



Use of reasonable force policy and procedures

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1 Context

Hope Community School is recognisable by the quality of its community within which Christian principles are fostered, both within the curriculum and through the relationships which exist between pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, governors, and the wider community. It strives to be a welcoming place offering the support necessary for individuals to develop and achieve fully their potential.

In accordance with school values and Government guidelines, the use of reasonable force is emphasised in section 135- 139, of the DFE's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 which all staff at Hope Community School have to read and understand. It reiterates that there are some circumstances when reasonable force might be a possibility, or it might be part of a strategy to deal with an incident of very challenging behaviour. Also, where relevant, individual plans are created in order to minimise the likelihood of challenging behaviour, and when it does occur, that there is less use of physical restraint and other restrictive methods.

Our approach is in line with the DFE guidance on the use of reasonable force. On the rare occasion staff are put in situations where they have to use reasonable force or physical restraint to ensure the health and safety of pupils. This policy outlines process and procedures involved.

2 Objectives

- To protect staff and pupils
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline
- To prevent serious damage to property
- To reduce the likelihood of actions by staff being successfully challenged in the courts

3 What is reasonable force?

- a) The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most class staff at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- b) Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- c) 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- d) As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- e) Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- f) School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

4 Minimising the need to use force

It is important to have a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind. The School views the use of reasonable force as a last resort for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment. Staff will follow the Behaviour to manage behaviour positively and reduce the need for the use of reasonable force.

Wherever practicable, staff will issue a warning to a pupil that force may have to be used before using it.

5 Staff authorised to use force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Principal has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on a school organised visit. All teachers and members of staff, who have the Principal's authorisation to be in control of or take charge of pupils, automatically have the power to use force.

In line with DfE guidelines, Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student.

6 Deciding when to use force

Staff can use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Causing personal injury to or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Any force used must be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The greater the potential for injury, damage or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified:

- Pupil attack on staff or pupil
- Pupils fighting
- Damage to property
- Rough play
- Use of dangerous objects
- Absconding if likely to involve safety

7 Using reasonable force

Wherever possible, staff should tell the pupil to stop and be calm and measured. They should not give the impression of acting out of anger, frustration or punishment. Force should cease quickly. Examples include: Standing between pupils, leading by the arm, hand on the centre of the back and finally, appropriate restrictive holds. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

When exercising the power to use force, we must also take proper account of any special need and/or disability that a pupil might have and recognise that reasonable adjustments may need to be made in these circumstances.

Staff working with special needs pupils will have an awareness of situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and de-escalation techniques. They will know of any previous incidents and handling strategies that are recommended.

SLT and medical staff may be called – though not necessarily waited for. They should be involved in post-incident follow up.

Reasonable force may also be used to search pupils without their consent for weapons. The Department for Education strongly advises schools not to search pupils where resistance is expected, but rather to call the police.

It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Always avoid touching or restraining in such a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

Sometimes physical contact may be proper or necessary – such as sport and first aid.

8 Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the Principal and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

9 Staff training

There may be particular needs for staff that work closely with pupils with additional needs or disability; however, training will be offered to all staff. Staff should be made aware of this policy and procedures during their Induction.

10 Recording and reporting incidents

Systematic records of any serious incident are kept using the specific form and the school’s management information system (see Appendix 1). Where possible it is desirable that there is a witness to what happened. After any recordable incident, parents should always be informed.

11 Post-incident support

First aid and emotional support will be offered for staff and pupils. Punishments such as exclusions and pastoral support programmes may follow.

12 Dealing with complaints and allegations

Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff and should contact the Principal.

