



Use of “Reasonable Force”

THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION 2024
THESE CAN BE FOUND ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE HERE:
<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is never used at St Edmund’s School, nor is it threatened.

Various actions involving physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate and should be avoided. These include all forms of manhandling or physical force directed at the pupil:

- pushing
- grabbing
- pulling
- striking

and include the imposition of physical discomfort or distress, and the threatening of the same.

Reasonable Force

The Education Act 1996 allows staff to use reasonable force in order to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence
- causing personal injury to or damaging the property of any person including him/herself
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at St Edmund’s.

This includes teaching staff and all support staff to whom the Head has delegated the authority to exert control over or have charge of pupils.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) p45 states

“There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges 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. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. ‘Reasonable’ in these circumstances means ‘using no more force than is needed’. The use of force may involve 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 the classroom.”

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792fff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

Staff should also read:

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

The following sets out how to support children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties who are at risk of restrictive intervention in special education settings, however all schools and colleges may find the information helpful:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention>

Deciding whether to use force

Staff should only use force when:

- the potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force;
- the chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low;
- the risk associated with not using force outweighs that of using force.

Using force

- It is important for staff to use the **minimum force** necessary to achieve the desired result.
- In practice, staff must
 - give a clear oral warning to the pupil that force may have to be used;

- be aware that any form of restraint that is likely to injure a pupil (particularly anything that could constrict breathing) should only be used in extreme emergencies and where there is no viable alternative;
- where possible not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.
- Consider the particular vulnerabilities of individual students (see “Vulnerable Groups” below)

Detailed and up to date records (see Appendix 1) should also be kept of any incidents where force is used and a copy of these records lodged with the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Parents of the pupil in question will always be informed by the school of such an incident at the first opportunity.

Susceptible Groups

At St Edmund’s we recognise the particular needs and sensitivities of individuals. This is acutely relevant in the context of the use of reasonable force.

Staff must be mindful the following passage in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)* p45-6:

“When using ‘reasonable force’ in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems or with medical conditions, schools and colleges should in considering the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 (see paragraphs 86-93), for example in relation to making reasonable adjustments and their Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents and carers, schools and colleges can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use ‘reasonable force’”.

EOC

September 2024

Reviewed:

1. June 2018
2. September 2018
3. September 2019
4. September 2020
5. September 2021
6. September 2022
7. September 2023
8. September 2024

Review Date:

September 2025

Appendix 1

USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS: INCIDENT RECORD

Details of pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff (name, class)
Date, time and location of incident
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used
Reason for using force and description of force used
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention required
Reasons for making a record of the incident
Follow up, including post incident support and any disciplinary action against pupils
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies

When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed

Has any complaint been lodged? (Details should not be recorded here) Y / N

Report compiled by:

Name and role:

Signature:

Date:

Report countersigned by:

Name and role:

Signature:

Date: