



WREN'S NEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Key Policy 2025-2026

Use of Reasonable Force Policy and Guidelines

September 2025

Document to be read in conjunction with ***other key school policies (listed within document)***



Wren's Nest Primary School



Use of Reasonable force and Guidelines

September 2025

Introduction and background to the policy: The use of restraint in schools – the legal position

A provision (Circular 10/98) came into force on 1 September 1998 (Section 550A of the Education Act 1996) clarifying the powers of teachers and other staff who have lawful charge of pupils, to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a crime, causing injury or damage; or causing disruption.

Neither the Act nor the circular authorises the use of corporal punishment in any circumstances. Nor are they intended to encourage the use of inappropriate force.

Education Act 550A allows staff to use such force as is reasonable in all circumstances to prevent a pupil doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- a) Committing a criminal offence
- b) Injuring themselves or others
- c) Causing damage to property (including pupil's own property)
- d) Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among the pupils.

The law covers staff whether at school or when he/she has lawful control elsewhere e.g. on a field trip or visit.

Action in self defence: Everyone has the right to defend himself or herself against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.

Types of situations cited in the circular fitting a) and b) above:

- A pupil attacking another member of staff or another pupil
- Pupils fighting
- A pupil engaged or on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A pupil causing or at risk from causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A pupil running in a corridor in a way which might cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school
(NB this only applies if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)

Types of situations cited in the circular fitting d) above:

- A pupil persistently refusing to follow an instruction to leave a classroom
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Use of Reasonable Force

To support the set legislation, in 2013 a document was published by the DFE - 'The Use of Reasonable Force' - to set out protective measures, for children, parents and staff. This document was introduced to ensure all parties understood 'Reasonable Force' and how it can and cannot be used in schools and by practitioners.

What is reasonable force?

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". It will always depend on the circumstances of the case.

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 (e.g. trivial misdemeanour)
- 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.

The approach prior to restraint

Before intervening physically a teacher should, wherever practical:

- 1) **Use de-escalation strategies to try to calm the pupil and distract them.** Ask the pupil misbehaving to stop in a non-confrontational manner - "I can see you are unhappy and I need to find out why you are upset. Let me help you."
At Wren's Nest, we believe de-escalation is at the heart good behaviour management. Whole school de-escalation training has been delivered and has been filtered down into everyday classroom practice. Giving children a 'get out' option early is a strategy advocated at Wren's Nest. This allows them to put right behaviours they have displayed before further escalation of a situation occurs.
- 2) If the behaviour escalates further, remind the pupil you are there to help and what will happen if he or she does not stop. "I can see you are upset. I am here to help. Let's stop banging the door now - I don't want you to hurt your fingers. We can sort this out together. Let's go and find a quiet space. If we can't sort this together, I will get a Learning Mentor to help you."
- 3) If the de-escalation strategies are proving unsuccessful at this time, ask a child to get a Learning Mentor for assistance with the situation.

Restraint approach used by staff at Wren's Nest



At Wren's Nest, several members of staff have received Positive Handling training by an external training provider - 'Team Teach.'

All staff had de-escalation training – the strategy we employ first.



From the Team Teach website:


www.teachteach.co.uk



About Team-Teach

Our aim: through the promotion of de-escalation strategies and the reduction of risk and restraint, to support teaching, learning and caring, by increasing staff confidence and competence, in responding to behaviours that challenge, whilst promoting and protecting positive relationships. Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) approaches are entirely compatible with Team-Teach. For more information, see links: "Keypoints About Training" and "Training Options".

Our results: Team - Teach training has received the highest level of award in the U.K - a National Training Award - This government supported award is presented to entries who have demonstrated exceptional achievement through training and development. Judges were impressed by the support infrastructure and the robust quality control and assurance processes. They observed that it was a clearly needed service and its innovative approaches have delivered significant benefits to schools/services and local authorities/employers. See the NTA document: "Helping Teachers Manage Challenging Behaviour" within the Case Study/Research area of the web site.



Team Teach training aids staff to develop their understanding of:

- Positive Handling Strategies have sufficient range and flexibility to be appropriate across the age and development range, for both the intentional and non-intentionally "challenging" individual.
- The physical techniques provide a gradual, graded system of response commensurate with the situation, task and individuals involved, allowing for phasing up or down as dictated to by the circumstances at the time.
- The use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.
- How to employ positive handling strategies safely.

- There is an emphasis on appropriate and targeted verbal and non-verbal communication. During a restraint, what you say and how you communicate it is vital to continue to de-escalate the situation.
- The aim is for the person to calm down sufficiently so that staff can return the physical control and help find a better way.
- A calm approach with staff using (Communication, Awareness /Assessment Listening/Looking and Making Safe skills) is expected at all times when managing such situations.
- Staff are encouraged to make a risk assessment, both before, during and after any serious incident involving positive handling. Running parallel with this risk assessment is the "duty of care" question they have both to the service user and themselves.

Trained Team Teach staff at Wren's Nest:

- Mrs Sarah Parkes - Headteacher
- Mrs Hannah Smith - DSL, Reading Leader and Attendance Champion
- Miss Melissa Wyer - Y3/4 Phase Leader and Science lead
- Mrs Sarah Abbiss - Y5/6 Phase Leader and Healthy Living Lead
- Mrs Gemma Donaghue - Assistant SENCO and Lead teacher in Shooting Stars
- Mr Steve Butler - Senior Leader and Maths lead
- Mrs Jane Round - Senior Learning Mentor
- Mrs Jill Bayliss - Senior Learning Mentor
- Mrs Jayne Neale - Learning Mentor
- Mrs Claire Malpass-Barrows - Learning Mentor
- Mrs Rachel Bytheway - Learning Mentor
- Mrs Stacey Warmer - Play Worker
- Miss Chloe Bridge - Teacher for Shooting Stars
- Mrs Clare Beale - TA for the Nurture Group
- Mrs Nicola Blewitt - Nurture Group Manager
- Mrs Josie Rogers - TA for the Nurture Group

There are other members of staff who have been previously Team Teach trained and have an understanding of the techniques used.

