

Use of Reasonable Force and Physical Restraint

Tring Park School does not encourage the use of force or restraint and these would be used only very rarely and in special circumstances.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'.

All forms of physical punishment are unacceptable and could render a member of staff liable for prosecution. Corporal punishment is prohibited at all times.

As stated above, in special circumstances a member of staff may have to use force to control pupils or to restrain them. 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 pupil 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.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Reasonable force may be used for self-defence where there is a risk of injury or where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline e.g.

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- pupils are fighting
- pupils are, or are about to, damage property
- pupils are running in a way that is likely to cause injury
- a pupil tries to leave the class/school
- a pupil persistently refuses to leave the classroom when ordered to do so
- a pupil is seriously disrupting the lesson

Reasonable force may also have to be used if the Principal or senior staff are required to search for prohibited items without the pupil's consent. Details of prohibited items can be found in section six of the school's Behaviour Policy.

Before intervening physically, a member of staff, wherever possible, should tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. The member of staff should try and get help from another member(s) of staff and continue to try and communicate with the child throughout the incident, making clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. Do not give the impression that you have lost your temper or are acting out of anger or frustration or to punish the pupil. The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour. Any force should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Physical intervention may involve:

- physically interposing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path
- holding
- pushing or pulling
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm

- guiding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

Staff should not:

- hold a pupil around the neck, by the collar or in any way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- slap, punch, kick or trip up a pupil
- twist or force limbs against a joint
- hold or pull a pupil by the hair or ear
- hold a pupil face down on the ground
- hold a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent
- use 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;
- use the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest;
- use the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose
- lock a pupil in a room for any reason (including pupil or staff safety); this is potentially illegal and isolation is not an appropriate form of restraint

Sometimes it may be dangerous to try and restrain a pupil. In this instance staff should remove other pupils, send for help and try and make the area as safe as possible whilst continuing to try to communicate with the pupil.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving pupils with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, staff should in considering the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these pupils.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 the school may need to make reasonable adjustments for these pupils. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, it is hoped that the school can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.

All staff at the school have the authority to use force when reasonable, and this extends to any other person whom the Principal has given the responsibility to be in charge or in control of pupils. Staff can also use this power when they are lawfully in charge of pupils but off the school premises i.e. on a school trip.

Following serious incidents involving the use of force, the school will speak to the parents/guardians concerned. It is up to the school to decide whether it is an appropriate occasion to report the use of force to parents.

Such serious incidents involving the use of force will also be recorded by the school.