

BONNER PRIMARY SCHOOL



Use of force to control or restrain behaviour

Policy

Introduction

Bonner Primary school has a duty to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff. We welcome visitors into our school community and we will act to ensure that it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of the community. We accept that everyone has the right to defend him or her self in an attack providing that they do not use a disproportionate amount of force in doing so.

If a member of school community is threatened, assaulted or suffers from abusive behaviour the perpetrator will be excluded or removed from the school.

We note that the teachers and staff at Bonner have lawful control of pupils under Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and may use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a crime, causing injury or damage or causing disruption.

Audience and Review

This policy is written to inform teaching and non teaching staff, governors, parents, LEA advisers and inspection teams about the procedures for restraint at Bonner Primary School. Copies are available in the staff handbook and in the staff room.

Purpose of the policy:

- To provide an understanding of what is meant by reasonable force
- To outline what situations it may be appropriate to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils
- To clarify how force may be applied, what is acceptable and what is not
- To establish common practice in positive handling or self defence
- To establish how any use of force should be recorded and reported
- To provide guidance for staff to manage behaviour effectively and avoid the need for force or restraint
- To alert staff of the potential liability in situations where force has been applied

Definition of reasonable force:

There is no legal definition. What is deemed to be reasonable always depends on all the circumstances.

There are two considerations:

- The use of force can only be regarded as reasonable if the incident warrants it. Force cannot be warranted if it is used to prevent a pupil committing a trivial misdemeanour or in a situation that could be resolved without the use of force.
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident. Any force should be kept to a minimum. It should bear a relationship to the age, sex and understanding of the pupil.

Next Review June 2018

BONNER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Situations where reasonable force may be appropriate:

There are a number of situations where reasonable force might have to be used:

- It may be necessary in self defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
- It may be necessary if there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property
- In extreme circumstances it may be appropriate where a pupil is compromising good order and discipline

Examples of these situations are:

- when a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- where pupils are fighting
- a pupil who is engaged in or about to commit an act of deliberate vandalism
- a pupil causing danger through rough play or misuse of dangerous objects or materials
- a pupil acting in an unsafe manner where they might hurt themselves
- a pupil who may be at risk if not kept within a room or school
- or others who persistently refuses to leave a classroom

Force which is not appropriate:

- holding a pupil by the neck, collar or in a way that may restrict breathing
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a pupil
- holding a pupil by his/her hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground
- a hold or touch which may be considered indecent

Intervention:

Intervention should not immediately involve the use of restraint or the application of force unless it is an emergency. In most situations it should be possible to apply strategies to manage the behaviour to prevent the situation developing to a crisis where physical intervention is the only solution. Physical intervention using force should not be a substitute for good behavioural management.

Before having to intervene a teacher should wherever possible tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he/she doesn't. Staff should continue to attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and tell them that physical contact or restraint will cease as soon as it no longer is necessary. Staff should remain calm and not give the impression they have lost their temper or are punishing the pupil.

Physical intervention can take several forms:

- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking a pupils path
- holding
- pushing
- pulling
- leading the pupil by the arm or hand
- shepherding a pupil by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

Staff should always try and deal with a situation through other strategies first.

Possible consequences of intervening physically to increase the disruption or provoke an attack need to be carefully evaluated.

Physical intervention to enforce compliance is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils.

Reporting:

Next Review June 2018

BONNER PRIMARY SCHOOL

It is very important that a detailed, contemporaneous written report by all involved be made of any incident where force is used. Incidents must be reported to the Head. If it seems likely that physical intervention using force may become necessary it is advisable to seek assistance from colleagues who can independently witness and verify the nature of the intervention.

Complaints:

It cannot be ruled out that any complaints regarding the application of force will not be the subject of investigation either under disciplinary procedures, child protection procedures or police. In these cases it will be necessary to have regard for 550A of the 1996 Act and determine whether the degree of force was reasonable in the circumstances. It will also need to take account of this policy and whether it has been followed.

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body if any complaints are raised.

Physical contact in other circumstances:

Some physical contact may be necessary and proper to demonstrate exercises or techniques during sports.

It is proper in the administering of first aid.

Young children or those with SEN may require physical prompts to help.

Touching may also be appropriate when a child is in distress and needs comfort.

This must be teachers own professional judgement.

There may be children where touching is unwelcomed due to cultural background or abuse.

Physical contact becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and pass puberty.

Staff should bear in mind innocent and well intentioned physical contact can be misconstrued.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Inclusion Policy
- Equal opportunities Policy
- Race equality policy
- Child protection policy
- Behaviour policy and procedures 'Rights Respecting School'

Policy Revised: June 2018
Next Review: June 2019
Training Provided: Team Teach (additional SEN strategies)

Next Review June 2018