

Rickleton Primary School



Guidance and Use of Reasonable Force

Dates of previous revision : November 2023
November 2024

Latest revision: November 2025

Approved by Governors: November 2025

To be reviewed: November 2026

Review Date	Changes made	Ratification Date by Governing Body
Dec 2013	Use of bound and numbered book and update TT trained	December 2014
March 2016	Substantial revision KCSIE CP review changes	March 2016
September 2018	Staffing updates and CPOMS record keeping	October 2018
March 2019	Staffing updates.	March 2019
January 2021	Staffing updates DSL updates	draft
March 2021	Parents are to be informed in writing following a team teach incident, as well as a telephone call	
March 2022	P.g. 2 – staff updated P.g. 4 S Wilson added as a named DSL	March 2022
November 2023	LADO number updated Updated names of staff who are Team Teach trained	November 2023
November 2024	Jemma Comrie and Lesley Reid removed from staff list	November 2024
November 2025	No changes	November 2025

RICKLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

The Governing Body of Rickleton Primary School has adopted DfE guidance on 'The Use of Reasonable Force' July 2013.

This is non-statutory advice from the Department for Education. It is intended to provide clarification on the use of force to help school staff feel more confident about using this power when they feel it is necessary and to make clear the responsibilities of headteachers and governing bodies in respect of this power.

Objectives

- To maintain the safety of all pupils and staff
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline
- To prevent serious damage to property

Staff Authorised to Use Force

All teachers and staff authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically have the legal power to use force which is **reasonable, proportionate and necessary**. This includes all teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors.

Members of staff should not put themselves at risk. An individual would not be seen to be failing in their duty of care by not using force to prevent injury, if doing so threatened their own safety.

Temporary authorisation can also be granted in specified circumstances such as volunteer parents helping on a school trip but this is under specific direction of a supervising member of staff.

However there are some key staff who are trained to a higher level who are used where possible as first responders – see Team Teach Approach.

Minimising the Need to Use Force

Use of force is only used as a last resort and procedures are in place at Rickleton Primary School to create a calm and orderly environment and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. ¹Effective relationships are developed between all members of our school community and PSHE and SEAL activities support pupils in managing conflict and coping with feelings. The ethos of the school behaviour policy is that positive management is used to prevent critical incidents and de-escalation techniques are used to reduce the risk for the use of reasonable force to be required.

During any physical intervention injuries may accidentally and regrettably occur as a side effect when keeping people safe.

Definitions

There is no statutory definition of 'reasonable force'. It depends on:-

- whether the force used is justified in the context in which the misbehaviour takes place.
 - whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent.
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Actions must be judged by the professional to be **reasonable, proportionate and necessary**.

In schools force is generally used for two different purposes – to ‘control’ and to ‘restrain’ pupils
Control means either passive contact (standing between pupils) or active physical contact (leading a pupil by hand or arm)

Restraint is when staff physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing when told to stop, or when involved in a fight

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

According to DfE guidance on ‘The Use of Reasonable Force’ July 2013. **reasonable force can be used in the following circumstances:-**

- 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 in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Team Teach Approach

Key staff across all areas of school have attended accredited specific training in the Team Teach approach to managing pupils. This training requires the school to abide by the principles of Team Teach and ensure consistency of approach and regular update training. The training is delivered through the Pupil Referral Unit staff who are accredited training providers. Staff are certificated after attending a one day course which covers de-escalation and safe holds and pupil guidance techniques.

Currently the following staff are trained in Team Teach intervention:

Jan Price
Alan Baker
Sarah Wilson
Sally O’Connor
Hannah Dhinsa
Charlotte Meredith
Helen Couling
Gail Banks
Lisa Johnson
Sam Hallimond
Heather Laidler
Lisa Ramshaw

Pupils with SEN or Disabilities

The SENCO is directly involved in reviewing the needs and management programme of pupils with SEN and behavioural difficulties. An Individual Behaviour Plan is prepared where it is known that

force is more likely to be used to restrain a particular pupil, such as with a pupil with SEN or poor behaviour. This gives clear guidance on 'positive handling plans' and takes into account issues identified on a pupil's statement. Staff coming into contact with such vulnerable pupils need to be made aware of situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and what de-escalation strategies are likely to work.

Parents are made aware that such a risk assessment is in place for their child and the school seeks express written consent from the parent to inform staff about their child and acknowledging that physical restraint may at times be necessary.

Pupils experiencing difficulties should also be given guidance/ strategies to cope when faced with times of crisis.

Post Incident Support

Care is taken after an incident to ensure both staff and pupils are supported including meeting immediate medical needs, rebuilding relationships and reflecting on the incident so lessons can be learned.

There is no specified time for this to occur, listening and learning can only begin when the pupil is ready. The choice of a quiet, calm environment is important during this time, as is the body language used by the adult. The discussion should take place without blame, but share the perspective of other people involved, and explore alternative actions to reduce the chance of a repetition.

Recording and Reporting Significant Incidents

The Governing Body ensures appropriate procedures are in place for recording and reporting significant incidents where a member of staff has used force on a pupil.

An incident is significant and requires a written record when the answer is 'yes' to any of the following questions:-

- did the incident cause injury or distress to a pupil or member of staff?
- even though there was no apparent injury or distress, was the incident sufficiently serious in its own right to require a written record? (ie involved restrictive holds)
- is a written record needed to justify use of force? (especially when judgement finely balanced)
- is a record needed to help identify and analyse patterns of pupil behaviour or staff training needs?
- Were other agencies involved, such as the police?

Rickleton Primary School uses a commercially produced Bound and Numbered Book. This is a record book specifically for the logging of the use of reasonable force. All records must be made by the member(s) of staff who carried out the intervention and the details of all events are countersigned by either the HT or DHT (in absence of HT). The Bound and Numbered Book ensures that records are consistent and kept in a single place and cannot be altered, removed Or lost. The book is held in a secure place in the Headteacher's office.

All injuries are also recorded in line with other school procedures (see first aid policy etc)

Parents, as soon as is practicable, are told when and where the incident took place, why force was used, what force was used, whether there were any injuries and what follow up action (support and /or disciplinary) was being taken in relation to their child. This is also followed up in writing.

If a child is subject to a care order the local authority is also informed. (If reporting the incident to a parent may result in significant harm to the child then the LA is informed.) If appropriate other external agencies are informed such as the Safeguarding LA Officer, the Health and Safety Executive and any other agencies involved in the support of the pupil.

Complaints and Allegations

All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated. The process used for complaint should be the schools complaints procedure. Designated safeguarding leads in the school : J Price HT, A Baker DHT, S O'Connor AHT and S Wilson AHT will refer complaints first to the Governing body or if of a significant nature involving allegation against a member of staff direct to the LADO 0191 5613901

Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.

Suspension will not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. The school will refer to the “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff” guidance where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.

The school will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.

If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school will ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.