considered to be a low level behaviour with a low severity outcome	<b>Level 2 –</b> This is a more persistent behaviour with a medium severity outcome. At this level it is quite likely to impact the environment and learning of others	<b>Level 3 –</b> High level of risk behaviour that presents an imminent or immediate risk. A crisis event where the individual has lost all rationale and staff need to seek immediate assistance.	<b>Low Level Haptic Response</b> A response to risk behaviour that requires communication through touch to prevent harm to self or others.	<b>Team Intervention</b> A response to risk behaviour that requires <b>SAFETY INTERVENTION</b> holding skills to prevent imminent harm to self or others.
<b>Possible behaviour types</b>	Swearing, Lesson avoidance, Non-compliance, Impulsive physical action	Abscending, Verbal threats towards others, Physical violence	Bringing in dangerous or banned items, High level of absconding, Conduct, Physical violence with intent to harm.	Emotional outburst, Peer altercation, Property misuse, Vulnerability	Any demonstration of risk behaviour where immediate or imminent harm to self or others is present
<b>Safety Interventions and PBS</b>	Rule reminders, Time-outs, PBS, Supportive approach with positive options given, Use of SCP, POINTs and stars reminders	De-escalation, Communicative, Rapport building, Directive approach such as setting limits	Take all threats seriously, Seek assistance, Team approach	Outside principles, Block and move, Physical positioning, Disengagement skills, Any low level holding skill	Medium level seated and standing, High level seated and standing, Medium and high levels of children's control position, Advanced holding skills including 3 <sup>rd</sup> person and emergency floor holding.

<b>Possible Consequences</b>	Verbal reprimand Time out Reflection time Detention Catch up Loss of privilege	Any level 1 consequence Internal inclusion Heads of upper or lower school informed Contact home Risk assessment updated	Any level 2 consequence SSP (Safety and Support Plan) Fixed term exclusion Permanent exclusion SLT consultations around next steps	Any level 1 or 2 consequence + Staff and student debrief Parents informed	Any level 1 ,2 or 3 consequence + Staff and student debrief Medical Check Parents informed
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