



# Inspire Education Trust

Together we achieve, individually we grow

## Use of Force to Restrain Pupils Policy

Blue Coat CE Secondary School

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**Policy Date:** January 2026

**Review Date:** January 2027

## Document History

Version	Status	Date	Author	Summary Changes
V1		January 2023	Reviewed by Mrs C Milbourne, Mr D Bedford, Mrs K Arnold	New reporting mechanism (MS Form) for use of restraint.
V2		January 2024	D Bedford	No changes.
V3		December 2024	D Bedford	No Changes.
V4		January 2026	C Milbourne	No Changes

# Introduction

At Blue Coat Church of England School, our vision is “Living life in all its fullness”. We exist to equip our students to ‘live life in all its fullness’ by providing excellent education, which is distinctively Christian and inclusive of all. At the heart of this education are the values of Care, Hard Work, Respect, Integrity and Servanthood, working Together for the good of all individuals, the school and wider communities. The conviction that we are created and sustained by God for living together in families and communities is at the root of our dedication to educating for life together.

## 1. Purpose

Rarely do teachers at Blue Coat School have to intervene physically to reinstate control or restrain a student.

The purpose of this policy is to make clear the position of the school with regards to necessary physical interventions and to safeguard the well-being of students and staff if a situation or incident requires the use of physical intervention.

It is the objective of Blue Coat School to maintain consistent and safe practices in the use of handling, reasonable force and restraint.

## 2. Physical Intervention and the Law

### What is reasonable force?

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 students.

Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

‘Reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed.

As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances. For example, when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the student.

### Who can use reasonable force?

- 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 Head teacher has temporarily put in charge of students, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.
- No member of staff is required to employ any physical intervention strategy if they are not comfortable or confident to do so effectively.
- No member of staff should intervene physically if they have reason to believe that to do so would worsen the situation/incident that is taking place.
- In all circumstances where physical intervention is or may become required, members of staff should ensure that adult assistance is requested before intervention. Although it is understood that circumstances may lead to the need for intervention prior to the assistance arriving.
- Staff considering handling, use of reasonable force or restraint must provide opportunity for the student to alter their behaviour/actions before employing a physical intervention strategy and should continue to make instructions to the student and details of their intended interventions clear.
- 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).

### When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- 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.

**The law allows all school staff and adults authorised by the Headteacher to be responsible to use such force as is reasonable to:**

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight within the school.
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

**It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.**

**In most circumstances Physical Intervention is a last resort or an emergency action.**

**All staff should:**

- Endeavour to create a calm environment which will minimise the risk of incidents where the use of physical intervention may be required.
- To promote a calm, orderly and supportive school climate.
- Wherever practicable, staff will issue a warning to a student that force may have to be used

before using it.

- Quickly seek to de-escalate incidents if they do arise.
- Only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.
- Be aware of risk assessments and positive handling plans for specific individual pupils.

### **Recording Physical Intervention**

- All incidents where staff feel that they have used force to modify behaviour or conduct should be recorded on the restraint Microsoft Office Form. It is the responsibility of the intervening member of staff to complete a detailed use of restraint record form on the day that the intervention took place. This is available at the bottom of the SLT Update Bulletin.
- Staff must also notify a member of the pastoral SLT.
- The Headteacher will be informed of the intervention that has taken place.
- The DSL, AHT, HOH will inform/refer to any necessary agencies/authorities.
- The DSL, AHT, HOH will inform parents/carers.
- A full investigation will be completed by an impartial member of staff.

### **Other physical contact with pupils**

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 comforting a distressed pupil.
- 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.
- To give first aid.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

A panel of experts identified that certain restraint techniques presented an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. In line with current guidance these techniques will not be used.

The techniques in question are:

- 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.

### Appendix B

#### Definition of Terms

##### Handling

This refers to any physical intervention applied by a member of staff where it is necessary to make physical contact with a student in order to manage their conduct or ensure their own or others safety. Handling strategies may be restrictive or non-restrictive and include shepherding, guiding, supporting, blocking, confining, holding and, in the most extreme cases, restraining.

##### Use of Reasonable Force

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.

##### Restraint

The positive application of force in order to actively prevent a child from causing significant injury\* to him/herself or others, seriously damaging property or from causing disorder.

*\*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. It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indicators that if immediate action had not been taken, significant injury would have followed.*

##### Further reading

[Guidance overview: Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools)

## Appendix C

The previous form used to log the use of physical restraint can be found below. This was replaced by a Microsoft Office Form from January 2023.

### Use of Physical Restraint Record

- This form must be completed as soon as possible on the day of the event
- If more than one staff member involved, a form must be completed by each staff member.
- All language used must be factual and free from judgement

Date and time	Location for CCTV purposes	Name of pupil (s) involved	Name of staff member (S) involved	Names of witnesses

Detail of incident, including any attempts to deescalate and warnings given that force will be used	
Reason for using force and description of force used	
Description of injuries sustained by student	
Description of injuries sustained by staff	
Medical attention received by student	
Medical attention received by student	
<b>Staff Signature</b>	<b>Headteacher signature</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Date</b>

	DSL/AHT/HOH INFORMED	Parents contacted	Recorded on CPOMS	Consequence given and recorded	Agencies involved	RJ Completed
Date						
By Who						

Reviewed by:

Claire Milbourne

January 2026

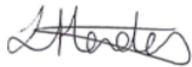
Next Review Date:

January 2027

Approved by Governors:

January 2026

Signed:



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Lisa Henden  
Headteacher



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Charlotte Marten  
Chair of Governors