

The Skills Hub BEHAVIOUR POLICY

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Behaviour policy

Introduction

This policy sets out how behaviour is understood and managed at The Skills Hub. All The Skills Hub 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: <https://ohcat.org/>

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Vision

The Skills Hub aims to be a safe, compassionate and inclusive learning community that recognises the uniqueness of its learners and celebrates their success. We are dedicated to helping our young people develop the knowledge and skills that reflects the best of their abilities, that will enable them to sustain healthy relationships, become equipped to live an enriched life.

Our procedures and high expectations aligned with our 101 Behaviour Strategies are designed to impact positively on teaching and learning with the aim of raising standards of behaviour and academic achievement.

Our Core values:

- **Excellence** – *of outstanding quality or extremely good*
- **Resilience** – *the ability to recover from or adjust to difficulties or change*
- **Compassion** - *the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering*

- **Growth** – *the ability to thrive on challenge and failure as springboard to growth and development of abilities*
- **Inclusion** – *the practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources regardless of background or disability*
- **Recognition** – *the appreciation and validation of an achievement, service or ability*

Aims

This policy aims to:

- To provide a consistent approach to behaviour management
- To help young people grow holistically and become positive, responsible and increasingly independent members of the school and local community.
- Define a clear outline of what is unacceptable behaviour, including bullying
- Summarise the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school community in regard to behaviour management
- Outline our system of rewards and sanctions
- To acknowledge and celebrate good behaviour at every opportunity

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 The Skills Hub, 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.

The TSH Approach

Engagement is paramount

This is how we seek to renew our students' mind-set.

We have a chance to intervene and become influential role models in the lives of the young people. Our positioning enables us to not only know our students on a deeper level, but we become the emotionally available adults for our students. Once we have built trust with our young people, we are then able to guide them and show them a better way of life and potentially show them the benefits of school and education.

In order for The Skills Hub to be intentional about our measured outcomes in conjunction with Compassion, Intervention and Engagement, we must be clear about our steps to success.

Steps to Success

Intent:

Engage all students: even if it is just one student falling by the wayside, we must do all we can to continually engage and get back that young person. We must work relentlessly with every young person in need. Every student deserves a fighting chance despite of their story or mistakes. We cannot take comfort in the fact that the majority of our students are abiding by the rules and getting their work done, we must be intentional in remembering the ones who are hardest to engage and be willing to do whatever it takes to make them feel a part of us.

Implement:

Actively recognise the efforts of young people. We seek to place emphasis on positive behaviour as opposed to negative behaviour.

Celebrating our young people's work and efforts shows them that we do not just value them, but we value the work that they do. This is foundational; ours is a culture of praise, a culture where we speak affirmations and positivity.

Our interventions and planned sessions promote self-belief, determination and resilience. We take the focus away from behaviour and we put it on the root causes, helping the young person to focus on the root causes, instead of seeing things at surface level.

We focus on thought patterns, feelings, and how our thoughts and feelings dictate and influence actions. In times past we have focused on actions, forgetting that actions/behaviour is not the first step in the process.

Impact:

Celebrate their achievements, especially when we see them proactively challenge their own behaviours! We must ensure that we celebrate these as WINS. This impact, while appearing temporary to us, will build and build until it becomes more permanent. This may not happen in our time but be very sure, it will come! Because of this, our young people will view themselves through a more forgiving lens. Once our young people realise what they can be, they will naturally pull away from the negative surroundings.

Compassion

Compassion is an utter shock to the system for a young person who has never been accepted for who they are. Young people from challenging backgrounds are not accustomed to being treated with compassion. It is unusual for them. If you treat a young person with disdain every time they step out of line or misbehave, you are not only showing them how you see them, but you are also teaching that person how to view themselves.

*Compassion says, I see your faults, I see your behaviour,
I see every time you go wrong, and I am still here.*

Compassion says, I am humbly intrigued to understand why you do what you do. I come without judgment to let you know that I am not turned off or turned away from you because of your behaviour.

