



REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

Introduction:

In accordance with the DENI Circular 1999/0 Walker Memorial Primary School has established a Pastoral Care Policy for all the pupils in its charge. In addition it takes reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its staff and pupils by promoting good behaviour and discipline on the parts of its pupils.

The Education Order (NI) 1998 enables a member of staff to use reasonable force in the following circumstances to prevent pupils from:

- a) Committing an offence
- b) Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person or self
- c) Displaying behaviour, which is unacceptable to proper school discipline either in or out of class

The right to use reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil applies:

- a) When a member of staff is on the school premises
- b) Elsewhere when in charge of the pupil
- c) To all school staff with the authority of the principal. (Volunteers would only be expected to alert the member of staff in charge)

Reasonable Force:

Reasonable force can not be precisely defined but three areas should be considered before reasonable force is applied:

- i) The use of force is only reasonable when prevention of the incident cannot be resolved without force
- ii) The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident

iii) The use of reasonable force must be in keeping with the physical strength of the pupil as defined by age, sex, or disability of the child.

Predicting the Need for Reasonable Force:

Initially it is assumed that all good behaviour management strategies have been exercised. In order that staff may make the correct decision at short notice the school will have considered, in advance, circumstances when they should and should not use reasonable force.

Need for Reasonable Force:

The use of reasonable force can be considered when:

a) The school's behavioural management strategies have failed, when self-defence is necessary or when there is a risk of injury.

b) When an imminent risk is predicted, when significant damage to property is likely.

Examples of the above include: A pupil attacking a member of staff or another pupil, pupils who are fighting, a pupil causing a hazard or is at risk themselves, injury or damage by accident, rough play or use of dangerous objects etc, running in an inappropriate situation, a pupil absconding especially from the school.

c) Where a pupil is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples of the above include: A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom, a pupil whose behaviour is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Conduct During the Application of Reasonable Force:

Having considered and applied all possible alternatives members of staff should:

i) Inform the pupil what action he/she will be taking

ii) Continue by word and action to diffuse the situation

iii) Secure the well-being of all other pupils, if necessary by removing them from the area

iv) Send for assistance

Physical Intervention:

Physical Intervention could include:

- Standing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's pathway
- Holding
- Leading a pupil by the arm
- Shepherding a pupil by placing hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme cases, using more restrictive force

Unacceptable Restraints:

Staff should never act in a way that might lead to injury of the pupil. It would be therefore **unacceptable** to hit, slap, punch, twist limbs, hold inappropriately, or throw an object as means of constraint. Avoidance of holding or touching indecently goes without saying.

Not all possible situations can be included in any school policy. However it is understood that all adults will act in good faith in cases of extreme emergency.

Physical Contact:

Teachers should use their professional training and judgements to when physical contact is appropriate such as in PE lessons when coaching techniques or consoling a pupil in distress.

Reporting of the Use of Reasonable Force:

- The Principal or a Senior Leadership Team Member should immediately be informed
- School policies on recording incidents will apply and the appropriate report form should be completed when the situation has been diffused.
- Parent / Guardian of the pupil should, as soon as possible, be contacted and informed of the incident

Record of the Use of Reasonable Force:

The report on the use of Reasonable Force will contain:

- Date of incident
- Outline of events preceding incident
- Outline of incident including reason for use of reasonable force
- Action taken to subdue the incident and to support the staff / pupils involved.
- Record of any injury / treatment
- Names of other involved adults
- Signatures of reporting members of staff

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Reasonable Force Incident Report Form

Event(s) before incident		M/F	Yr
Child(ren) who has been restrained		M/F	
Staff involved(actually restraining)			
Other staff(assisting)			

Date of Incident:	Location of Incident: <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Corridor <input type="checkbox"/> Playground <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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Details of Incident: Please give as much detail as possible leading to why reasonable force was used.

Any Injury/treatment:

Staff Name: _____ Date: _____

Staff Name: _____ Date: _____

Staff Name: _____ Date: _____

Add others if required