



# **Culmore Primary School**

## **Reasonable Force Policy**

**All non-teaching staff and volunteers must be identified and specifically authorised by the Principal to be in control or in charge of student.**

**Reasonable force may be used in the following situations:**

- On school premises while authorised to have charge or control of students.
- On authorised out of school activities.

**By reasonable force we mean that:**

- The use of any force is UNLAWFUL, unless circumstances warrant it.
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the seriousness of the behaviour.
- It may depend on the age, level of understanding, sex and any possible physical disability of the pupil.

**The use of reasonable force may be appropriate in the following circumstances:**

- In self-defence due to imminent risk of injury.
- In case of a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property eg:
  - i. Pupil attacks teacher or other pupil
  - ii. Pupils are fighting
  - iii. Pupil causing or causing risk of, injury or damage, by accident, by rough behaviour or misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
  - iv. Pupils running on stairs or corridor likely to cause an accident
  - v. A pupil (**who could be at risk if not kept in the school**) tries to leave the school or class.

**Note:**

- Reasonable force is never a substitute for good behaviour management.
- Staff should attempt to resolve all issues calmly, never give the impression of acting out of frustration or anger to desire to punish the pupil.
- Care should be taken when dealing with older pupils, physical large pupils or groups of pupils – if necessary try to remove other pupils who may be at risk and send for help if necessary telephone the police. Tell the pupil(s) concerned that help has been sent for.
- Staff should develop a range of behaviour management strategies for dealing with pupils, especially those known to be difficult/disruptive. SDD's will help here, and all staff will have an opportunity to develop these strategies.

**The use of reasonable force to restrain or control pupils**

Although the need to restrain/control pupils by force is an extremely rare occurrence, the guidance given by DENI is valuable should such a situation occur.

**What actions constitute using reasonable force?**

- Physical interposing between pupils.
- Blocking a pupil's path.
- Holding.
- Pushing.
- Pulling.
- Leading a pupil by the arm.

- “Shepherding” by placing hand in the centre of back.
- (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

These Actions **Must Not** be used:

- Holding pupil round neck, or by collar, or in a way, which restrain breathing.
- Slapping, punching, kicking or using implement on a pupil.
- Throwing any object at a pupil.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint.
- Tripping up a pupil.
- Holding a pupil by hair or ear.
- Holding a pupil face down to the ground.
- Touching or holding a pupil in any way, which might be construed as indecent.

**Some General notes:**

1. In extreme circumstances, everyone has the right of self-defence provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force.
2. In an emergency, anyone can intervene to prevent a pupil causing personal injury to others.
3. Physical contact with pupils is unavoidable in some circumstances, for example in certain PE situations, music and technology, classes or when administering first aid. Young children and children with special educational needs may also need a degree of physical assistances.
4. Students experiencing distress may require comforting – teachers should exercise professional judgment as to what is appropriate in these cases.
5. Some young pupils, in particular those who have suffered abuse, may find any touching unwelcome. Staff should be sensitive to this.
6. No matter how well intentioned, physical contact with pupils, especially those at and approaching adolescence can be misconstrued.
7. All instances where reasonable force has been used should be formally recorded and reported to the Principal. The parent(s) of the pupil involved will also be officially notified by letter. The Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Governors will review these reports at least annually, records will be kept for at least five years after the date of occurrence.