Compassion says, I've seen your worst and I'm still here. The compassionate approach breaks down barriers *before* intervention and behavioural strategies have to be implemented.

This has been one of the major youth struggles - the self-sabotaging mentality, the constant 'hate talk' and negative narratives they heap upon themselves. When compassion is the first move, we build a good foundation to see guaranteed change in young people.

The compassionate approach interrupts the common way of thinking.

Our approach goes against all things punitive.

The question 'does exclusion work or not' becomes irrelevant. Instead, we begin to understand the point that you do not exclude until you have made a determined effort to redeem and reform.

We aim to reduce fixed term exclusions by delivering onsite sessions which provides space to reflect, be challenged and learn new coping strategies.

Classroom behaviour management

Teaching and support staff are responsible for setting the tone and context for positive behaviour within the classroom.

They will:

- Create and maintain a stimulating environment that encourages students to be engaged
- Display the student code of conduct and their own classroom rules where applicable
- Develop a positive relationship with students, which may include:
 - Greeting students in the morning/at the start of lessons
 - Establishing clear routines
 - Communicating expectations of behaviour in ways other than verbally
 - Highlighting and promoting good behaviour
 - Concluding the day positively and starting the next day afresh
 - Having a plan for dealing with low-level disruption
 - Using positive reinforcement

General understanding and promotion of positive behaviour

At The Skills Hub we promote and facilitate positive behaviour by:

- Being proactive by highlighting and praising positive behaviour.
- Ensuring that pupil/student voice is regularly heard and valued as part of school culture, so that pupils/students feel valued as part of the school community.
- Working to minimise behaviours that challenge e.g. avoiding confrontation, avoiding 'triggers' or background factors known to present difficulties to the pupil/student.
- Ensuring that everyone is clear about which behaviours are appropriate and which are inappropriate, i.e. ensuring a clear distinction between behaviour which is to be reinforced and that which is to be discouraged or ignored.
- 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 in the most suitable format for each pupil/student (this may help pupils/students influence others without dysregulation).
- Helping the child or young person to anticipate the sequence of daily events and activities to maximise understanding and minimise anxiety.
- Providing consistent positive feedback.
- Ensuring that adults respond to pupil/student behaviour in a consistent and fair 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.

- Encouraging adult tolerance and understanding of children's or young people's specific difficulties.
- Paying attention to antecedents and consequences associated with behaviour.
- Providing structured, predictable environments and routines for pupils/students who benefit from them.
- Monitoring pupil/student stress levels and offering 'escape' mechanisms.
- Teaching pupils/students appropriate self-management strategies and supporting them to develop the skills of empathy, tolerance, respect for individual differences and conflict resolution.
- 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.

Positive behaviour will be rewarded with:

- Verbal recognition/praise
- Merits
- ePraise rewards system
- Letters, postcards or phone calls home to parents/carers
- Special responsibilities/privileges

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:

- A verbal reprimand - 'being told off', using a firm voice and tone to establish the immediate wrongdoing and constructive next steps.
- Timeout with a member of staff

- Referring to a skills coach
- Reparation e.g. 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.
- Restriction – a pupil/student may be 'kept in' (e.g. from playtime) for a reasonable period, or they may experience temporary removal of privileges. This may include completing work during break or lunchtime.
- Referring the student to a senior member of staff
- Letters or phone calls home to parents/carers
- Agreeing a behaviour contract
- Suspensions – in line with OHCAT's Exclusions Policy, may be made as necessary.

Fixed period suspensions

Fixed period suspension and permanent exclusions are only used in extreme circumstances. A fixed period suspension is where your child is temporarily removed from school.

Suspensions will be the last step in The Skills Hub's approach to managing student behaviour. Exclusions will be under the direction of the Senior Leadership Team and will be granted in exceptional circumstances without review in incidences which the student's level of severity of risk is the most appropriate course of action. The Skills Hub will follow the statutory guidance as detailed in the Education Act. The Skills Hub will support all students with a reintegration programme on their date of return to the school community.

