



Use of Reasonable Force Policy

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EmpowerEd Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Context and Purpose

This policy should be interpreted in the context of other relevant EmpowerEd policies, particularly the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Its purpose is to ensure that EmpowerEd provides a safe and supportive learning environment where staff are equipped to use reasonable force in appropriate situations, in alignment with safeguarding and legal standards.

EmpowerEd is committed to providing high-quality education and developing students' skills, knowledge, and experience in a safe and respectful atmosphere. This policy outlines how, when necessary, reasonable force can be used to protect students, staff, and property, or to prevent situations that compromise the order and safety of the educational environment.

EmpowerEd Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, this policy supports EmpowerEd's commitment to equality and diversity. We strive to create an inclusive environment where all individuals have equal opportunities to achieve their full potential and feel respected and valued. We oppose all forms of discrimination and ensure that no student is treated unfairly based on their protected characteristics.

Introduction

This policy establishes clear guidelines for the use of reasonable force to control or restrain students. All staff must be aware of acceptable practices and the circumstances under which physical intervention may be required. EmpowerEd strictly prohibits corporal punishment or any form of physical contact intended to punish, cause pain, or humiliate students.

EmpowerEd ensures that staff are trained in accordance with **TEAM TEACH** principles, a framework focused on de-escalation and the use of physical intervention only as a last resort. All staff are expected to understand this policy thoroughly and be trained to apply it appropriately.

Legal Framework and Policy Statement

Under the **Education Act 1997**, section 550A (introduced in 1998) clarified the use of reasonable force by staff to control or restrain students in education settings. Staff at EmpowerEd who are authorised by senior management are permitted to use reasonable force in certain circumstances, such as to:



- Prevent a student from committing a criminal offence.
- Prevent injury to themselves or others.
- Prevent damage to property.
- Maintain good order and discipline, particularly during disruptive or dangerous incidents.

This policy applies when staff are on EmpowerEd premises or when they have lawful charge of students on approved off-site activities.

Defining Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to actions necessary to prevent harm or serious disruption, applied in a way that is proportionate to the circumstances. The use of force must always meet the following criteria:

- It must be **proportionate** to the situation.
- It must be the **minimum force necessary** to resolve the issue.
- It must take into account the **individual student's age, understanding, and personal needs**.

Reasonable force is not appropriate for:

- Minor misbehaviours or situations that can be resolved using non-physical strategies.
- Actions that could be managed through alternative behaviour management techniques, as outlined in EmpowerEd's Behaviour Policy.

Positive behaviour and De-Escalation

In alignment with positive behaviour principles, the primary focus of all staff must be de-escalation and positive behaviour management. Physical intervention should always be a last resort and only used when other strategies, including verbal calming techniques, have been ineffective. Staff must be trained in these de-escalation techniques and apply them consistently.

Types of Physical Intervention

Physical intervention may involve:

- Blocking a student's path or standing between students.
- Holding, pushing, or pulling a student to guide them away from a dangerous situation.
- Leading a student by the arm or hand.
- Shepherding a student away by placing a hand on the centre of their back.
- In extreme circumstances, using approved restrictive holds, for which staff will have received specific training.



Inappropriate Use of Force:

- Never hold a student around the neck, throat, or use any force that could restrict breathing.
- Avoid holding or pulling a student by the hair or ears.
- Do not slap, punch, kick, or trip a student.
- Do not restrain a student by holding them face down on the ground.

Self-Defence

All staff have the right to defend themselves from an attack but must use only the minimum degree of force necessary for self-defence.

Recording and Reporting Incidents

Any incident where force is used must be recorded in detail, including in cases where minimal force is applied. Accurate and timely reporting ensures transparency and protects both staff and students. The record should be submitted to the Senior Management Team and include:

- The names of the student(s) involved.
- Date, time, and location of the incident.
- Names of witnesses (staff or students).
- A detailed account of the incident, including the steps taken to de-escalate the situation, the degree of force used, and how it was applied.
- The student's response and the outcomes of the incident.
- Any injuries to the student, staff, or damage to property.

Parents/carers must be informed of the incident as soon as possible, preferably the same day. Any complaints made by a parent will be investigated, and if necessary, the police or social services may become involved, particularly in cases of alleged child protection violations.

Considerations Before Using Force

Staff must consider the following before resorting to physical intervention:

- Can the situation be resolved using non-physical interventions, such as de-escalation techniques?
- Are there existing strategies in the student's behaviour plan that could be employed?
- Will using force escalate the situation further?
- Is the student at risk of harming themselves or others if intervention is delayed?

Practical Considerations for Physical Intervention



When physical intervention is deemed necessary:

- Staff should issue a **clear verbal instruction** to the student to stop their behaviour.
- Continue **talking to the student calmly** throughout the incident to explain what is happening and why.
- Maintain a **calm and controlled demeanour** at all times, avoiding confrontation or escalation.
- If possible, **seek assistance from colleagues** before intervening.
- Remove any students who may be at risk.
- Use **verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques** in line with TEAM TEACH training.

In an emergency situation where no assistance is available, staff must act in the best interests of the students, always prioritising their safety and well-being.

Positive Handling and EmpowerEd Ethos

Positive handling at EmpowerEd is part of a broader proactive approach to behaviour management, aiming to meet individual student needs through de-escalation and structured interventions. Staff must exercise their responsibilities within EmpowerEd's ethos of respect, care, and support for all students.

Staff must ensure that:

- All physical interventions are conducted with the intent of care and control, not punishment.
- The minimum necessary force is used.
- Any use of force is documented and communicated transparently to parents, carers, and relevant authorities.