

Farrowdale House

INDEPENDENT PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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Reasonable Force Policy.

Farrowdale House Independent Preparatory School expects the highest standard of self-discipline from all our pupils. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the behaviour and sanctions policy, and applies to all children, including those in the EYFS.

School aims

The aims of this reasonable force policy are to:

- Provide clarification on the use of reasonable force in school
- To enable staff to feel more informed and confident about the use of reasonable force when they believe it to be necessary
- To make clear the responsibilities of the headteacher, staff and proprietors in respect of this power.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the DCSF guidance published in July 2013, 'The use of force reasonable force which has been shared with all staff'.

Minimising the need to use force:

Prevention is always the primary consideration at Farrowdale House, steps should be taken at an early stage to distract or discourage any negative behaviour. We successfully manage behaviour in a number of ways in. These include:

- Creating a calm orderly environment in the classroom (and around the School).
- Developing effective relationships between staff and children.
- Helping staff to develop skills of positive behaviour management and managing conflict.
- Ensuring a sufficient number of staff are on duty at break, lunch and other times of free movement.

Deciding whether to use force

Reasonable force should be the last option but staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency providing they follow the guidance below (see appendix 1). Staff are not expected to place themselves in danger. The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Reasonable force may be used:

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence
- To prevent a child from causing injury to his or herself or others;
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property;
- To stop the child from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to others.

- To prevent a child leaving a classroom where allowing the child to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour which disrupts the behaviour of others.

Reasonable force may never be used as a punishment.

During an Incident

1. Minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation, restore safety and appropriate behaviour. The child should be approached calmly but firmly. Where possible, explain the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour, giving a warning at their level of understanding that force may have to be used and continue to communicate with the student throughout the incident. A calm and measured approach is needed and a teacher must never give the impression that he/she has lost his or her temper or is acting out of anger or frustration. If possible, a child will be sent to ask a senior member of staff for assistance.
2. If a situation escalates to a dangerous level, (i.e. where there is imminent danger of personal injury to any person or damaging property) then reasonable force will be considered. The headteacher will be informed immediately.
3. Appropriate use of force will range from physical passive presence in between pupils, to blocking a pupil's path, ushering them by placing a hand in the centre of the back, leading them by the hand or arm, to in more extreme circumstances using an appropriate hold. Particular attention will be given to individuals' needs which arise from statements of SEN or disability. Whilst it is highly desirable that staff should avoid acting in any way which might reasonably be expected to cause an injury, in truly exceptional circumstances it is recognised that it may not always be possible to avoid. Any such injury caused will be properly investigated by the school and will require justification

Recording of incidents

The headteacher or proprietor will notify the child's parents at the earliest opportunity- the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable. Opportunities to discuss the incident with the child will be provided. At all times the DfE advice- 'Use of Reasonable Force' (July 2013) must be adhered to. Any such incidents will be formally recorded on The Physical Restraints Log and the head teacher will record in the Behaviour Log.

Training for staff

Physical restraint is an available option, only to be used when other means of dealing with the situation have failed. Staff are made aware of this policy and have training on child protection that will ensure they are aware of their duties and the law.

Complaints and allegations

If a complaint is made against a member of staff about the use of force the school will follow the guidance set out in Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies DfE.

(see appendix 1 below)

Appendix 1 Department for Education Guidance - REASONABLE FORCE

This guidance is taken from the Department for Education 'Use of reasonable force. Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies'. Dated July 2013.

- School staff have a power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. 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 pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.
- 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.

- 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.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Schools can use reasonable force to:
 - remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction
 - 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
 - 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.
- In addition to the above, headteachers and authorised 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.
- Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules
- Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student.
- 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.
- In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers should use their professional judgement and consider 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; and the child's age.
- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- 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.
- When a complaint is made, the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his or her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he or she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- 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.
- 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 to give first aid.