



DEAN CLOSE
**KINGHAM HILL
SCHOOL**
OXFORDSHIRE

POLICY DOCUMENTS

Citation	This document shall be cited as: Control and Restraint of Pupils
Person responsible	Second Deputy
Comments to	Second Deputy
Last reviewed/updated	September 2025
To be reviewed/updated	September 2026
Reason for review/update	Regular review cycle
Person reviewing/updating document	Second Deputy
Source/Author of document	
Implementation of the policy	On-going

Control and Restraint of Pupils

1. General

- At Kingham Hill School the likelihood of needing to use force is extremely remote and must only be used as a last resort.
- All teaching staff are authorised to use reasonable force when circumstances dictate, as are other employees of the School who find themselves in the position of being the senior adult present at a specific time, e.g. SSI, Catering Manager.

2. Types of incident

- There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil. They will fall into three broad categories:
 - Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
 - Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property
 - Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.
- Examples of situations that fall within one of the first two categories are:
 - A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
 - Pupils are fighting
 - A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property
 - A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
 - A pupil 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 pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave School (N.B. this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at School).
- Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:
 - A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
 - A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

3. Reasonable force

- There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'. So it is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case.
- There are two relevant considerations:
 - The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.
 - The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
- Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding, and sex of the pupil.

4. Practical considerations

- Before intervening physically a teacher should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. The teacher should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the pupil.
- Sometimes a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help (unless it is an emergency). For example, when dealing with an older pupil, or a physically large pupil, or more than one pupil, or if the teacher believes he or she may be at risk of injury. In those circumstances the teacher should remove other pupils who might be at risk, and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary phone the Police. The teacher should inform the pupil(s) that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives the teacher should continue to attempt to defuse the situation verbally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

5. Application of force

- Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:
 - Physically intervening between pupils
 - Blocking a pupil's path
 - Holding

- Pushing
 - Pulling
 - Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
 - Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or, if necessary, using more restrictive holds.
- In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take action, consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force'; for example to prevent a pupil running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.
 - In other circumstances staff should not act in a way that reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:
 - Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
 - Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
 - Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
 - Tripping up a pupil
 - Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
 - Holding a pupil face down on the ground.
 - Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.
 - Where the risk is not so urgent the teacher should consider carefully whether, and if so when, physical intervention is right. Teachers should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using force. All teachers need developed strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations which they should use to defuse and calm a situation. In a non-urgent situation force should only be used when other methods have failed.
 - That consideration is particularly appropriate in situations where the aim is to maintain good order and discipline, and there is no direct risk to people or property. As the key issue is establishing good order, any action which could exacerbate the situation needs to be avoided. The possible consequences of intervening physically, including the risk of increasing the disruption or actually provoking an attack, need to be carefully evaluated.
 - The age and level of understanding of the pupil is also very relevant in those circumstances. Physical intervention to enforce compliance with staff instructions is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils. It should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management.

6. Recording incidents

- It is important that there is a detailed, written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where force is used. It may help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful should there be a complaint.
- The School should keep an up-to-date record of all such incidents, in an incident book which is maintained by the Head. Immediately following any such incident the member of staff concerned should tell the Head or a senior member of staff and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. That should include:
 - The name(s) of the pupil(s) involved, and when and where the incident took place
 - The names of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident.
 - The reason that force was necessary
 - How the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long
 - The pupil's response, and the outcome of the incident
 - Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, or a member of staff and of any damage to property.
- Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative of their professional association when compiling a report. They should also keep a copy of the report.
- Incidents involving the use of force can cause the parents of the pupil involved great concern. It is always advisable to inform parents of an incident involving their child, and give them an opportunity to discuss it. The Headmaster, or member of staff to whom the incident is reported, will need to consider whether that should be done straight away or at the end of the school day, and whether parents should be told verbally or in writing.

7. Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances

- There are other occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons, sports coaching, or DT (Please see policy on contact with pupils), or if a member of staff has to give first aid. Young children and children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Teachers will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.
- There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background, or because they have been abused. It is important that all staff receive information on these children.

In addition, the School will need to develop clear common practice towards particular groups of children and events. There should be a common approach where staff and

pupils are of different sexes. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence, and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Rob Jones

Last reviewed: September 2025

To be reviewed: September 2026