



GUILSBOROUGH ACADEMY

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

Policy Name	Physical Intervention Policy
Policy Owner	Vice Principal
Statutory	No
Authorisation	Standards and Curriculum Committee

Date Ratified	Review Date
March 2026	March 2028



Author	Date	Page	Changes

Legislative Guidance

Linked Policies

The aim of this policy is to clarify the powers of teachers and other staff who have lawful control or charge of pupils in relation to the use of reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a crime, causing injury or damage or causing disruption. This policy applies to all school related activities and reflects the Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools guidance issued by the Department for Education in April 2026.

[Restrictive interventions including use of reasonable force in schools.pdf](#)

This policy does not authorise the use of corporal punishment in any circumstance.

This policy is not intended to encourage the use of inappropriate reasonable force.

Situations involving decisions about whether to use reasonable force can occur at any time in any school. Both using reasonable force and deciding not to can entail significant risks for pupils and staff. This policy aims to minimise the risk. Any restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm and should be avoided where possible, considering whether it is necessary, proportionate and the impact on the pupil's welfare.



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What is 'reasonable force'?

- 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.
- Reasonable 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 reasonable force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use reasonable 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.

Other key definitions

- **Restrictive interventions** - are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. Restrictive interventions include physical and non-physical actions aimed at restraining pupils' movement. For example, putting a pupil in a room and not allowing them to leave is a restrictive intervention.
- **Significant incident** - any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil.
- **Seclusion** - a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room is a form of seclusion.
- **Appropriate contact** - might include a handshake to congratulate a pupil, giving first aid, or demonstrating how to use a musical instrument.

Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of Guilborough Multi Academy Trust (MAT) staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the MAT. It can also apply to people whom the Principal has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents/carers accompanying students on a MAT organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- Reasonable force can be used on school grounds; during the school day or on residential visits/school trips/extracurricular activities.



- In a school, reasonable force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- 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.
- 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;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot

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

Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation. For example, by covering the nose or mouth or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.

Power to search pupils without consent

- In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Principals/Heads of School and authorised staff can use such reasonable 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.

Reasonable force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

[Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK](#)

Minimising the use of reasonable force

We will aim to minimise the use of reasonable force by:

- Creating a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require reasonable force being used



- Teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings through effective Life skills (PSHE) delivery
- De-escalating incidents if they arise
- Only using reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using reasonable force
- Risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils as necessary

Staff authorised to use reasonable force

The Principal will authorise specific permanent staff who have control or charge of pupils to automatically have the statutory power to use reasonable force and the Principal will identify the staff to whom this applies. This would be the case only in exceptional circumstances to meet a clearly identified need.

Current names of staff trained in Team Teach are:

- Simon Frazer (Principal)
- Gabby Keenes (Vice Principal)
- Andy Bunney (Assistant Principal)
- Mike Harrison (Assistant Principal)
- Dean Mills (Assistant Principal)
- Liam Niland (Assistant Principal)
- Kit Woolridge (Assistant Principal)
- Kim Lynch (SENDCO)

Team Teach training provided by JOGO Behaviour Support – March 2026

In circumstances in which staff who do not normally have this authority the Principal can issue temporary authorisation. However, the Principal recommends to all staff that they do not use reasonable force except in exceptional circumstances to protect themselves or other members of the school community. All staff should use every possible alternative to avoid the use of reasonable force.

Deciding when to use reasonable force

Staff should only use reasonable force when;

- The potential consequences of not intervening were sufficiently serious to justify considering use of reasonable force
- The chances of achieving the desired result by any other means were low, and
- The risk associated with not using reasonable force outweighed those of using reasonable force

Staff will be kept informed about and advised how to deal with pupils who present particular risks to themselves or others (as a result of SEND and/or disabilities and/or other personal circumstances such as domestic violence)

Using reasonable force

It is important to remember to use minimum reasonable force to achieve the desired result by:

- Giving an oral warning to the pupil that reasonable force may be used
- Not blocking the student's exit and allowing a student to run away if it is safe to do so.
- The member of staff removing themselves or other students from the vicinity
- Remembering that any form of restraint that is likely to injure a pupil (particularly anything that could constrict breathing) must only be used in extreme emergencies

