JARROW SCHOOL

Excellence in Education

Policy Title: **Restrictive intervention, including use of reasonable force policy**

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Contents

1. Policy Guidelines …… pg3
2. Legal Framework …… pg3
3. Who can use reasonable force? …… pg3
4. What is reasonable force? …… pg4
5. When can schools use reasonable force? …… pg4
6. Power to search pupils without consent …… pg5
7. Seclusion..... pg5
8. Risk assessment/support plans …… pg6
9. Contacting parents/carers …… pg6
10. Recording …… pg7
11. Complaints …… pg7

Appendix 1 …… pg8

1. Policy Guidelines

All staff at Jarrow School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being.

Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures. This policy should be read in conjunction with associated policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2. Legal Framework

The principal legislation to which this guidance relates are:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

3. Who can use reasonable force?

The DfE Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026) allows all staff at a school to use reasonable force to keep children safe. It also allows other adults in the school to use physical interventions, where reasonable, proportionate and necessary to ensure the safety of children. This might include:

- classroom assistants
- care workers
- midday supervisors
- specialist support assistants
- escorts
- caretakers
- people whom the head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents/carers accompanying students on a school organised visit

The right for school staff to use reasonable force is further set out in the DFE document Behaviour in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff which states that members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to:

- prevent pupils committing an offence
- injuring themselves or others
- damaging property
- maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among pupils

Positive Handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful or in an emergency situation.

4. What is reasonable force?

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed.

Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten by the Department of Education Teacher Standards.

- The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions that can involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed and applied for the shortest period of time necessary.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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

5. When can schools use reasonable force?

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 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 on the school premises; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot lawfully use force as punishment. Restraint must not compromise airway, breathing, or circulation; avoid neck or abdomen pressure and minimize risk on the ground. If ground restraint happens unintentionally, reposition promptly.

Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. Additionally, schools should not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils. School leaders

should adopt sensible policies which allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact.

6. Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Head teachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items":

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- vapes
- 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
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property

Reasonable force may only be used to conduct a search for items prohibited by law. It must not be used to search for items that are banned only under school rules.

The power to search without consent may also apply to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

7. Seclusion

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Head teachers and authorised staff can seclude a student for the purposes of searching. Seclusion is defines as;

a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving

Secluisoin will only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion will not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced,

the pupil should be allowed to leave. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting duties'. Seclusion, as defined in this guidance, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom. Schools should refer to the Behaviour in schools guidance for further information on these and other disciplinary measures.

8. Risk assessment/support plans

Pupils who require reasonable force regularly may require an individual risk assessment/support plan. This will be communicated with parents/carers and reviewed and updated accordingly. We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- the environment
- body language
- communication

The risk assessment/support plan may also include:

- highlighting reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict or to diffuse a situation and holds to be used if necessary
- briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered
- involving the parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take

Please note: There may be circumstances where use of reasonable force may be required in an emergency situation such as stopping a child from falling or running in front of traffic.

9. Contacting parents/carers

We will contact parents/carers to share incidents as appropriate. Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as practicable (endeavour same day) following a significant incident and provided with a written account of what happened. This action should be recorded.

In deciding what is a serious incident, school leaders will use their professional judgment and consider the:

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

10. Recording

School will record the following details as a minimum, following the use of force, seclusion or non-force related restraints:

• names of pupil and staff directly involved
• any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
• time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
• brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
• brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
• any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts Staff should record all incidents of reasonable force in accordance with school policy and report these to the Head teacher.

11. Complaints

Please refer to the school complaints policy
By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils 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.

Appendix 1

When might appropriate force be necessary?

Examples include where a pupil is;

- Committing an offence;
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or amongst its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils fighting;
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB. This will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.