

Copthill School

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Building positive relationships is at the heart of a safe, happy, supportive and successful school. In this type of environment, everyone is more likely to want to work and learn, more likely to achieve and less likely to be hurt or feel excluded.

At Copthill School our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy supports our Vision and Aims and our emphasis on developing the characteristics of the Copthill Learner.

Vision

At Copthill, we will:

- put the child at the heart of their education, making the education fit the child rather than trying to make the child fit into a one size-fits-all system;
- care for our children as individuals within a supportive family community, learning and growing together - happy children learn;
- have the highest expectations of all our children across all areas of their education and development but be flexible in our approach;
- challenge and support our children to be confident in recognising their own and each other's strengths and talents across the broad Copthill curriculum;
- acknowledge that learning can be difficult and reassure our children that making mistakes is part of the process of learning;
- instil in our children the curiosity, excitement, desire and drive to be lifelong learners, seizing every opportunity to pursue their dreams and to write their own success stories at each stage of their journey;
- grow as Copthill Learners (responsible citizens, independent explorers, team players, problem solvers, creative thinkers, reflective learners), respecting each other, our environment and ourselves and preparing for the next stage in life, whatever that might be.

Aims

1. A welcoming, stimulating and happy environment which is friendly, caring and well disciplined, in which every pupil is encouraged to achieve and motivated to succeed.
2. An open-door policy, providing the foundations for effective communication and co-operation between Home and School.
3. A broad curriculum emphasising the importance of literacy and numeracy and designed to develop lifelong knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow our children to

become responsible citizens, independent explorers, creative thinkers, problem solvers, team players and reflective learners.

4. An emphasis on using the outdoor environment to engage and inspire our pupils, developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes across the curriculum.
5. An excellent preparation for entrance to a wide range of state and independent secondary schools.

PRINCIPLES

- Promoting positive relationships and behaviour is the responsibility of every adult in our school.
- Adults always model caring, calm, controlled behaviour.
- Adults focus first on those children who are behaving well.
- Minimum standards are rewarded with a simple 'thank you'. 'Over and Above' is highlighted and given formal recognition.
- As a school, we make our expectations explicit through clear routines and we are consistent in our approach.
- We have 3 simple rules which are referred to in every discussion about behaviour.

SCHOOL RULES

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Reflective

All conversations with children about behaviour refer back to these 3 rules.

Adults teach what good behaviour looks like by setting clear expectations and routines.

ROUTINES

- Signal for silent attention:
 - hand in air and embellished countdown
- Reflective questioning - for example,
 - how much effort are you putting in? Are you working with the right people?
 - End of lesson - how well did you understand? What are you still thinking about? What do you wish you had asked? Did you give this lesson your best effort? Why/why not?
- The power of clear instructions and expectations

Practise, practise, practise is key. Praise when the children get it right; repeat when they don't - for example, if you want children to listen when someone else is talking, keep stopping until they do. Instil that the routine is followed by every child, every time, defending the high standard so that it becomes a habit.

RECOGNISING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

- A simple **'thank you'**:
 - All staff should look to thank children for positive behaviour whenever possible as this highlights the positive behaviour which we are looking for.
- **Recognition Boards:**
 - Every classroom has a Recognition Board which is used to target expected behaviours.
 - The focus can change daily/weekly/fortnightly/half-termly and is appropriate to the class/year group/key stage.
 - Names of children who are demonstrating the expected behaviour are recorded on the board.
 - The reward might be the child publicly adding their name themselves or a collective cheer, round of applause or short burst of music.
 - Peers can nominate others in the class to be recognised so the whole class can work together.
 - Names are not removed from the board.
- **Stars:**
 - Stars are awarded when a child demonstrates behaviour which is 'over and above' what is expected.
 - When a star is awarded, a star ticket is issued to the child **by the adult giving the reward**. The child writes their name on the ticket and adds it to the Star Box on their form teacher's desk. Once a week, a ticket is drawn from the Star Box and the winning pupil is rewarded with a prize.
 - Form teachers keep a tally of stars awarded to individual children.
- **House Points:**
 - When a child has received 10 stars, a house point is awarded. Children are given a coloured token to add to the relevant collection cylinder. The cylinders for children in Lower School are displayed in the Year 1 / 2 corridor and, for Upper

School children, in the main corridor near the House noticeboards. The children then continue to collect stars.

