

Uplands Junior School

Use of Reasonable Force Policy

September 2025

At Uplands Junior school our aim is to provide a welcoming, secure and safe environment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE guidance issued - Feb 2025 'Use of Reasonable Force'. The school follows the principles and recommendations set out in this guidance. Our aim is to create an environment in which the use of force in relation to a pupil is unlikely.

This policy has also been written following the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: article 2 (non-discrimination), article 3 (best interest of the child), article 6 (life, survival and development), article 12 (respect the views of the child) and article 28 (right to an education).

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies relating to interactions between adults and pupils and other guidance. Specifically:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Adult Code of Conduct
- DfE Guidance (Feb 2025) "Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions in Schools"

Responsibilities

The Headteacher will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three year.

Policy Statement

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that pupils at Uplands Juniors School respond positively to the school's Behaviour Policy followed by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, may be required. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at Uplands Junior School:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where restrictive interventions, including the use of 'reasonable force' (positive handling), is necessary and;

- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur. The application of any form of restrictive intervention places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible to prevent the need for restrictive interventions.

Positive handling (use of 'reasonable force') will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed; when pupils or staff are at risk, or there is a risk of significant damage to property.

Definitions:

- **Physical contact situations:** in which appropriate physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in games/PE or to comfort pupils.
- **Physical intervention:** this may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.
- **Positive handling:** this will involve the use of 'reasonable force' when there is a risk to pupils, staff or of significant damage to property. All such incidents must be recorded on the CPOMs system using the category, "Restrictive Intervention: physical restraint"
- **Reasonable force:** Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.
- **Restraint:** A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. Restraint may also include mechanical or chemical restraint. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.
- **Restrictive interventions:** Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include use of equipment, medication or seclusion (i.e. Positive Handling Policy (Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions) Version date: July 2025 Page 3 of 6 where a pupil is isolated in a room under supervision). Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of 'reasonable force'.

Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working at Uplands Junior School has the right to:

- a recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from harm

Pupils attending Uplands Junior School and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupils needs by the staff with responsibility for their care and protection
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in the school
- be informed about the school's complaint procedure

Uplands Junior School will ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school, as set out in the school's Behaviour Policy.

Parents should have committed themselves, through the Home-School Agreement, to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that their child understands and follows the school's Behaviour Policy.

Training

All school staff who are authorised to be in charge of pupils are automatically authorised to use 'reasonable force' where necessary, as described in DfE Guidance. Uplands Junior School recognises that adults have a duty of care to act in the best interests of the children. Staff should use their own judgement and assess the risks before acting. Staff should take care to avoid injury to themselves.

Two members of staff at any one time will be receiving training through 'Positive Handling Academy' Train the Trainer programme (Mrs A Walker & Mrs T Rowley). These members of staff will train the rest of the school staff, offer support in different situations and give 1-1 CPD where required.

Strategies for dealing with behaviour that challenges others

Staff should understand that children with special educational needs, or other vulnerabilities, may exhibit behaviours that are a manifestation of an unmet

need. Staff should ask themselves, "What is this behaviour communicating?" when dealing with dysregulated pupils. Uplands Junior School recognises its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, and those in respect of safeguarding and supporting pupils with special educational needs. As a school we are keen to ensure that we do not discriminate through the application of our school behaviour policies against pupils whose apparent inappropriate behaviour may be a function of SEND needs or other protected characteristics.

Staff should consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- Verbal acknowledgment of the emotional behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain and, if appropriate, move to a designated safe space; this involves negotiation, care and concern.
- De-escalation discussions: - this is the second request for compliance - an explanation of why the observed behaviour is unsafe.
- Warning of potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil calms and is safe.
- If possible, summoning assistance. It must be remembered that a physical restraint, if required, is a safeguard, not a sanction. The child should be told that the reason for positive handling is to protect them not to punish them. At this point, it may be necessary to remove other children from the scene for their own protection.
- Physical intervention. Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.
- Positive handling (the use of 'reasonable force') to ensure the safety of the pupil, other people or property.

Uplands Junior School recognises that children in a state of dysregulation, especially those who have suffered trauma, may not be able to process the verbal and non-verbal cues from adults during periods of distress. Staff should always act in a calm and consistent manner and verbalise their intentions anyway as this indicates to other staff and pupils what is happening.

Use of 'Reasonable Force'

This section should be read alongside the DfE Guidance (Feb 2025) "Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions in Schools"

All members of school staff have a legal power to use 'reasonable force'. 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. 'Reasonable force' can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

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. It should be proportionate, legal, accountable, necessary and reasonable.

Acceptable measures of Positive Handling (use of 'reasonable force').

Positive handling can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result
- the individual needs of the pupil are taken into account
- it is likely to achieve the desired result

If the use of positive handling can be anticipated wherever possible assistance should be sought from another member of staff before 'reasonable force' is used. Following the incident, the child (if possible) should be spoken to, once calm, and encouraged to reflect on their actions.

Recording

Where positive handling (i.e. 'reasonable force') has been used a record of the incident must always needs to be kept. This incident report form (Appendix A) must then be uploaded on CPOMs and recorded as an incident. All recording needs to be completed on the day of incident and needs to include the following:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used

- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or
- potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
 - brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
 - any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Informing Parents

Parents must always be informed, as soon as practicable, following an incident where 'reasonable force' has been used. It is good practice for parents to be informed of any incident involving restrictive interventions, even when 'reasonable force' is not used. As a minimum the report to parents should include the following:

- time, date, location and approximate length of time the force was used
- brief account of what type of reasonable force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary

This requirement to report applies even if the use of reasonable force in certain circumstances has been agreed in advance as part of a pupil's risk assessment.

Following an incident of restrictive intervention a discussion should take place involving parents and relevant members of staff (e.g. SLT, SENDCO, class teacher) to put appropriate measures in place to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

Action after an Incident

The Headteacher (or SLT in their absence) will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure

Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy regarding the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Uplands Junior School Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring of Incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use a restrictive intervention, this must be recorded on the schools CPOMS system using the parent category, "Restrictive Intervention" and the appropriate sub-category. The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead should review the number of incidents requiring restrictive intervention on a termly basis. This process should address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour has repeatedly required the Positive Handling Policy (Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions) Version date: July 2025 Page 6 of 6 use of positive handling.

Policy to be reviewed: September 2028

Appendix A: USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS INCIDENT RECORD

Details of pupil of whom force was used by a member of staff(name, class)	
Date time and location of incident	
Names of staff involved(directly or as a witness)	
Details of other pupils involved directly or as a witness, including any pupils involved who were vulnerable – SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.	
Description of incident by staff involved, including any attempts to de – escalate and warnings that force might be used.	
Reasons for using force and description of force used.	
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid required.	
Follow up, including post incident support, any disciplinary action against pupils.	
When and how the parent / carer informed and any views expressed	
Has any complaint been lodged	
Report compiled by: Name: Role: Signature: Date:	Report countersigned by: Name: Role: Signature: Date:

