

# Use of Reasonable Force Policy



**Review Date**

November 2023

**Ratified**

-

**Next Review**

November 2025

**Responsible Directorate**

Safeguarding

# Four Critical Questions

*These four critical questions make it clear who we are and what we do.  
We ask ourselves these questions to guide our work and our improvement.*

## Why do we exist?

To **transform life chances** by achieving the highest possible standards and preparing all our students to lead successful lives.

## How do we behave?

- **Hard work**  
*We are determined to see things through to the end and are resilient when faced with challenges.*
- **Integrity**  
*We do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.*
- **Teamwork**  
*We work together to help everyone succeed.*

## What do we do?

- We educate, safeguard and champion all our learners.
- We set high standards for ourselves and our learners.
- We build the powerful knowledge and cultural capital which stimulate social mobility and lifelong learning.

## How will we succeed?

1. Aligned autonomy
2. Keeping it simple
3. Talent development

# Contents

<b>1</b>	Purpose of this Policy	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	Legal Framework	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	Definitions	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	Academy 'Safety' Areas	<b>6</b>
<b>5</b>	Authorised Staff	<b>7</b>
<b>6</b>	Other Workers Within ATT Academies	<b>7</b>
<b>7</b>	Training	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	Risk Assessment and Individual Behaviour/Positive Handling Plans	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	Recording	<b>8</b>
<b>10</b>	Monitoring Incidents	<b>8</b>
<b>11</b>	Guidance	<b>9</b>

# 1 | Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1 This policy has been developed in line with DfE guidance, January 2013 entitled *Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*. This document has been prepared to assist all staff and volunteers working within ATT academies.
- 1.2 There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use *reasonable force* to safeguard children and young people. The term *reasonable force* covers a broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. '*Reasonable*' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a student by the arm out of the classroom.
- 1.3 Every effort will be made to ensure that staff in our academies:
- Clearly understand this policy and their duty of care responsibilities
  - Are provided with appropriate training to support the management of challenging behaviour (including the use of reasonable force).

# 2 | Legal Framework

- 2.1 Reasonable force should only be used if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the child, following an analysis of the presented risks. *The Education and Inspections Act (2006)* (Par. 7, Chapter 1) stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a child from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the academy or among any of its students, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a lesson or elsewhere in the academy (this includes authorised out-of-school activities)
  - Self-injuring
  - Causing injury to others
  - Committing an offence.
- 2.2 All staff and volunteers should operate an appropriate duty of care and within policy guidance. The application of any form of physical contact can place staff in a vulnerable position. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

### 2.3 Academy staff can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom, where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts an academy event or a school trip or visit
- Prevent a student leaving the classroom, where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight
- Restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

### 2.4 Academy staff cannot use reasonable force as a punishment. It is unlawful to use reasonable force as a punishment.

### 2.5 Power to Search Students Without Consent- **In addition to the general power to use reasonable force** described above, Principals, Heads of Academy and other authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following prohibited items:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Vapes, e-cigarettes, tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Articles that the member of staff reasonably suspects have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause personal injury to, or damage to property of, any person (including the pupil).

## 3 | Definitions

### 3.1 **Reasonable Force-** *Reasonable* means ‘using no more force than is needed’ and Force is used to ‘control or restrain’.

### 3.2 **Physical Contact-** This describes situations when physical contact occurs between staff and students (e.g., in the care of students with learning difficulties, in games/PE or to comfort students).

- 3.3 **Control-** *Active control* may be used to divert a student from a destructive or disruptive action (e.g. guiding a student forward by placing a hand gently on the centre of the child's back or leading a child by the hand, arm, or shoulder with little or no force). Passive control might include moving between two students or blocking a pupil's path.
- 3.4 **Physical Restraint-** The use of force to overcome rigorous resistance; completely directing, deciding, and controlling a person's free movement. The purpose of its application should be to safeguard the person, other people or prevent significant damage to property. The level of compliance from the student determines whether the interaction is a control or restraint.
- 3.5 A physical intervention should use the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period to prevent a student harming themselves, others, or damaging property. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they might cause (see page 3 of the DfE guidance, *Use of Reasonable Force* 2013). Reasonable adjustments for students with a disability or special educational needs will be made to take account of known information about the pupil's needs and their understanding of the situation.