There are some children that have been identified who require a personal Risk Reduction Plan in place due to their level of need in school. These are kept sensitively in classrooms where children work. An example is found in Appendix 1.

The application of force - what might it be or look like?

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupils path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by hand or arm using the Team Teach approach and techniques
- 'Shepherding' a pupil away by using Team Teach techniques
- In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds carried out by trained Team Teach staff.

Specific Guidelines for Staff

- ✓ Always try to use other strategies before using physical intervention. Wren's Nest always tries to de-escalate situations as part of our embedded strategy and provision. ALL staff are regularly trained with up-to-date de-escalation strategies by reputable behaviour consultants.
- ✓ If de-escalation is proving unsuccessful, seek immediate assistance from a Learning Mentor, SLT, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

Specific Guidelines for trained Team Teach Staff

- ✓ Always try to use other strategies before using physical intervention. Wren's Nest always tries to de-escalate situations as part of our embedded strategy and provision. ALL staff are regularly trained with up-to-date de-escalation strategies by reputable behaviour consultants.
- ✓ Follow the guidance on appropriate restraint listed above
- ✓ Always use the minimum force necessary for the circumstance - use your professional judgement.
- ✓ Seek assistance as soon as possible.
- ✓ Hold the pupil for the minimum time necessary
- ✓ Try to have another adult who can act as a witness to the incident.
- ✓ Do not put yourself at risk by being alone with one or two children in a situation where physical intervention may be necessary.
- ✓ Report the incident to the Headteacher (or Deputy in HT absence) and complete an incident log with DHT/HT.
- ✓ Inform parent of behaviour incident and preventative measures implemented to prevent child from being unsafe/hurting self or others.

KEY things to remember:

- The member of staff involved with holding a pupil should continue to talk to them during the incident, trying to distract and de-escalate the situation with other conversation and also making it clear to the pupil that restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
 - e.g. "I will take my hand from your shoulder when I can see you are starting to calm down. You will have stopped throwing the cushions. I will know you are beginning to calm down then and are ready to talk."
- A calm measured approach must be used. Teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or acting out of anger or to punish the pupil.
- Sometimes a member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help - if you are at risk from injury yourself. In these circumstances, remove the other children who may be at risk and summon assistance. The member of staff should inform the others that she/he has sent for help and until assistance arrives, the teacher should continue to try and defuse the situation by talking and try to prevent the incident escalating.

A summary of reasonable force and what it means at Wren's Nest:

In some circumstances, staff may use reasonable force to restrain a pupil to prevent them:

- Causing disorder
- Hurting themselves or others
- Damaging property

Incidents of physical restraint must:

- **Always be used as a last resort**
- Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Never be used as a form of punishment
- Be recorded and parents informed.

Other Related Policies

Other relevant information that should be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- Behaviour Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force (DFE 2013)
- Child Protection Policy
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Exclusion Policy

Monitoring and Review


The whole policy is available for all parents from the school office and published on the school website. <http://www.wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk/>

The Deputy Headteacher and the Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Governors will review the policy annually.

Date: September 2025

Review date: September 2026

Appendix 1



Wren's Nest Primary School

Risk & Restraint Reduction Plan

Name: _____ **Setting:** Wren's Nest Primary School

TRIGGER Behaviours: (Describe common behaviours/situations which are known to have led to Positive Handling being required. When is such behaviour likely to occur?)

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TOPOGRAPHY of Behaviour: (Describe what the behaviour looks/sounds like)

•

PREFERRED Supportive and Intervention Strategies: (Other ways of CALMing such as behaviours, Describe strategies that, where and when possible, should be attempted before handling techniques are used) TICK appropriate

<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal advice and support	<input type="checkbox"/> Distraction (known key words, objects, likes, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Reassurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Take up time
<input type="checkbox"/> CALM talking/stance	<input type="checkbox"/> Time out (requires a written plan)
<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal (requires staff/other observation)
<input type="checkbox"/> Choices/Limits	<input type="checkbox"/> Cool off: Directed?/offered? Time out allowed to calm
<input type="checkbox"/> Humour	<input type="checkbox"/> Contingent Touch
<input type="checkbox"/> Consequences	<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer Adult (Help Protocol)
<input type="checkbox"/> Planned Ignoring	<input type="checkbox"/> Success Reminder
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others?

Praise Points/Strengths: (areas that can be develop and built upon) Please state at least 3 Bridge Builders

1.

2.

3.

Medical Conditions that should be taken into account before physically intervening. E.g. asthma, Brittle Bones

Preferred Physical Interventions: (Describe the preferred physical techniques and Restrictive Physical Interventions (holds): standing, sitting, ground, stating numbers of staff, what 'get outs' that can be used when holding etc.)

De-briefing process following incident: (what is the care to be provided restoratively?)

Recording and Notifications Required:

Setting/Placement	
Name of setting: Wren's Nest Primary School	
Staff Name:	Signature:
Staff Name:	Signature:
Staff Name:	Signature:
Senior Leadership Staff Name:	Signature:
Parents/Guardians	
Name:	Signature:
Name:	Signature:
Date:	Review Date: