



Use of Reasonable Force

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Context

Oaklands School is a co-educational, independent SEN day school in Hungerford, West Berkshire, established for pupils aged 5 – 16 years with special and individual needs. We offer places to children with an EHCP in place, via Reading and West Berkshire Local Authorities.

Our special school offers a warm and friendly environment for learning, with specialist support for pupils with unique learning profiles and aspires to deliver an outstanding integrated model of education, therapy, and therapeutic care to pupils. Pupils at Oaklands School include pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC); Communication Difficulties; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Sensory Processing Needs. Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) may compound difficulties in some instances but will not be the primary area of need.

Typically, pupils at Oaklands School have a rate of acquisition and/or degree of retention of knowledge and educational skills across all National Curriculum Core Subjects significantly below age related expectations (ARE). Many pupils might have been out of education for periods of time and might have experienced trauma in their lives.

Reasonable force refers to physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. This is done to prevent or stop a pupil from committing any offence, causing personal injury to any person including the pupil themselves, damage to property, or disruption to education and good order at the school.

At Oaklands School, we are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of bullying or harassment so that all pupils can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat each other and members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed and orderly atmosphere.

Oaklands House School fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This policy is a whole school policy and applies to all pupils including those in the EYFS and boarders. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following the guidance in this policy.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school including governors.

This policy has been written using advice taken from Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies DfE 2013. The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND). Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

Consultation on use of reasonable force and restraint in schools

The DfE has been asking for schools' views on how reasonable force and restraint are currently used in schools. Responses will be used to inform future amendments to the current guidance.

<https://schoolclerk.co.uk/2023/02/17/new-consultation-on-use-of-reasonable-force-and-restraint-in-schools-friday-17-february-2023/>

For the Purposes of this Policy Document

- Reasonable force is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances.
- Physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force to protect/prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.
- Injury means 'significant injury;' this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others, by willful or reckless behaviour, and self - poisoning.

Who can use Reasonable Force?

- Under the direction of the headteacher, all members of Oaklands school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on an educational visit.
- The decision about whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention using Team Teach.
- New staff, who have not yet received training in physical intervention should only restrain pupils in support of another trained member of staff, unless there is imminent danger, and no other staff are available to support.

When can Reasonable Force be used?

Reasonable force can be used:

- to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, from committing an offence, or from causing disorder.
- to remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- to prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the learning of others.
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground.
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

When can Reasonable Force not be used?

- Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this

policy.

- Staff should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues.
- In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used, for the minimum time required to calm down the situation.
- Whenever possible, help should be summoned from colleagues.
- Pupils should never be involved in restraint.
- Reasonable Force cannot be used as a form of punishment.
- Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed.

What to do when reasonable force is needed

- Approach the pupil calmly but firmly.
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout.

Method of Restraint

The method of restraint employed must use methods taught in Team Teach training, using the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following. Oaklands staff are expected to complete levels 1 and 2, in this respect.

Restraint must not:

- involve hurting the pupil.
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil.
- restrict the pupil's breathing.
- involve contact with sexually sensitive areas.
- involve locking the pupil in a room.

NB: It is illegal to lock a pupil in a room, whether by themselves or with staff

During any incident, the person restraining should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil.
- cause the minimum level of restriction of movement.

- reduce the danger of any accidental injury.
- end the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the pupil such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting.

Physical restraint can be:

- Partial: restricting and preventing a particular movement (kicking, punching etc.).
- Total: as in the case of immobilization.

Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff:

- physically interposing between pupils.
- blocking a pupil's path.
- Holding.
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm.
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or in extreme circumstances
- using more restrictive holds.

Actions

- Summon help immediately. A pupil can be sent to get another adult.
- Ensure a free passage of air through airways.
- Be aware of your own feelings and try to stay calm.
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way.
- Provide a soft surface if possible.
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil that could cause injury.
- Monitor the pupil's respiration, circulation, and state of consciousness.

But Do Not

- Try to manage on your own.
- Stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply.
- Straddle the pupil.
- Push their arms up their back.
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head.

- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck).
- Use of facedown holds.

Recording Incidents

- Minor or everyday use of reasonable force does not need to be recorded. For example, very young children running off in the playground and being guided back to the line by the teacher or assistant.
- All more serious incidents involving the use of physical restraint must be reported to the DSL, recorded on MyConcern (currently) and on the MIS iSAMS (implementation December 2023).

Informing Parents and Carers

- Staff need to use their professional judgement on whether to inform a parent, depending on the seriousness of the incident, the details on the individual risk-assessment and PILS.
- In a serious incident where a member of staff has had to physically restrain a pupil, the parent will be informed on the day and the conversation must be followed up in writing to the parent (email or letter by agreement).

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

- All complaints about the use of force should be recorded and thoroughly, speedily, and appropriately investigated by the DSL or Deputy DSL under the direction of the headteacher.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defense to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- 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.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored:

- through the analysis of records, including the Headteacher's weekly report to the LAB via the dashboard.
- reading of records of events.
- discussion with staff and where appropriate,
- discussion with pupils.

All incidents of physical intervention will be reported to the School Board on a weekly basis and discussed in the LAB meetings, which are 6 times per school year, with formal monitoring visits from the Chair and the CQS Committee Chair.

The policy will be reviewed by the Chair of the School Board, working with the headteacher.