



<b>Greenholm Primary school</b> <b>USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY</b>
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### **Overarching statement**

At Greenholm we are a school that is welcoming, safe and creates an environment which values and supports learning for everyone. We work hard to create an ethos that promotes inclusive practice for all, by providing a consistent and fair approach, which is supportive of the continual emotional development of all and by demonstrating mutual respect, openness and honesty.

### **ABOUT THIS POLICY**

This policy is based on advice given in the non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education and the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. 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 school leaders and governing bodies in respect of this power. It should be viewed and understood in conjunction with the school Safeguarding policy.

### **REVIEW DATE**

This guidance will be reviewed annually.

**DATE LAST REVIEWED:** .....

### **1 What is reasonable force?**

- (i) The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- (ii) We recognise that 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) 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.

- (v) At Greenholm, force may be used to control pupils or 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.
- (vi) 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.
- (vii) School staff will always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in understanding the definition of reasonable force, it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

## **2 Who can use reasonable force?**

- (i) All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force<sup>1</sup>.
- (ii) This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.
- (iii) Wherever possible the use of reasonable force will be undertaken by staff members who have completed the 'Safer Handling Techniques' training.

## **3 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) 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. **HOWEVER, WHERE POSSIBLE THE HEADTEACHER OR A SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF SHOULD BE CONSULTED BEFORE DECIDING TO INTERVENE PHYSICALLY.**
- (iii) In line with government guidance, 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; and

- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground.

#### **4 Communicating the school's approach to the use of force**

Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student however, wherever possible, we will endeavour to develop behaviour plans in conjunction with parents for children who may present behaviours that make them more likely to be subjected to the use of reasonable force.

#### **5 Staff training**

At Greenholm all the Leadership team, including the senior lunchtime supervisors and the Before and After School manager have been trained to use POSITIVE HANDLING TECHNIQUES.

- (i) Whenever reasonable force has been used, the school will conduct a debrief with all staff involved. This may involve considering:
  - a. The pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
  - b. The degree of force used in line with this policy
  - c. The effect on the pupil or member of staff
  - d. The child's age or any specific needs
  - e. Future support needed for the pupil/s involved to prevent a reoccurrence of reasonable force needing to be used

#### **7 Telling parents when force has been used on their child**

When an incident has occurred where a child has been subjected to the use of reasonable force we will ensure that the parent/s are contacted and informed of what has happened.

When an incident has occurred where a child has been subjected to the use of reasonable force we will ensure that the child is briefed on why action was taken by a staff member.

#### **8 What happens if a pupil/parent complains when force is used on them?**

- (i) All complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated in line with the school's complaints policy.
- (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. The school is under no obligation to suspend the member of staff pending investigation.

## **9 What about other physical contact with pupils?**

We recognise that 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.

- (i) Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:
  - a. Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
  - b. When comforting a distressed pupil;
  - c. When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
  - d. To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
  - e. To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons sports coaching; and
  - f. To give first aid.

### **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.