



THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE IN SCHOOL			
School Staff member Responsible		Assistant Head Teacher – Pastoral Deputy Head	
Policy Type	Non -Statutory	Review	3 years
Date Updated	January 2022	Next Review	January 2025

## REASONABLE FORCE

These guidelines were produced using;

“Physical Contact – Care, Comfort and Restraint” by Bernard Allen (2015), the “Team Teach Workbook” 2015 and “The Use of Force to Control and Restrain Pupils” DfE 2013.

### 1 The Rationale

At Ryburn Valley High School we create an environment where students are safe and encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Ryburn has a detailed behaviour policy and promotes differentiated learning across the school. The vast majority of our students behave well and follow the rules, but a tiny minority may lose control. As a last resort, such situations may require physical intervention.

The staff of Ryburn need to know how to safely and confidently manage inappropriate behaviour. They have to be clear about what options are open to them when all the normal systems have failed, or when there is a clear emergency situation and talking calmly to someone in danger is irrelevant. Staff need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical interventions.

School staff have the legal power to use reasonable force, and lawful use of this power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action. Senior staff at Ryburn will support staff in the lawful use of this power and will not automatically suspend a member of staff who has been accused of using excessive force.

Ryburn parents need to know that their child, and those who are teaching them, are safe and free from disruptive influences or danger. They also need to know that they will be properly informed if their child is the subject of physical intervention. The school is open to any parental queries about its policy and review.

### 2 What is reasonable force?

Reasonable force means using no more force than is needed. Ryburn will only use force to control pupils and restrain them. Control means either passive contact such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm from a

classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or bring a pupil under control. For example, if used on two pupils who refuse to stop fighting.

Ryburn staff will always try to avoid using reasonable force and will regard it as a last resort. The vast majority of crisis situations can be dealt with through calm, dignified and skilled intervention. (The use of non-confrontational approaches and understanding of messages received from body language are vital).

If reasonable force is required, only the minimum force required will be used to resolve the situation safely. How we respond to a developing situation will always take in to account the personal circumstances and age of the young person.

## **2.1 De-escalation techniques**

Except in cases where there is immediate danger, we would normally try other ways of resolving or de-escalating a situation. These could include the CALM technique;

C – Communication – positive stance, posture, gestures, facial expression. Be positive, use the student's name and emphasise you are here to help and will listen.

A – Awareness and Assessment – Read the student's behaviour – what might happen. Does the student have a handling plan. Do a risk assessment of potential dangers of the environment.

L – Listening and Learning – Give time and space – give the student a way out.

M - Making Safe – Objects and surroundings made safe.

Staff may also try;

1. Calmly re-stating the rules and expectations for the situation.
2. Removing other pupils from the situation who may be at risk through being an audience;
3. Encouraging the pupil to withdraw to a safer and calmer situation/environment;
4. Calling another adult for support or to take over.

## **2.2 Space and Stance.**

If you are between nose and elbow length from the student this is INTIMATE space and can be dangerous. You are probably too close.

If you are between elbow and fingertip length this is PERSONAL space and you are still likely in a dangerous space re kicking etc.

If you are outside fingertip space this is SOCIAL space – this may be too far away to convey a personal message.

Distances re appropriate space will vary in each situation according to the individual, the situation, gender, culture, emotional state, size, relationship etc.

### **3 Who may use reasonable force and when**

The law allows all members of school staff to have the legal power to use reasonable force. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers.

Reasonable force can be used to:

- a) Stop a pupil committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupils were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- b) Prevent a pupil injuring themselves, others or staff (including fights);
- c) Prevent damage to property including the pupil's own property;
- d) Remove a pupil from a classroom when they have refused to do so;
- e) Prevent a pupil significantly disrupting a school event or trip;
- f) Stop a pupil leaving a classroom if there is a concern they could hurt or disrupt others;
- g) Keep a pupil safe when at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

If more than minor physical intervention is judged to be necessary, the teacher or adult can call for help by alerting Pupil Services, Main Reception, or the staff on the SLT duty rota. If possible staff should:

- Send for the assistance of a qualified Team Teach teacher. Two support assistants working together without a teacher should only be used as an extreme last resort.
- Remove other pupils from the scene if possible;
- Continue to talk calmly to the pupil explaining what will happen, and under what circumstances the physical intervention will cease (but not in a threatening way);
- Use the minimum force necessary and cease the intervention as soon as it is judged safe.

#### **3.1 What is positive handling? (Team Teach)**

Reasonable force is not defined legally in isolation. It must be justified as appropriate by the circumstances. We use only the minimum force that is needed to restore safety or appropriate behaviour and we take account of the age, understanding and gender of the pupil. An uncaring attitude is likely to provoke students. The TEAM TEACH approach advocates:

- At least two members of staff
- Minimum force and time
- Maximum care and control
- Reasonable force used as a last resort – after use of behavioural management strategies

Acceptable forms of intervention in this school include all stipulated on the TEAM TEACH foundation course. (Friendly hold, single elbow, double elbow, figure of four, the wrap, etc) which allow:

- leading or guiding a pupil by the hand or arm, or shepherding them with a hand in the centre of the back;
- holding a pupil who has lost control until they are calm and safe;
- physically moving between and separating two pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- preventing immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' – for example to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone;
- the use of more restrictive holds in extreme circumstances.

It is also acceptable for doors to be locked to ensure pupil safety; as long as a member of staff is always with the pupils in such circumstances (care needs to be taken here regarding Health and Safety Fire Regulations). Staff may move, defend themselves, lead, restrain or block someone, bearing in mind the whole time their own safety as well as that of others and of the child being restrained.

It is unacceptable and likely to be illegal for staff to use any physical intervention designed to cause pain or injury including:

- any form of corporal punishment, slapping, punching or kicking;
- holding by the neck or collar, or otherwise restricting the ability to breath;
- holding by the hair or an ear;
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- tripping up a pupil or holding an arm out at neck or head height to stop them;
- holding a pupil face down on the ground or sitting on them;
- shutting or locking a pupil in a room, except in extreme situations whilst summoning support.

Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. The dignity of pupils is vital, and we need to foster their self-respect.

NB – In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to use physical intervention on intruders from outside the school community. (Again use de-escalation techniques first) The police may need to be called in extreme situations.

A list of staff that are trained in Team Teach will be available in main reception and pupil services, and will also be displayed in the staffroom.

### **3.2 After the use of reasonable force.**

Following a significant incident of physical intervention, when a pupil has resisted or challenged and force has been used, the teacher or adult responsible should, as soon as possible, inform the Headteacher. The school acknowledges that such events are stressful for both pupils and staff, and both parties will need time to recover, with the chance of debriefing and resolving the situation.

Intervention Removal Areas:

- 1st Floor – Deputy Head’s (Pastoral) Office, Ms Joppich’s Office.
- 2nd Floor – Key Stage Managers Offices, Interview Rooms, Access Centre Offices.
- 3rd Floor – Headteacher’s Office.

A full written account of the incident will be made by the member of staff concerned and recorded on an incident sheet.

**Appendix 2** (If reasonable force used by staff trained in Team Teach)

**Appendix 3** (If reasonable force used by a member/members of staff not trained in Team Teach)

The report will contain the key details needed regarding the incident, including details of any injury to any person or damage to property. An unfortunate consequence of restrictive physical intervention is that the student may suffer minor injury to prevent a major injury or safety concern: - First Aid should be given in such a situation. The sheet must be signed and dated by the member of staff and countersigned if possible by another member of staff who was at the incident. Time should also be spent after the incident to:-

- discuss the incident with the pupil. The aim is for the student to learn from the incident so that Positive Handling is not needed in the future. Monitor the student carefully for 90 minutes after the incident to check their emotional wellbeing.
- interview staff involved and any other witnesses;
- inform the pupil’s parents/carers and social worker if relevant (letter and phone call) (**See Appendix 4**)
- record any disagreements expressed by the pupil or adults about the event;
- take any appropriate further action, liaising with LEA, Governors or Unions as appropriate, and acting within the LEA’s Child Procedures.

#### **4 Planning for Physical Intervention (Positive Handling Plan: Appendix 1)**

In certain cases, a Positive Handling Plan will be created for a child. This would happen when there is a foreseeable risk that a pupil’s behaviour could require physical intervention. For example:

- A student where information has been received (Primary transition, BAC information, SEN etc) which suggests reasonable force may need to be used.
- A student who has had to be previously restrained.

This planning includes helping pupils to avoid provoking situations, helping them find success and minimise their frustration. It will develop our own skills and help us to manage potential difficulties if we spot them early enough. The pupil’s individual behaviour plan (IBP) would:-

- involve the parents and the pupil to gain their views and to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take;
- manage the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, at what stage and what type of holds to be used);
- identify key staff who should know exactly what action they should be taking. Any member of staff who may have to use a physical intervention should always be fully briefed about the child in question, and it is best if they are well known to the child.

## 5 Training

We are clear that training of staff is vital in this area if we are to adopt best practice and maintain a record of safe management of all school situations. We will make provision in the training budget to develop behaviour management in the school. Training and refreshers will be available, when needed, in restraining techniques, e.g. TEAM TEACH. After any incident Ryburn will evaluate the incident and amend aspects of the policy or individual student plan if required.

## 6 Who needs to know about the policy?

Everyone connected with the school should know of the existence of the policy and feel free to study it in detail if they wish or need to do so. However, not everyone needs to know about specific incidents. The chart below sets out the information.

Who should be informed	About the policy	About a specific incident
Governors	Governors to approve	Next Governors Meeting after the incident.
Parents	on schools website	Only incidents relating to their own child - verbal – same day  Follow up letter within 3 days ( <b>Appendix 4</b> )
Staff	on schools website	About any incidents involving pupils they may have charge of – Through IBP if needed
Pupils	Through pupil Planners	Those who witness incidents
LEA and Health and Safety Team	LEA aware through Darrell Carney	All incidents logged if information needed
Staff Union Reps	On schools website	Informed by members if needed

## 7 Complaints

We hope that by adopting this policy and keeping parents well informed we will avoid the need for complaints. Any disputes that do arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with in accordance with the “Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and non-teaching staff” produced by the Department for Education in 2012. Complaints about this policy should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

**APPENDIX 1**

**NAME** **Date of PHP Plan** **Review Date**

<p><b>ENVIRONMENTS AND TRIGGERS</b> Describe the situations which have led to a dangerous situation in the past</p>							
<p><b>RISK:</b> <i>Tick the level of the potential risk:</i></p>		<p><b>Low</b></p>		<p><b>Medium</b></p>		<p><b>High</b></p>	
<p><b>Tick and/or describe precisely what might happen</b></p>							
<p><b>Slap</b></p>		<p><b>Punch</b></p>		<p><b>Bite</b></p>		<p><b>Spit</b></p>	
<p><b>Kick</b></p>		<p><b>Hair grab</b></p>		<p><b>Neck grab</b></p>		<p><b>Clothing grab</b></p>	
<p><b>Body holds</b></p>		<p><b>Arm grab</b></p>		<p><b>Weapons</b></p>		<p><b>Missiles</b></p>	
<p><b>Other</b></p>							
<p><b>PREVENTION</b> Describe any changes to routines, personnel or environment which might reduce the risk of this happening:</p>							
<p><b>DIVERSION AND DISTRACTIONS</b> Describe interests, words, objects etc which may divert attention from an escalating crisis:</p>							
<p><b>DE-ESCALATION</b> Describe any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided:</p>						<p><b>TRY</b></p>	<p><b>AVOID</b></p>
Verbal advice and support							
Firm clear directions							
Negotiation							
Limited choices							
Distraction							
Reassurance							
Planned ignoring							
Contingent touch							
C.A.L.M. talking & stance							
Take-up time							
Withdrawal offered							
Withdrawal directed							
Transfer adult							
Reminders about consequences							
Humour							

Success reminders		
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<b>PHYSICAL INTERVENTION</b> Describe any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided:	<b>TRY</b>	<b>AVOID</b>
Help hug		
Cradle hug		
Standing wrap		
Sitting wrap		
Standing double elbow		
Half shield		
Sitting double elbow (single person)		
Standing single elbow (two person)		
Sitting single elbow (two person)		
Figure of four (two person)		
OTHER:		

**POSITIVE LISTENING AND DEBRIEF**

Describe any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided: *E.G. Head Teacher's office*

**RECORDING AND NOTIFICATIONS REQUIRED**

Parents / Carers		Social Worker		Educational Psychologist	
Behaviour Support Service		Virtual School		Others	

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**



## APPENDIX 2 - Ryburn Valley High School – Use of Reasonable Force by Team Teach staff

Name of Pupil		Date of Birth	Form /
Date and Time of incident		Person recording the intervention	
Location of incident			
Staff members involved			Job Title
Other witnesses to intervention			
De-escalation techniques used: NB number in order used			
Verbal advice <input type="checkbox"/>	Humour <input type="checkbox"/>	Space given <input type="checkbox"/>	Step away <input type="checkbox"/>
Other student removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Time out <input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal support <input type="checkbox"/>	Reassurance <input type="checkbox"/>
Direction given <input type="checkbox"/>	Calm Talking <input type="checkbox"/>	Alternative offered <input type="checkbox"/>	Distraction <input type="checkbox"/>
Planned ignoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Contingent touch <input type="checkbox"/>	Adult transfer <input type="checkbox"/>	Consequence reminder <input type="checkbox"/>
Other		Time out offered	
Response to de-escalation			
Reason for intervention (please tick)			
Immediate danger to self <input type="checkbox"/>		Potential damage to property <input type="checkbox"/>	
Disruption to immediate environment/peers <input type="checkbox"/>		Threat of absconding <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fighting <input type="checkbox"/>		Immediate danger to peers/staff <input type="checkbox"/>	
Assault/attempted assault <input type="checkbox"/>		Threats verbal/physical <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other			
What happened prior to the intervention?			

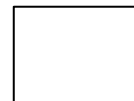
Technique used in intervention (Team Teach Techniques) NB number in order used			
Guide □	Cradle Hug □	T Wrap □	Single elbow □
Double elbow □	Friendly Hold □	Hold to chair □	Bite/Grab □

Position □	Standing □	Sitting □	Ground □
Did the position change? □□If so, to what position?			
Is this intervention an agreed strategy linked to the behaviour management plan? Yes/No/N/a			
Details of incident			
Duration of incident Hrs Mins		Duration of physical intervention Mins	
Medical intervention:			
Breathing monitored during incident Yes/No		Circulation monitored during incident Yes/No	
Injuries to young person Yes/No		Injuries to staff Yes/No	
If yes, describe injury		If yes, describe injury	
Entry in accident book Yes/No		Entry in accident book Yes/No	
Injured party seen by (circle) F/Aider GP Casualty dept.		Injured party seen by (circle) F/Aider GP Casualty dept.	
Action taken after incident			
Incident report completed Yes/No			
If yes, who supervised report?			
Any additional measures imposed			

Young Person's Comment	
Time: signature	Date:      Staff signature      Date:      Young person's
Notifications & Signatures	
Staff signatures:	Date:
Headteacher	
Parent	
EWO/Police/Social Worker/Other	

**APPENDIX3**

RYBURN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - Use of Reasonable Force by a member of staff



Details of pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff (Name, Class)	
Date, time and location of incident	
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses) including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for ALN, disability, medical or social reasons	
Description of incident by the staff involved including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used	
Reason for using force and description of force used	
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention required	
Reasons for making a record of the incident	
Follow up, including post-incident support and any disciplinary action against pupils	
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies	
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed	
Has any complaint been lodged (details should not be recorded here)?	
Report compiled by:	Report Countersigned
by:	
Name and role:	Name and role
Signature:	Signature:



## Appendix 4

Date

Dear

Unfortunately your son/daughter had to be physically controlled today in order to prevent him/her from:

- Causing injury to himself/herself
- Causing injury to others
- Disrupting the good order of the school
- Damaging property
- Committing an offence

Our intervention procedures comply with the law (Education Act 1996 Section 550A). The incident has been logged and filed.

- It was checked that your child was not hurt
- Your child was seen by our First Aider
- Your child was checked and sustained \_\_\_\_\_
- Medical attention was sought

This was distressing both for your child and the teacher involved. If we have not already done so, you will be contacted at home or by telephone as soon as possible.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss the incident further.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Lord  
Headteacher

Mrs L Clarke  
Assistant Headteacher