APPENDIX 1 – Record of physical restraint Hope Community School

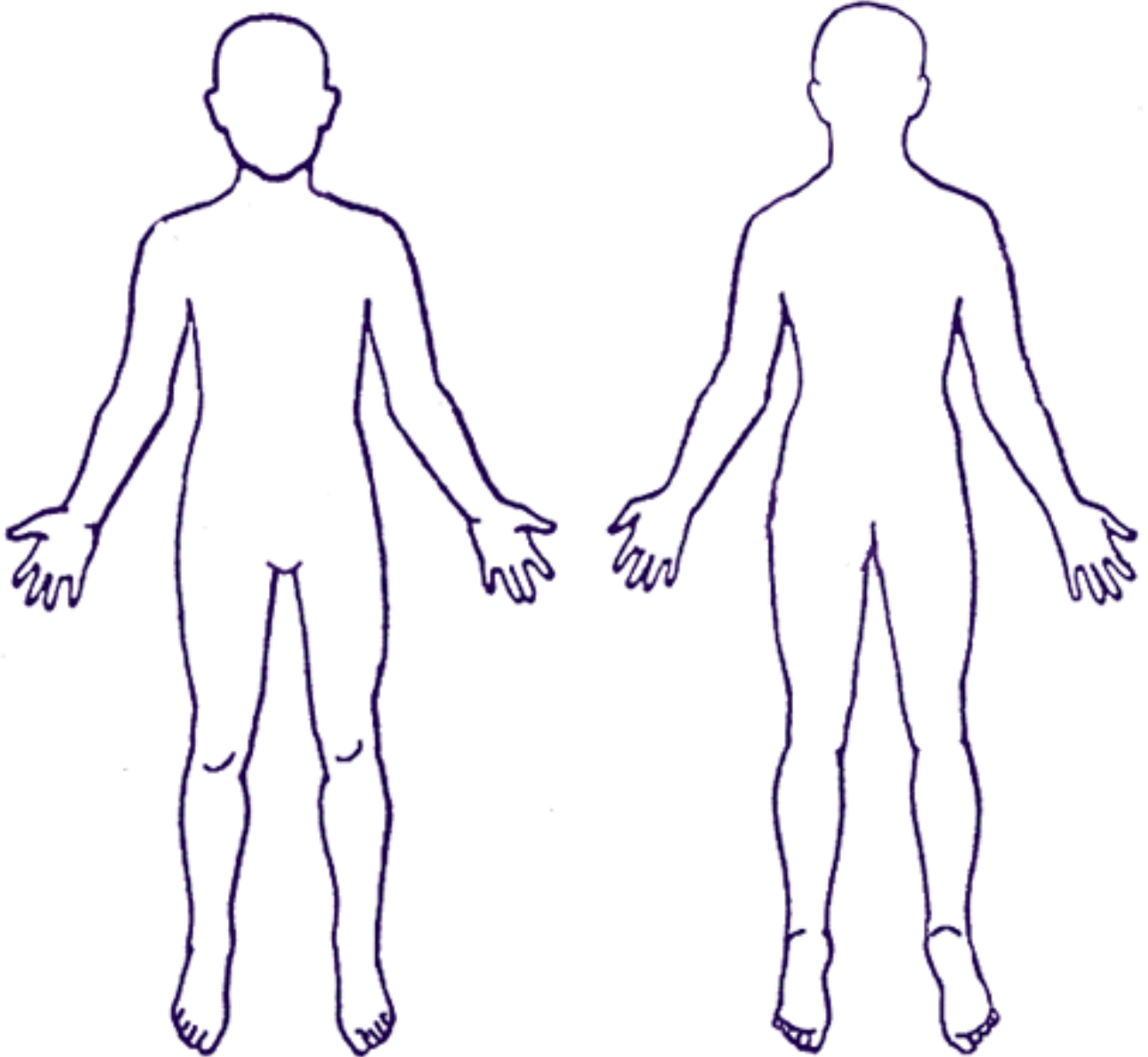
Details of pupil /pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff .

Form submitted to SLT Name of SLT _____ time/ date: _____

pupil name		class	
location		date	
staff name		time	
role of staff (tick)	directly	witness	
Details of other pupils involved	name	class	role (directly or as witnesses)
	name	class	role (directly or as witnesses)
(continue on additional sheet if needed)	name	class	role (directly or as witnesses)
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to deescalate and warnings given that force might be used.			
Reason for using force and description of force used			
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention Required			
Follow up, including post-incident support and any disciplinary action against pupils.			
staff name			
signed			
When and how those with parental		Informed by: name of staff	

responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed		When:
information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies		Informed by: name of staff When:

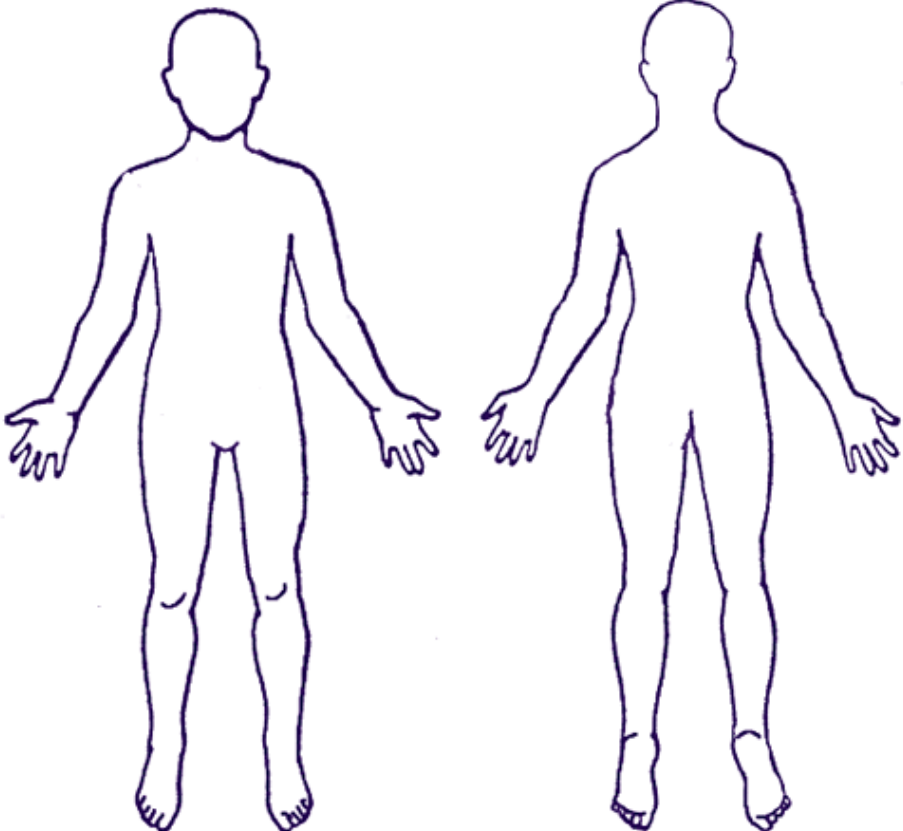
Indicate where the pupil was held.



Appendix 2 : Record of physical restraint Parent / Carer form Hope Community School

Name _____ Class _____ date of the incident _____

name of staff informing the parent / carer	
Name of the parent / carer	
date / time of feedback	
Information about the use of physical restraint	
Initial location	
What was the child doing	
Staff actions aimed at de-escalation	
Reasons for using force	
Description of the physical restraint used	

<p>Record of where the pupil was held</p>	
<p>Nature of any injury suffered by the pupil and any first aid and/or medical attention Required</p>	
<p>Follow up from the incident and including any disciplinary actions</p>	
<p>Information sharing</p>	<p>Will / has an external agency been informed of this incident? Yes / NO</p> <p>If yes, state the name of the agency and any named contact.</p>

Parent / Carer views	
confirmation of being informed of this event	Parent / Carer Name Signature date
Parent / Carer Following this meeting if you have any further response to this matter, please inform the School within 24 hours or the next working day.	

Copy: for the parent / carer

Copy for the School.