If a child has been excluded for a fixed period, schools should set and mark work for the first 5 school days. Some reasons for a fixed period of exclusion:

- violent or threatening behaviour towards a member of staff or another student.
- damage or threat of damage to school property.
- sexual misconduct, racist behaviour and bullying.
- persistent disruptive behaviour
- drug or alcohol related incidents.
- carrying an offensive weapon.

Permanent exclusion means your child is expelled and alternative education sought. This outcome is rarely exercised and would be explored only where all other means of support has been exhausted.

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 the police. The Skills Hub staff will work with police, families and pupils/students to ensure the safety of everyone within the school community.

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 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

Occasionally the need may arise when a child, despite warnings to change unacceptable behaviour, may require the intervention of physical restraint. This is used only as a last resort by trained staff (Team Teach). Parents will always be informed when this has occurred, and it will only take place when the safety of the child or other children is at risk. We record any such physical restraint by a member of staff in our bound and numbered book.

Where restrictive physical interventions are concerned, there are clear guidelines from central government regarding the use of reasonable force (see Appendix 1). 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'. 'Force' is divided into two categories – control and restraint. Control refers to either passive or physical contact, for example, blocking a pupil or student's path to a busy road (passive) or leading a pupil/student by the hand away from a situation (active). 'Restraint' refers to physically engaging with a pupil/student as part of any necessary measures in order to bring a situation under control.

Where intervention in any behaviour is required, **interventions that do not require physical interventions are desirable because they are ultimately more sustainable and dignified**. However, there may be occasions when the use of reasonable force may be necessary. These fall into two categories:

a. **Control**: *if it is anticipated that, as part of a considered and agreed approach to the management of a pupil or student's behaviour, elements of reasonable force (passive or active) may be required to support the pupil/student towards more positive*

behaviour, then such physical interventions must be detailed as part of a regularly reviewed written protocol. Any physical intervention outside of this written protocol must be recorded separately.

*b. **Restraint**: this refers to physical interventions that are not pre-planned and are a proportionate and appropriate response to an unforeseen circumstance. As such, they should be treated as emergency physical interventions, as they refer to the use of any **reasonable** force necessary to bring a situation under control.*

Physical restraint will ONLY be used:

- Rarely and as a last resort
- When all other possible alternatives have been considered
- As part of a 'total response' to the pupil or student's behaviour (i.e. not in isolation)
- When the purpose of physical restraint is to restore safety
- When it can be justified as being in the paramount interests of the child and/or when the child is considered to be in immediate danger of harming self or others
- By staff who have been fully trained in positive behaviour management and appropriate de-escalation techniques – at The Skills Hub we use Team Teach
- When it can be justified as a reasonable and responsible way of responding to a pupil/student's severely dysregulated behaviour.

The use of force is reasonable if it is **appropriate to the consequences it is intended to prevent**. This means that the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired results.

Incident report forms must be completed and submitted to a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible following any physical intervention, and must be accurately logged.

The Skills Hub Team Teach Approach

Team Teach describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. It is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, staff deployment and restraint accounting for only a small part of the framework.

95% Positive behavioural Support:

- Use of spaces
- Management of time
- Changes in environment
- Stance, postures, and gestures
- Facial expressions
- Eyes
- Voice

5% physical contact:

- Prompts, comfort, and reassuring touch
- Guide, escorts and hold
- Physical restraint and restrictive physical interventions
- Reasonable, proportionate, and necessary

All staff will:

- Adhere to relevant individual student risk assessments and support plans
- Use a tiered approach in de-escalation responses
- Use distractions
- Maintain calm in self and environment
- Use Team-Teach positive behaviour non-physical strategies
- Use Team-Teach physical intervention if necessary
- Record incidents on SIMS/MyConcern including physical interventions
- Report incidents to a member of SLT
- Engage in Team Teach training as directed by SLT, including regular refreshers, to ensure their skills are properly maintained and developed
- Staff involved in an incident to participate in a debriefing session

Pupil/student support systems

At The Skills Hub 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; 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 (e.g. bullying, sexual harassment). 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.