## 4 | Academy 'Safety' Areas

- 4.1 It should be noted that some students will refer themselves to designated areas to 'sit quietly' and self-manage their behaviour. On occasions, staff will refer students to use these dedicated areas within the academy to reduce the presented and potential risks. Should this be necessary this will be done in line with the *Use of Reasonable Force* guidance from the DfE (2013). These areas are not to be used as a punishment or sanction. While the pupil(s) are in these areas, they will be supervised by an adult at all times to ensure their safety. It is important that time spent in these areas is recorded by the academy. We will inform parents when these rooms have been used and include information as to the reasons it was used and the length of time that the pupil spent within the safety area.
- 4.2 Academies can adopt a policy which allows disruptive students to be placed in an area away from other students for a limited period, in what are often referred to as **isolation or seclusion rooms**. If an academy uses isolation or seclusion rooms as a disciplinary sanction, this should be made clear in their *Behaviour for Learning Policy*. As with all other disciplinary procedures, academies must act reasonably in all the circumstances when using such rooms. Any use of isolation that prevents a child from leaving a room of their own free will should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The academy must also ensure the health and safety of students and any requirements in relation to safeguarding and pupil welfare.

- 4.3 It is for individual academies to decide how long a student should be kept in isolation or seclusion, and for the staff member in charge to determine what students may and may not do during this time. Academies should ensure that students are kept in isolation or seclusion no longer than is necessary and that their time spent there is used as constructively as possible. Academies should also allow students time to eat or use the toilet.
- 4.4 If it is apparent that a situation can no longer be managed safely by the academy, then the decision may be made by the Principal or other senior staff to call the police for assistance.

## 5 | Authorised Staff

- 5.1 In ATT academies, all staff are authorised to use reasonable force within the context of the DfE publication *Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies* (July 2013). The Principal can legally authorise others (e.g. volunteers or parents assisting on a school trip), but caution in extending such authorisation should be exercised. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of their right to use reasonable force and in what circumstances they may use it (this right is not a basis for a legal defence in the event of an allegation of misconduct or malpractice).

## 6 | Other Workers Within ATT Academies

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of the Principal to make sure that individuals entering the site to work are aware of the nature of the students and are offered some guidance in what to do if an incident occurs or is witnessed.

## 7 | Training

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of the Principal to arrange suitable training for all staff. No member of staff will be expected to use a physical intervention without the appropriate training, led by authorised training providers. **The Director of Safeguarding should be contacted to arrange training from the registered trainers within ATT staff.**

- 7.2 Prior to the provision of training, new staff or volunteers will receive guidance from the Principal or designated person on actions to be taken in the event of challenging and/or dangerous circumstances.

## 8 | Risk Assessment and Individual Behaviour Management/Positive Handling Plans

- 8.1 Specific assessments of risk will be made for each child as appropriate, in the context of identified behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify potential control measures.
- 8.2 Any interventions used will consider a learner's:
- Age and gender
  - Level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
  - Mental Health Needs
  - Particular special needs
  - Social context
  - Physical, medical or relevant conditions.

## 9 | Recording

- 9.1 All incidents of physical restraint should be recorded using the academy recording system, CPOMS.
- 9.2 Staff who have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force should have access to counselling and support.
- 9.3 All incidents where there has been use of reasonable force or restraint will be reviewed and scrutinised by the senior leadership team for the academy
- 9.4 Parents will be notified, as a matter of course.



## 10 | Monitoring Incidents

- 10.1 Monitoring of incidents must be part of the work of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to developing trends and to engage necessary action/intervention, including therapeutic intervention or other agency involvement where needed.

## 11 | Guidance

- 11.1 The following government guidance and ATT policies can be used for further guidance on this matter:

- *ATT Safeguarding Policy*
- *ATT Health and Safety Policy*
- *Each academy's Child Protection Policy*
- *DfE document Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2013).*
- *Each academy's Behaviour Policy*