- The total number of tokens awarded to children in each of the four houses is added together and averaged according to the number of children in the house resulting in the awarding of a House Points Shield.
- A House Point Certificate is awarded when a child reaches 5 house points (50 stars).
- If a pupil achieves 10 house points, they receive a bronze star badge. When a pupil achieves 15 house points, a silver star badge is awarded. A gold badge is awarded for 20 house points.
- 5, 10, 15 and 20 house point awards are recorded in the SchoolBase Day Book and shared with parents.

- **Copthill Learner Certificates:**

- Children who demonstrate a characteristic of the Copthill Learner particularly well at any time, in any subject or activity, are rewarded with a certificate. A child might prove to be a team player in rugby or in maths.
- Certificates are stored in the staffroom and awarded during Friday's Celebration Assembly.
- Certificates are recorded in the SchoolBase Day Book and shared with parents.

- **Commendations:**

- A child might visit the Headteacher to receive special praise for outstanding behaviour. A Commendation sticker is given to the child and a certificate is awarded in Friday's Celebration Assembly.
- Commendation Certificates are recorded in the SchoolBase Day Book and shared with parents.

- **Praise at the end of the day**

- Praising a child in front of their parent at collection or drop-off ends or begins the day positively.

- **SchoolBase Day Book:**

- Note can be emailed to parents via the SchoolBase Day Book.

Teachers can use other informal rewards such as stickers, stamps, Golden Time (Reception/Year 1) and, in the Reception class, elephants within their own classroom as part of their own classroom management. The emphasis should always be on promoting positive behaviour.

RESTORATIVE APPROACH TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to ensure we maintain a safe, happy and supportive environment for everyone to learn and thrive, inappropriate and negative behaviours must be acknowledged, challenged and changed. We use restorative approaches in our work with our children.

Every member of Copthill School staff should deal with inappropriate behaviour using the stepped actions outlined below. The steps are linear in design and we are aware that not all behaviours fit such a process but, as far as is possible, these steps should be followed. Some behaviours might result in immediately moving to 'Time Out' then 'Repair'.

- 1. Reminder**
- 2. Caution**
- 3. Last Chance**
- 4. Time Out**
- 5. Repair**

Step	Action	Useful Language
Reminder	First, make a point of congratulating a child who is behaving as expected - focusing on correct behaviour. A reminder of the 3 rules: ● Respectful ● Responsible ● Reflective Deliver reminder privately if possible - don't make the poor behaviour the focus.	"I'm very impressed by how well ... is doing with ... Thank you ..." "[Name], are you ok? Do you remember that one of our rules is ...? I can see you are struggling with ... How can I help?" "Thank you for now doing ..."
Caution	A clear verbal caution delivered privately wherever possible. Make the child aware of their behaviour, again reminding of rules.	"You know ... is one of our rules. Doing ... is breaking our rule because ..." "I expect you to ..."

	Clearly outline expectation. Clearly outline consequences. Make clear, behaviour is their choice. Say you know they'll make the right choice. Walk away. Only 1 caution given.	"Every choice has a consequence. If you make this [positive] choice then [positive outcome]. If you continue with ... then ..." "Think carefully about your next step." "I know you'll make the right choice."
Last Chance	Deliver privately. Clearly explain broken rule. Clearly explain sanction > 'Time Out' in specific area. Refer to child's previous examples of good behaviour. Follow up with two minutes after lesson or at break to discuss behaviour that led to this - do this, even if behaviour improves. Walk away. Only one last chance given.	"[Name], I notice that you are [specify unwanted behaviour]" "It is the rule about being ... that you broke." "If it continues then you have chosen to ..." "Do you remember last week when you [highlight example of child successfully following rule]? That is who I need to see now." "I don't like your behaviour now but I know you can succeed." "We will talk about this at ..."
Time Out	Send to another place for a specified time. Time out examples might include moving to another seat/table; moving to another areas of the classroom; leaving a specific part of the play area Deliver request to move calmly and assertively. A few minutes for the child to calm down and compose themselves. Follow up with longer discussion after lesson or at break to discuss behaviour that led to this. 10-15 mins.	"[Name], you have chosen to keep ... and breaking our rule about ..." "You now need to go to ... for ... minutes." "We will discuss this at ..."

	Return the 'Reminder' stage for each new session/return after Time Out.	
Repair* (see below)	A restorative meeting. Most important part of the process. Focus on the outcome you want - i.e. child to learn from behaviour. Five questions is enough. Never ask why!	"What happened?" "What do you think the poor choices were that caught my attention?" "What were you thinking/feeling at the time?" "What have you thought since?" "How did this make other people feel?" "Who else has been affected? How?" "What should we do to put things right?" "How could you do things differently next time?"

Playtimes

During playtimes, for example, it is unlikely you will have seen an alleged incident, so:

- ask each child to "Tell me what happened."
- Ask children not to interrupt each other and make sure everyone involved gets a chance to talk.
- Ask who else saw what happened and speak to them as well.
- Make sure your body language and voice are calm and neutral.
- Having heard all viewpoints, summarise what happened and ask if everyone agrees.
- Most children just want to be heard, so invest time in listening.
- Offer advice about how to move forward.

Remember CALM:

C - Calm Down

- allow time to calm down

A - Acknowledge

- allow time for children to speak about how they feel

L - List

- ask each child to list what the other said. “I heard that you felt ...”

M - Move on

- find solution to compromise and move on

De-escalation Strategies

- respect personal space
- keep your tone and body language calm and neutral
- avoid making demands
- move to a quiet area
- distraction
- offer a movement break or walk
- deep breathing

Repair*

A restorative approach should be our default mode and restorative meetings should be used when behaviour has gone below minimum standards. However, we cannot expect restorative meetings to be a ‘quick fix’. It will take time for children to answer questions fully and reflect properly. Persist to build trust, develop conscience and make everyone aware of their behaviour.

Actively listen and encourage the child to talk by asking open questions, supporting and summarising. Choose 5 of the suggested questions for our older children. The highlighted 2 are perhaps most helpful for our youngest children.

When talking to the child, it might be possible to combine ‘walk and talk’ with a visit to the animals or doing a job together. Sit alongside the child, not at a desk or towering above them. Be curious about their behaviour and give reasons why changing behaviour is beneficial. Use a solution rather than a blame approach.

SEVERE BEHAVIOUR

Adults should deal with inappropriate behaviour without delegating to other staff members unless in more serious situations as suggested below.

If a child demonstrates any of the following severe behaviours, the steps outlined above can be by-passed and a member of the SLT can be called for.

- 2nd time out in same session
- severe disruption which prevents class from learning
- bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- deliberately dangerous activity
- fighting
- hate language - racist, homophobic, transphobic etc
- swearing
- vandalism
- violence

Members of the SLT to be called are:

- Judy Dimbleby
- Imogen Hesford
- Sam Bloor
- Simeon Willson
- Helen Ruberto

PERSISTENT POOR BEHAVIOUR

If a child is repeatedly receiving Cautions, Last Chances and Time Outs, then this pattern needs to be addressed through close monitoring, refocusing the child on the positive outcomes of positive choices.

Reception - Year 4 School/Home Diary

In consultation with the Lower School Lead, the Form Teacher and parents, a School/Home Diary will be introduced in which daily successes will be shared as well as areas that need improvement.

Years 5 - 6 Report Card

In consultation with the Headteacher, Tutor and parents, a Report Card might be used. This is completed by subject teachers at the end of each lesson and break time supervisors, noting successes and areas for improvement. At the end of each day, the Report Card is shared with the Tutor (or Headteacher in Tutor's absence) to celebrate positives and discuss poor choices.

Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)

Children who exhibit behavioural problems might need to have a behavioural support plan (BSP) put in place. In consultation with the Headteacher/Department Leads, SENCo, Form Teacher/Tutor, a BSP outlines the reasons why a BSP has been introduced and details actions to be taken should an incident of inappropriate or more serious behaviour occur. A BSP is written with the particular needs of the individual child at the forefront so a range of different strategies will be put in place.

If a BSP has been written, the child will be offered tailored support in recognising the reasons for their inappropriate behaviour and actions to take in order to prevent repetition. This might involve regular sessions with one of the trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) in our Learning Support Department.

Advice and recommendations might also be sought from an external agency, such as Lincolnshire Psychology Services, an educational psychologist or Local Authority Early Help Advisors.

Should the behaviour necessitate, then the Directors will discuss the possibility of suspension or expulsion. Examples of such behaviour include:

- Persistent severe behaviour described above
- Repeated bullying
- Bullying which results in serious injury

Parents have the right to have any such decision reviewed by the School Advisory Panel.

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE (including harassment and violence) - see also our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

At Copthill School, we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy (2.6).

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as child-on-child abuse. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for our children. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse. This could, for example, include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence. We recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators but all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. It is important that staff challenge abusive behaviours between peers.

Types of abuse

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. There are many forms of abuse that may occur between children and this list is not exhaustive:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying),
- discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents,
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'),
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse),
- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon,
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence),
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse,
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party,
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI generated images,
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

We develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of child-on-child abuse rather than manage issues in a reactive way.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against children by others in the school which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil;
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence;

- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school;
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student;
- indicates that children and young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can and will occur in any setting even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms, in which case it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting our pupils to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff. We support this by ensuring that our school has an open environment where pupils feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. This is strengthened through a strong and positive Relationships Education and PHSEE curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

Children should be able to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

We recognise that, even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported.

Expected action taken by all staff

Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the victim and initiator of the harm, we follow simple steps to help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm.

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts around what has occurred as soon after the child(ren) may have forgotten. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents/carers when they become involved. For example, we do not use the word perpetrator, as this can quickly create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

All staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to pupils and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff are not prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

All concerns and/or incidents are recorded and shared with the DSL. Information is shared appropriately with parents/carers.

All staff should be aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator. Support must be provided for victims, initiators and any other

children affected. Timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT - - see also our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Staff are aware of sexual violence and sexual harassment and that children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way.

Sexual violence refers to rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault as described in the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Sexual harassment means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Staff understand that when we reference sexual harassment we do so in a context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Part 5 of [*Keeping Children Safe in Education*](#) and the LSCP policy, 'Child-on-child Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse and Sexually Harmful behaviours', set out how schools should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Neither is acceptable and will not be tolerated by the school. Copthill School takes all such reports seriously and they will receive the same high standard of care that any other safeguarding concern receives. A multi-agency approach will be undertaken when responding to all such complaints; however the school will always take immediate action to protect children despite the actions of any other agency. These actions may include an immediate risk assessment in respect of the needs of the child victim and will address any risks identified to any child in respect of an alleged perpetrator of sexual violence or sexual harassment to ensure children are protected from harm. Any risk assessment will be fluid and may change to reflect any developments during the management of the case. All such reports will be managed by the DSL.

There are a number of options the school may consider in respect of the management of a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment between children and each case will receive an appropriate bespoke response once all the facts are known. Irrespective of any potential criminal outcome, the school have a duty to safeguard all children and may deal with any

such report on a balance of probability basis when considering the outcomes for children involved.

Any report of sexual violence will trigger the school to do a risk assessment to consider:

- the needs of the victim and their support and protection;
- any other potential victims;
- the perpetrators and,
- all other children, and if appropriate, students and staff if protection is required against the perpetrator.

A report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should include the time and location of the incident. The subsequent risk assessment will include any actions required to make the location safer.

This risk assessment does not replace those assessments carried out by professionals but helps the school decide on the next course of action, particularly in relation to keeping the victim and other potential victims safe from harm or distress. The assessment may result in reorganisation of classes, for example, to ensure that the victim and perpetrator are not in close proximity. It may be necessary to consider a move to an alternative school or educational setting based on the risk assessment or the decision of the court. Any decisions will be made based on the wishes of the victim, the nature of the incident and the safety of others. Actions will be taken immediately to reduce risk and undue distress and assessments will be reviewed regularly.

The outcome of a report of sexual violence may be that we will manage the situation within our own processes, request early help from the local authority, report the incident to social care or report to the Police. All reports will be reviewed and potential lessons to be learnt by the school will be considered.