Where necessary, support and advice will also be sought from specialist teachers, an educational psychologist, medical practitioners and/or others or external agencies to identify or support specific needs.

When acute needs are identified in a student, we will liaise with external agencies and plan support programmes for that child. We will work with parents to create the plan and review it on a regular basis.

All 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; every student has a trusted adult they can talk to; the school has a Worries and Concerns Procedure that clearly sets out options for students to raise concerns and seek support. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is clear and is regularly discussed with students and families.

Off-site behaviour

This policy also applies when pupils/students are:

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

The Skills Hub 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

Risk assessments may be applied where a student has misbehaved off-site when representing the school, such as on a school trip or on the bus on the way to or from school or if attending an off-site alternative provision programme.

In the event that sanctions are applied for any such behaviour, these will only be given out within school jurisdiction (e.g. 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 The Skills Hub 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 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, The Skills Hub 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

Any prohibited items found in students' possession will be confiscated. These items will not be returned to students.

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

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

All students are searched at the beginning of the school day by paired staff. The Skills Hub has the statutory power to search, confiscate, retain, or dispose of any items or student possession where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that students may have prohibited items. Staff will use their legal power to seize any items they consider harmful or detrimental to the discipline of the school. Students who refuse to comply with school searching, screening and confiscation policy will be referred to a member of SLT.

Prohibited items include:

- 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.

Safeguarding

At The Skills Hub we understand behaviour as communication and remain alert to the possibility that changes in pupil/student 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	DEFINITION
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"> • Racial • Faith-based • Gendered (sexist) • Homophobic/biphobic • Transphobic • Disability-based 	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g., gender, race, sexuality)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
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

The Skills Hub 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://theskillshub.org/policies>

Managing allegations against pupils/students or staff

Please refer to our Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy for full details of how The Skills Hub responds to pupil/student allegations of abuse against staff or other pupils/students.

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

Our staff are provided with training on managing behaviour as part of their on-going professional development. CPD includes:

- Attachment, separation and loss
- Trauma informed practice

Additionally, staff at OHCAT Academies are able to access Trust-wide training and CPD, which contributes to the organisational culture of positive behaviour CPD focusing on e.g. 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 Team Teach 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 in the school behaviour culture, at induction and throughout their time with us.
- Have opportunities to feedback on our behaviour culture, including reward systems, via School Council, student surveys and tutor time.
- Be expected to model and uphold our core values of respect, kindness, honesty and fairness throughout their time at The Skills Hub.

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
E-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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. ‘Reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed.
- iv. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. 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.
- v. 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.

- 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.

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 such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

- i. Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils 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 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 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 playground; and
- Restrain a pupil 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 and pupils. 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 found fighting or that if a pupil 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 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, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.
- vi. By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils and parents 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 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's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- The degree of force used
- The effect on the pupil or member of staff
- The child's age

What happens if a pupil 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?

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

- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil 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 or parent 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, and this includes while on school trips.

Can force be used on pupils 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 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 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?

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: Written statement of behaviour principles

- Every student understands they have the right to feel safe, valued and respected, and learn free from the disruption of others.
- All students, staff and visitors are free from any form of discrimination
- Staff and volunteers set an excellent example to students at all times
- Rewards, sanctions and reasonable force are used consistently by staff, in line with the behaviour policy
- The behaviour policy is understood by students, staff and parents
- The exclusions policy explains that exclusions will only be used as a last resort, and outlines the processes involved in permanent and fixed-term exclusions
- Students are helped to take responsibility for their actions
- Families are involved in behaviour incidents to foster good relationships between the school and students' home life

The Senior Leadership Team also emphasises that violence or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated in any circumstances.

Behaviour Response Flow Chart

