



AYSGARTH SCHOOL

EYFS Reasonable Force Policy

Reviewed: January 2026

Member of Staff responsible for this policy: Anna Brown

To be reviewed September 2026

Aysgarth School complies with all statutory requirements, as amended, from time to time. The principles of 'reasonableness' and 'proportionality' are used at all times in respect of the use of force and restraint.

Purpose

The School uses this policy to protect every person from harm, to protect all pupils against any unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful physical intervention, and to ensure all of our staff know what constitutes appropriate use.

The School is fully aware of and committed to its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff should always act in accordance with our policy on behaviour and discipline.

This policy aims to make clear when such force might be used, so that parents, staff, and pupils understand our practice and can support in the unlikely event that this form of control will be required.

Our School staff have the power to use 'reasonable' force to protect from harm. Correct and lawful use provides a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.

Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

The School's Senior Leadership Team will support staff when they appropriately use this power, including any person who has been put in charge, temporarily, of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying our children on a school-organised visit.

Introduction

Use of physical force is not usually necessary. However, should this ever be required, then it is the aim of this policy to clarify the power of teachers and other staff and volunteers who have lawful control or who are in charge of pupils.

The provision applies when a teacher or authorised person is on the school premises and when the person has lawful control or charge of the pupils elsewhere, for example, on a school trip.

This policy does not authorise the use of corporal punishment or threat of corporal punishment in any circumstances, nor is it intended to encourage the use of inappropriate force. Aysgarth School does not permit the use, or threatened use, of corporal punishment during any activity, whether on or off the school premises, under any circumstances. Moreover, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requires that corporal punishment is not given by any person who cares for or is in regular contact with a child, or by any person living or working in the premises where care is provided. The School is aware that if we fail to meet this standard, then we would be committing an offence.

The School will never threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a child's well-being.

There are a variety of circumstances in which reasonable restraint may be appropriate or necessary to control or restrain a pupil. Wherever possible, if this is anticipated, appropriate steps should have been taken beforehand to plan appropriate responses.

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force.

This policy takes fully into account the most recent DfE non-statutory guidance entitled Use of Reasonable Force (DFE, June 2025).

Reasonable Force

Force is usually used to control or restrain. For example, guiding a pupil to safety by the arm, or where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent injury or aggression.

‘Reasonable’ is using no more force than is needed.

Control is usually about passive physical contact, such as standing between two pupils or blocking a pupil’s path, or indeed guiding them out of the room by leading them by the arm.

Restraint refers to holding back physically or bringing a pupil under control. We would only use this strategy in more extreme situations where physical intervention is the only option.

We would always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in highly extreme cases, this may not always be possible.

The decision as to whether or not to intervene physically is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will always depend on the individual circumstances.

Wherever possible, staff will have exhausted the full range of behaviour management strategies in the Behaviour Policy, which are aimed at preventing the situation from reaching the point at which physical intervention becomes necessary. Restraint is a last resort after all efforts to defuse any situation have been taken.

There are many alternative strategies which should be used by staff initially in situations, such as:

- An instruction is repeated until the pupil complies.
- Use of a distractor, such as a whistle, to interrupt behaviour long enough for verbal methods to take effect.
- Withdrawal of attention from the rest of the class/group when they act as an audience.
- Avoiding confrontation.
- Use of humour until tempers have been alleviated.

Use of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force may be used in the following circumstances:

- To remove pupils from the classroom if they have refused to follow an instruction to do so in the interest of the safety of others and/or the child themselves.
- To prevent a pupil from behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, on a school trip or visit.
- To prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom where allowing them to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- To prevent a pupil's physical outburst in the playground.
- To restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- To prevent a pupil, member of staff or volunteer from being harmed.

Force is never used to punish a pupil, as to do so would be unlawful.

Training for Staff

We carry out a risk assessment for any individual pupil for whom we believe that control or restraint may be needed. As appropriate to our school population, our Senior Leadership Team will consider the needs of any of our staff who should be trained in effective techniques. The Head will consider carefully if any staff member requires any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and care for any individual pupil's needs.

Information for Parents

We will always speak to any parent about any incidents involving the use of force or physical intervention. We will make a written record of such, noting timings, any witnesses and staff names involved, in the School's Physical Restraint Log. Also, we will outline the antecedents and consequences, including any injury sustained and subsequent treatment. We will also record when parents are informed and by whom, as well as making a note of parental responses.

With regard to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years, we will ensure that we fully comply by informing parent/carer(s) on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

All complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with our Complaints Policy. The onus will be on the complainant to prove that their allegations are true.