



CLARENDON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Together we shine



Reasonable Force Policy

Reviewed:	PFP Subcommittee
Agreed (FGB):	Summer 2026
Next Review Due:	Summer 2030

Headteacher:

Mrs V. Chatterjee

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children and adults at Clarendon Primary School are kept as safe as possible and any risks of injury are kept to a minimum. All adults have a duty of care to themselves and all other children and adults. This means that reasonable force or restraint may be used if a child is hurting themselves or another child or adult or if damage is taking place to the school which could result in further injury.

1. What is Reasonable force?

1.1 The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions that may be used by teachers at some point in their career that involves a degree of physical contact with a child.

1.2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

1.3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

1.4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control children and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between children or blocking a child's path, or active physical contact such as leading a child by the arm out of a classroom.

1.5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a child under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two children are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

1.6. 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 child.

2. Who can use reasonable force?

2.1 All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

2.2 This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of children such as unpaid volunteers.

3. When can reasonable force be used?

3.1 Reasonable force can be used to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

3.2 In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control children or to restrain them.

3.3 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.

3.4 The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

3.5 Staff at Clarendon Primary School will always try to use a range of other strategies to minimise the risk of needing to use force or restraint. This may include: distraction, time out or negotiation / further sanctions with the child.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. The school do not require parental consent to use force on a child.

4. Reasonable force may be used at Clarendon Primary School in the following examples to:

4.1 Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so and it is not possible to remove the other children safely.

4.2 Prevent a child behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.

4.3 Prevent a child leaving the classroom where allowing the child to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.

4.4 Prevent a child from attacking a member of staff or another child, or to stop a fight.

4.5 Restrain a child at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

5. Reasonable force will never be used at Clarendon Primary School:

5.1 as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

6. Power to search children without consent

6.1 In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and 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
- 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.

6.2 Force will not be used to search for items banned under the school rules, such as toys.

7. Communicating the school's approach to the use of force

7.1 Clarendon Primary School has a clear Relationships & Behaviour Policy and this policy is known to, and understood by, all staff. It is also shared with parents and children in school and is on the school website.

7.2 At Clarendon Primary School we take into account our legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).

7.3 School staff have a duty of care to all children and other adults therefore we do not require parental consent to use force if required.

7.4 At Clarendon Primary School we understand that there are occasions when a member of staff may need to have contact with a child.

7.5 By taking steps to ensure that staff, children and parents are clear about when force might be used, our school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly. The SLT will review the incidents of using reasonable force to identify any patterns of behaviour.

8. Using force

8.1 Selective staff receive training on practical physical de-escalation techniques and staff will only use the procedures that they have been trained to use.

8.2 When restraint or force is required the incident will be recorded on the 'Clarendon Record of Restraint' form (Appendix 1) and saved on CPOMS. This information will be shared with parents/carers.

9. Staff Training

9.1 At Clarendon Primary School we take training very seriously. All school staff are trained in how to use de-escalation techniques to minimise the risk of needing to restrain children. In addition to this, some of our staff are also trained in the Physical De-escalation training. Our school team discusses risk management regularly and ensures that vulnerable children have suitably qualified staff working with them. When new staff join the school, we identify any relevant training that is required and provide this as soon as possible.

9.2 Our training programme meets the required standards and is planned on a rolling programme to ensure we are always fully covered. A register of all staff training is maintained.

10. Telling parents when force has been used on their child

10.1 At Clarendon Primary School, in the event of a serious incident involving the use of force or restraint, school staff would always notify parents/carers. Staff will show that restraint was used as a last resort.

10.2 In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers will use their professional judgement and consider the:

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

11. What if a child complains when force is used on them?

11.1 All complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated by the Headteacher / Governing Body.

11.2 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.

11.3 The DFE guidance states that 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.

11.4 It is recommended by the DFE that suspension must not be an automatic response if a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. The Headteacher will 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.

11.5 The Headteacher / Governing Board will 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.

11.6 If a decision is taken to suspend a member of staff, the school will ensure that the member of staff has access to a named contact who can provide support.

11.7 The Governing Board will always consider whether a member of staff has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against them.

11.8 As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. Our school will provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

12. What about other physical contact with children?

12.1 It is not illegal to touch a child. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a child is proper and necessary.

12.2 Some examples of where touching a child might be proper or necessary at Clarendon Primary School may include:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to the hall or when walking together around the school
- When comforting a distressed child
- When a child is being congratulated or praised
- When supporting a child to walk safely on a school visit
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument or a tool in Design technology
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- Intimate care (see our Intimate Care Policy)
- To give first aid

Further information can be obtained by reading the full document 2013 DFE Guidance on 'The use of Reasonable Force' for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies in schools.



Appendix 1

CLARENDON PRIMARY RECORD OF RESTRAINT

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Child Name:

D.o.B:

Member(s) of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to restraint:

Child witnesses to restraint:

Outline of event leading to restraint:

Outline of incident of restraint (including restraint method used):

Outcome of restraint:

Description of any injury(ies) sustained by injured child and any subsequent treatment:

Date parent/carer informed of incident:

Time:

By whom informed:

Outline of parent/carer response:

Signature of Parent:

Date:

Signature of staff completing report:

Date:

Signature of Teacher-in-charge:

Date:

Signature of Headteacher:

Date:

Brief description of any subsequent action:



Appendix 2

CLARENDON PRIMARY RECORD OF RESTRAINT - REVIEW SHEET

Child Name:

D.o.B:

Date of Review:

Outline of procedures to prevent incidents:

Outline of restraint plan if needed:

Staff involved:

Signature(s):

Parental signature: