



### 1. Purpose

DfEE Circular 10/98 provides guidance on Section 550A of the Education Act 1996.

The circular states that schools should have a policy on the use of force to control and restrain students and that this should be communicated to the whole school community.

This policy outlines guidance on the use of force to control and restrain students and clarifies procedures used to record such incidents.

- The policy applies to all teaching staff.
- Training should be offered to all staff in behaviour management.
- The use of reasonable force should be seen as a **last** resort.

### 2. Corporal Punishment

The law forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a student, or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation. That ban applies in all circumstances and has applied since 1987.

### 3. Planning for incidents

Where it is known that a student's behaviour might require physical control or restraint, a specific plan should be drawn up for that student and communicated to all involved (parents, staff and student).

### 4. Section 550A

This section allows teachers and other authorised staff to use reasonable force in the following circumstances:

- where a criminal offence is being committed;
- where students may injure themselves or others;
- where a student is damaging property;
- where the behaviour is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among students, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere. The action can occur on school premises or during an authorised activity off the premises.

### 5. Types of incident

There is a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a student. They will fall into three broad categories:

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# NORTH LIVERPOOL ACADEMY

## USE OF FORCE POLICY

- a. where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- b. where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- c. where a student is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

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*Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:*

- a student attacks a member of staff or another student;
- students are fighting;
- a student is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- a student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- a student is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- a student attempts to abscond from a class or tries to leave who would be at risk out of the classroom or school.

*Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:*

- a student persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- a student is behaving in a manner that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

It is the strong view of the Governors and Principal of the Academy that physical force should only be used if all other alternatives have failed.

Force should only be used in self-defence, if there is an imminent risk of injury or there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property.

Physical force should not be used to prevent a student from absconding from class unless they would be at risk out of the classroom or school.

Physical force should not be used to manage students who are compromising good order and discipline except in the most extreme circumstances when all other options – including the involvement of senior staff – have failed.

## **6. Reasonable Force**

There is no legal definition of reasonable force, but these criteria have been established:

- if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it;
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances;
- the age, understanding and sex of the student.

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### 7. Application of Force

Physical intervention can take a number of forms, for example:

- physically interposing between students;
- standing in the way of a student;
- holding, pushing or pulling;
- leading a student away from an incident by the hand or by a gentle pressure in the centre of the back;
- in extreme cases more restrictive holds might be used.

Force that should not be used includes:

- holding around the neck or any other hold that might restrict breathing;
- kicking, slapping or punching;
- forcing limbs against joints;
- tripping or holding by the hair or ear;
- holding face down on the ground.

### 8. Recording Incidents

All incidents when restraint is used must be recorded as soon as possible.

The following information should be detailed on an incident sheet together with written and signed statements of witnesses including:

- names of students involved;
- time and place of incident;
- names of staff involved.

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