

Wheatfield Primary & Nursery School



Safe Handling & The Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Rationale:

The purpose of Wheatfield Primary & Nursery School is the broad and balanced education of each child. The paramount responsibility of every person connected with the school is the safety and welfare of the children in their care. Through a sense of order and a sense of purpose the care and education of children are made more effective.

It is within this context that safe handling and the use of reasonable force may, on occasions, be necessary.

Safe handling shall be carried out in a professional way in the best interests of the child (reasonable, proportionate and justified will be the basis on which any problem will be addressed).

Aim in Relation to Safe Handling and the Use of Reasonable Force:

1. To protect every person in the school community from harm
2. To create a learning environment in which children and adults feel safe
3. To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
4. To provide both teaching and non-teaching staff with guidance relating to circumstances in which reasonable force may be used and how such reasonable force might be applied.

Reasonable Force as a Possible Necessity:

The Department of Education Circular 1999/9 quotes Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. On any occasion where a member of staff has responsibility for a pupil (in school or outside the premises) this order permits the member of staff to use "such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
3. Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise"

In Wheatfield School the use of reasonable force with children will always be as a last resort or in any emergency where it is possible that significant harm will occur if action is not taken immediately. **It will never be used as a punishment.**

Situations Where Reasonable Force Might Be Necessary:

- A pupil attacking another pupil or a member of staff
- Pupils fighting
- A pupil causing, or likely to cause damage or injury by rough play, accident, wilful action or misuse of dangerous material and items
- A pupil running in a corridor or on stairs where there is a risk of accident
- A pupil trying to leave school
- A pupil defying repeated instructions to leave a classroom
- A pupil seriously disrupting a lesson

Definitions of Safe Handling and Reasonable Force:

Reasonable Force – is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property but used in a manner which attempt to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

The use of reasonable force is only lawful if the circumstances warrant it. The degree of force used will be the minimum appropriate to the seriousness of the behaviour or incident that it is intended to prevent. It will be employed calmly and in a professional manner.

This might include:

- Physically separating pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil with hand on the back of the shoulder
- In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

Safe Handling and Reasonable Force Procedures:

- Tell the pupils to stop
- Clearly state the desired behaviour
- Tell the pupil that handling will take place if inappropriate behaviour continues
- During handling tell the pupil that contact will stop when he/she is ready to behave appropriately
- If a member of staff feels at risk send for staff support

Unacceptable and Unreasonable Force:

- Holding around the neck
- Any hold that might restrict breathing
- Kicking, slapping or pouncing
- Forcing limbs against joints
- Tripping
- Holding by the hair
- Holding the pupil's face down on the ground

Anticipating the Use of Reasonable Force:

Having completed both an individual risk assessment and an environmental risk assessment, the situation will continue to be monitored. All staff will be encouraged to report concerns relating to routines, individuals and situations that have potential to lead to incidents requiring the use of reasonable force.

If it is considered likely that a pupil will be sufficiently disruptive to require the use of reasonable force (whether for medical, special needs or other reason), the parents/guardian will be consulted and an appropriate plan of action agreed.

Teachers and Supervisory Assistant will only exercise the use of reasonable force in extreme circumstances. In an emergency any member of staff will have the authority to use reasonable force.

If a child is bruised during the use of reasonable force, this is no indicator of negligence by the member of staff who had to restrain the pupil.

Recording the Use of Reasonable Force:

- Any occasion where force is used will be recorded in full:
- The name/s of the pupil involved
- The time and place of the incident
- The names of any witnesses
- The reasons for the use of force
- An account of what happened including the pupil's response
- The outcome of the incident
- The details of any damage or injury
- Completion of PIRF1 and PRIF2 which will be copied to relevant people

Complaints:

Any complaints following the use of reasonable force will be considered according to the procedures outlined in the school's policy for dealing with complaints made against a teacher or other adult employed in the school/nursery – (Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in Schools Child Protection).

Review:

This policy has been written and agreed in response to the Department of Education Circular 1999/9 and the guidance material issued by DENI and the Regional Policy Framework of May 2004 on the use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling. It will be reviewed annually in relations to ongoing individual and environmental risk analyses, advice and training. It will form part of the school's overall Pastoral Care Policy.



**Wheatfield Primary & Nursery School
Pupil Restraint Incident Report Form**

Name (s) of Pupil (s) Involved: _____

Name (s) of Adult (s) Involved: _____

Incident Summary:

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Place: _____

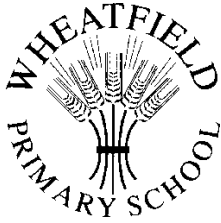
Circumstances Leading to the Incident:

Specific Details of Restraint:

Further Action:

Signed: _____

Signed: _____ **Principal** **Date:** _____



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**The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils
Incident Sheet**

Name (s) of Pupil(s) Involved: _____

Name (s) of Adult (s) Involved: _____

Name (s) of Witness' to the Incident: _____

Reasons the force was Necessary – e.g. To prevent injury to the pupil:

How the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said, steps taken to diffuse the situation, the degree of force used how it was applied and for how long:

The Pupils response and the outcome of the incident:

Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil or a member of staff and any damage to property:

Signature(s) of Teacher (s) Involved: _____

Principal: _____ **Date:** _____