



**Pontypridd High School**

**The Use Of Reasonable  
Force To Control or  
Restrain Students  
Policy**

February 2018

# The Use of Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Students Policy

Date of policy:	February 2018
Adopted:	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2018, Wellbeing Committee Meeting
To be reviewed:	Spring 2021
Member of staff responsible:	Headteacher
Committee Responsible:	Pupil Wellbeing

## Introduction

We understand that the vast number of children will never require any form of physical intervention. However, a small number may exhibit disturbed or distressing behaviour which may require some form of physical intervention by staff where they find themselves in circumstances where reasonable force is needed to safeguard themselves and the children. We will make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled children and children with ALN.

## Aims

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all children against any form of a physical act which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To put in place guidance for staff so that they are clear about circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain a student and how such force may be applied.

## School Expectations

At Pontypridd High School our focus is on preventing as far as possible, the need for the use of force on students by creating a calm environment and de-escalating incidents as they arise. We believe that the use of reasonable force could be necessary when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not doing so. It may be employed to prevent a student from:

- attacking a member of staff, or another student, or to stop a fight between two or more students
- causing serious, deliberate damage to property.
- causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.
- behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or activity.
- It may also be employed to ensure that a student leaves a classroom where the student persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so.

### **Staff guidance – who can use reasonable force?**

- The 'staff' referred to in this policy applies to all employed adults on site
- All members of staff have a legal power to enable them to use reasonable force. This can also apply to unpaid volunteers or parents whom the head teacher has temporarily put in charge of a group of children on a school organised visit.
- Staff do not require parental consent to use 'reasonable force' on a child.
- The use of restraint should always be a last resort.

### **What is Reasonable Force ?**

- Force is used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight where a child may need to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- Staff may use 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.
- 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.

### **When can reasonable force be used?**

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In school we may use force for two main purposes – to control children or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgment of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

### **Positive behaviour management**

Guidance suggests that reasonable physical interventions might be;

- physically interposing between students
- blocking a student's path
- leading a student by the hand or arm
- shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- in more extreme cases, holding a pupil

When considering the use of reasonable force;

- Staff should always avoid touching/holding a student in a way that might be considered inappropriate.
- Force, where used, should always be reasonable. There is no definition of 'reasonable force'. It should always be proportional to the circumstances of the incident. It should be used only to control or restrain and never with the intent to cause pain or harm. It must, therefore, be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
- In any action, due regard has to be taken to the age, understanding and sex of the student. In addition, proper account needs to be taken of any particular additional learning need and / or disability of the student.

**THE FOLLOWING LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE BUT IT PROVIDES SOME EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS WHERE REASONABLE FORCE CAN AND CANNOT BE USED**

- to remove a disruptive child from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- to prevent a child behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or school trip or visit
- to prevent a child leaving the classroom where allowing them to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts others
- prevent a child from attacking a member of staff or another child, or to stop a playground fight.
- Restrain a child at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

**Staff training**

All staff will receive regular guidance on the use of reasonable force.

**The school accepts and understands that in accordance with the law corporal punishment is forbidden. Force will never be used as a punishment**

**Reporting and Recording**

- Where restraint has been necessary, the incident must be reported to the Child Protection Officer and logged using the form attached (Appendix A).
- In the event of an injury occurring, the appropriate Health and Safety form must be completed and the accident reporting procedures must be followed. This could include the 'Serious Incident Form'.

Parents / carers of the student(s) involved will always be advised of an incident and it may be necessary for it to be followed up by other disciplinary action or pastoral support.

**Post-incident support:**

The following strategies may be needed:

- Parents / carers will be contacted
- The school nurse or first aider will see the student
- The student will be reported to the Leadership Team who will implement the positive relationships policy
- The child protection officer will contact outside agencies
- The Headteacher to arrange support for the member of staff
- Where appropriate the member of staff to be advised to contact their union or professional association
- Complaints against staff will follow the process outlined in the school safeguarding policy.

## Advice to Staff

### DO :

- Wherever possible plan appropriate positive intervention and involve parents, carers and colleagues.
- Know the procedures within the school's guidelines for the use of physical restraint.
- Be aware of students who have been physically restrained before and what happened.
- Send for adult help early if things begin to get out of hand and restraint seems likely.
- Assess the situation before acting
- Stay calm – do not over-react.
- Use minimum restraint for minimum time until the situation is calm.
- Report the incident to the Headteacher or senior member of staff as soon as possible and complete a report form.
- Consult your line manager or professional association if you have any concerns.

### DO NOT :

- Place yourself at risk. Do not attempt to restrain a student who obviously carries a 'weapon'.
- Attempt to restrain a student when you have lost your temper.
- Allow the situation to get out of control.
- Use unreasonable force.
- Place yourself at risk of false allegation
- Be in a situation where you are alone with any student

### What to do if a child complains that force has been used.

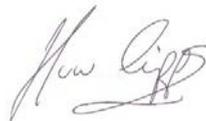
- All complaints should be passed to the Head Teacher / Designated Safeguarding Officer who will thoroughly investigate the incident.

### Circumstances when physical contact is acceptable

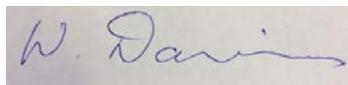
There are many occasions when physical contact is proper and necessary. For example;

- When comforting a distressed child
- Demonstrating a musical instrument
- Demonstrating exercises or a PE technique
- Administering First Aid

Approved by:



Mr H Cripps, Headteacher



Mr W Davies, Chair of Governors

## Appendix A

### REPORTING AND RECORDING USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

Name of Student : .....

Year / Form : .....

<b>When and where the incident took place</b>
<b>Why the use of force was deemed necessary</b>
<b>Details of the incident, including all steps taken to diffuse the situation and resolve it without force and the nature of the force used</b>
<b>The student's response</b>
<b>The outcome of the incident</b>
<b>A description of any injuries suffered by the pupil or others and/or any property damaged in the incident</b>

Member of staff : .....

Staff Signature : .....

Head teacher signature : .....

Date : .....