- and where there is no viable alternative
- Remembering that as far as possible staff should not use reasonable force unless and until another responsible adult is present to support observe and call for assistance

- Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff: -
 - Physically interposing between pupils;
 - Leading a pupil by the hand/arm;
 - Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
 - In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds e.g. preventing a pupil hitting someone or throwing something. Staff should not attempt this unless they have no alternative and there is a serious risk of injury to themselves or others if they do not use a more restrictive hold. Where possible a teacher trained in Team Teach should be contacted.

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' therefore it is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use reasonable force, or the degree of reasonable force which may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case. However, the use of reasonable force can only be regarded as reasonable if the circumstances warrant it and the degree of reasonable force employed must be in proportion to the seriousness of the incident. Any reasonable force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Whether it is reasonable to use reasonable force, and the degree of reasonable force that could reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding and gender of the pupil.

If physical reasonable force is used the member of staff should make it clear that such reasonable force will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. Staff should try to remain calm and measured in their approach and never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration or to punish the pupil.

Seclusion

Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

Procedures

- Under exceptional circumstances (e.g. a specific member of staff working with a child with known special needs) training will be provided for the relevant SLT and pastoral staff designated by the Principal to be deemed responsible for the use of reasonable force.

Considerations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions.

The Academy will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour in order to provide support and create an inclusive environment. This will be done by utilising staff who know the individual student well to help identify and manage risk, as well as develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restriction interventions being used. This will be compiled in the form of a behaviour support plan, which will be co-produced with parents/carers and external agencies where necessary. The behaviour support plan will outline any adjustments required as well as where there is an identified risk that may increase the likelihood need of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. This will also be detailed in a risk assessment.

Recording incidents

- Any member of staff involved in an incident of physical restraint must **IMMEDIATELY** alert the Principal (or SLT representative on site, in their absence) of the incident. The attached form will be held centrally in the front office and all instances of the use of reasonable force will be logged and investigated. The form must be completed within 24 hours of the incident. Staff may seek assistance in completing the form and should always keep a copy for their own records. Any use of restraint has to be recorded in the bound and numbered book found in Human Resources.
- If the Principal is involved in an incident of physical restraint, they must **IMMEDIATELY** alert a Vice Principal and the Chair of Trustees.

Reporting incidents

- The use of reasonable force will be reported to parents/carers by the Head of Year or appropriate senior member of staff

Post incident report

- Whenever the use of reasonable force occurs the staff and pupils involved in the incident will be given immediate physical support if necessary and follow up work involving counselling and rebuilding processes.

Complaints and allegations

- If any complaints arise from the incident, the Principal will instigate an investigation in line with the school procedure for dealing with complaints.
- If any complaints or allegations arise from the incident regarding the Principal, these are to be referred to the Chair of Trustees as per the Academy's usual complaints procedure.



Monitoring and review

- The policy will be reviewed and developed according to need after consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and Trustees

Further information

Further information is available on [Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK](#)

Conclusion

Physical intervention to enforce compliance with staff instructions is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older students. IT SHOULD NEVER BE USED AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT. To maximise protection for all members of the school community it is important that all teaching and other authorised support staff, as outlined above, follow the school's policy on the use of reasonable force.



USE OF REASONABLE FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS: INVESTIGATION RECORD

The use of physical restraint must be recorded in the bound and numbered book found in the HR office.

Details of pupil or pupils on whom reasonable force was used by a member of staff (name, tutor group)	
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 reasonable force might be used:	
Reasons for using reasonable force and description of reasonable force used.	
Any injury sustained by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention needed	
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 expressed	
Has any complaint been lodged (details should be recorded here)	
Report compiled by:	Report countersigned by:
Name and role:	Name and role:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Please enclose any witness statements or other pertinent evidence available with this report and submit it to the head teacher within 24 hours of any incident of the use of reasonable force. Record the incident in the bound and numbered book in the human resources office

Principal received on **Signature**