We recognise in our school that reporting of the above can be difficult for children.

Therefore, we provide a range of ways in which children can let us know of their concerns and we will promote these regularly. However, there might be a situation where the young person asks the school not to tell anyone about the incident. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK

GDPR that applies. Advice should be sought from the DSL (or a Deputy DSL), who should consider the following:

- parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care, and
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. The police will take a welfare, rather than a criminal justice approach, in these cases.

Ultimately, the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children. If the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) decide to go ahead and make a referral to local authority children's social care and/or a report to the police against the victim's wishes, this should be handled extremely carefully, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support should be offered.

Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, schools should be aware of anonymity, witness support, and the criminal process in general so they can offer support and act appropriately. Relevant information can be found in: [CPS: Safeguarding Children as Victims and Witnesses](#).

As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, Copthill School will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.

We will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. Sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection with face-to-face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or

harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation. Part 5 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) outlines the unique challenges regarding social media along with potential support.

We will adopt an understanding that it could and is most likely happening in our school and not depend on reporting to dictate actions. We will develop a 'zero tolerance' approach and not judge any disclosure as 'low level' or acceptable. We understand that child-on-child abuse does not only happen in school but also outside of the setting and online. The way we respond to a concern is likely to have a long lasting impact on how others react if they wish to disclose therefore we are very aware of ensuring appropriate support is in place. We will continue to reflect on our approaches using the experiences of children and families to guide this. If we find the information to be false, unfounded or malicious, we will also reflect and act on if necessary, why this disclosure was made and any potential 'cry for help' that could escalate into a safeguarding concern. Support will also be considered for the perpetrator in order to reduce harmful behaviour and potential risk to others. It is also important to understand intrafamilial harms and identify any necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy also outlines the processes followed by the school and staff have undertaken training regarding the implementation of the policy and read it.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Teachers may only use 'physical intervention' to 'avert immediate danger of personal injury to a person (including the child himself)'

548(5) Education Act 1996

Can I restrain pupils physically?

Teachers are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils physically in the arrangements explained below. You must not use physical force to punish pupils. **Corporal punishment is not used or threatened in this school.** Force should not be used except in self-defence or an emergency, where a teacher might have to react quickly to prevent injury. You should be aware that your actions must be **considered and appropriate**; using excessive force in a situation where it is not appropriate can result in disciplinary action or criminal charges. The Education Act, 1997, added a section to the 1996 Act to clarify when teachers may use physical force to restrain a pupil. It allows teachers to use 'reasonable force' to prevent a pupil from:

- committing a criminal offence (or what would be a criminal offence if they were old enough);
- injuring themselves or others;
- damaging property;
- acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school.

The provisions of the Act **do not just** apply in the school itself. Circular 10/98 states that they apply whenever you have '*lawful control or charge of the pupil*' (para. 10).

Circular 10/98 (para. 21) suggests reasonable physical interventions might be:

- physically interposing between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding;
- pushing or pulling;
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back, or (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

Teachers must seek to avoid doing anything that '*might reasonably be expected to cause injury*' (para. 23) or '*touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent*' (para. 24). They '*should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using force*' (para. 25). The Circular makes it clear that records should be kept of any incidents where force is used: what occurred, why it was necessary and any consequences (para. 28-29). It is good practice for the school to inform parents and to discuss any such incident with them.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

The use of 'reasonable force' in schools and colleges

There are limited circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time', the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

The department believes that the adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their pupils. The department therefore expects school leaders, governing bodies, and proprietors to adopt sensible policies, which allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact. The decision on whether or not to use 'reasonable force' to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances. Advice on how to make this assessment is provided in the 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in school's' guidance.

When using 'reasonable force' in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems or with medical conditions, schools should, in considering the risks carefully, recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 (see paragraphs 92-96), for example in relation to making reasonable adjustments and their Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents, schools can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use 'reasonable force'.

- Departmental advice for schools is available at 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools'
- HM Government guidance 'Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention' sets out how to support children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties who are at risk of restrictive intervention in special education settings; however all schools and colleges may find the information helpful.