



# **Pate's Grammar School**

## **Reasonable Force Policy**

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Headteacher (Dr James Richardson)</b>
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	<b>January 2024</b>
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## 1. Rationale

As part of our school values of “Nurturing Excellence” and “Supporting Each Other,” Pate’s Grammar School is committed to ensuring that each child has the right to be educated in a safe environment and that staff should expect to work in a safe environment.

This policy complies with the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) advice [“Use of Reasonable Force.”](#)

## 2. What is Reasonable Force?

The DfE’s advice states that “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 defined as *“the application of appropriate and proportionate force required to achieve the required outcome from the handling strategy employed without further endangering the student, member of staff or others present at the time of physical intervention.”*

The use of force can be regarded as “reasonable” provided that:

- The circumstances of the incident warrant it<sup>1</sup>; and
- The force is ‘reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed.

Force may be used either to control or restrain pupils. Reasonable force should never be used as a form of punishment.

### **Reasonable force may involve staff:**

- physically interposing between pupils (blocking);
- physically moving a pupil from a situation;
- leading a pupil by the arm);
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of their back;
- retaining a pupil in a confined area;
- in order to actively prevent a child from causing significant injury<sup>2</sup> to themselves or others or seriously damaging property, restraint may be used;
- using distraction techniques (for example, pushing or pulling a pupil).

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<sup>1</sup> The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. (DfE, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> Significant Injury would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning.

### 3. Who can use reasonable force?

Under section 93 of the 2006 “Education and Inspections Act,” all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. However, no member of staff is required to employ any physical intervention strategy if they are not comfortable or confident to do so effectively but they should be aware of their duty of care to the students.

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 right to use reasonable force applies on Pate’s Grammar School premises and on organised visits that take place outside the school grounds.

Parental consent is not required to use reasonable force on a pupil.

### 4. When can reasonable force be used?

In the first instance, all staff will seek to follow strategies likely to reduce the need for force in dealing with pupils. Staff will also consider alternative responses where appropriate before applying force in any situation, for example:

- If there is no immediate risk to the child, member of staff or peers, staff should provide opportunity for the student to alter their behaviour/actions before employing a physical intervention strategy. They will always endeavour to make clear statements, telling the pupil to stop and the consequences of failing to do so.
- It may also be inappropriate for a member of staff to intervene in an incident without help if they would be at risk of injury (particularly when dealing with an older pupil or more than one pupil). In this event, the member of staff should remove other pupils who may be at risk and summon help from a colleague.

Staff will only use reasonable force as a last resort.

Staff will never:

- hold a pupil around the neck in a way that is likely to restrict breathing;
- hit a pupil; or
- hold a pupil face down on the ground.

If the School becomes aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will draw up an individual risk assessment and plan measures that may be taken.

The following restraint techniques present an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people, and therefore should not be used:

the 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing

the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest

the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose

The method of physical intervention employed must use the minimum reasonable force for the minimum length of time (additional guidance regarding what intervention is and is not appropriate is given in Appendix A).

## 5. Behaviour Policy

It is the policy of Pate's Grammar School that physical contact should not be used as a means of maintaining good order and discipline.

For example, where a pupil insists on leaving a room, unless the pupil is committing a criminal offence, or injuring themselves or otherwise causing damage to property, the pupil should not be prevented from doing so using physical means i.e. blocking.

The matter should be brought to the attention of a member of the School's Senior Leadership Team at the earliest opportunity.

## 6. Other Physical Contact

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 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; and
- To give first aid.

## 7. Actions following the use of Reasonable Force

### i. Student

A member of staff, separate to the incident and trained in first aid, will check for any injuries, as a result of the incident.

Parents/Guardians will be contacted by the Headteacher as soon as possible after the incident.

The circumstances and nature of the physical intervention will be held on the record of the student involved.

Students who witnessed the event will be asked to make a statement (Appendix A) and supported as appropriate by the pastoral team.

ii. Staff

Staff must make a written record (Appendix B) of any occasion on which reasonable force is used to restrain a pupil. This must be passed to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity. It is the responsibility of the intervening member of staff to submit a record form on the day that the intervention took place.

Pastoral support will be provided to any member of staff who has been physically or emotionally affected by the use of reasonable force and support will be provided if a member of staff is subject to formal allegations following the use of force

The DSL will inform any necessary agencies/authorities of the physical intervention in accordance with DFE and LA guidance.

For the safeguarding of both staff and student, any subsequent investigation of the situation/incident will be undertaken by a member of staff other than the one applying the physical intervention.

If a complaint is made it will be dealt with in accordance with the School's complaints policy.

Allegations against members of staff will be referred to the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board with whom the appropriate steps to be taken will be determined. Suspension will not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

Staff have all received training on our school's approach to "reasonable force."

Appendix A:

Physical Restraint Incident Form

Student's Name:		Date of Birth:	
Form Group:		Date of incident:	
Time of incident:		Location:	
Staff Involved:			
Names of those involved:			

Witness Statement:

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Form Completed by:	Date:
Handed to HR:	Date:

Appendix B:

Physical Restraint Incident Form



Student's Name:		Date of Birth:	
Form Group:		Date of incident:	
Time of incident:		Location:	
Staff Involved:			
Names of Witnesses:			

Reasons for the intervention (please circle all that apply)	
A	To avert immediate danger of personal injury to the student.
B	To avert immediate danger of injury to another student or staff.
C	To avert immediate serious damage to property.
D	To prevent or stop a criminal offence being committed.
E	To prevent absconding.
F	To interrupt disruptive behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and a safe and secure learning environment.
Other:	

Please indicate what techniques you used to help defuse the situation (please tick)

Verbal advice & support		Time Out	
Humour		Calm Talking	
Step away		Options offered	
Reassurance		Negotiations	
Distraction		Non-threatening body language	

Other:

Description of the incident, including details of any physical intervention

Follow Up and Outcome (to be completed by Head or DSL)	
Form Completed by:	Date:
Handed to HR:	Date: