

**Longmoor  
Primary  
school**

Advice on the use  
of  
reasonable force  
to control or  
restrain pupils

# LONGMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

## *Advice on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.*

Longmoor Primary School follows advice issued by the NAHT – January 1999, in conjunction with the school's own discipline policy as follows:

Key Points from the advice are as follows:

1. Reasonable force can be used in the following circumstances:
  - z Where a criminal offence is being committed;
  - z Where pupils may injure themselves or others;
  - z Where the behaviour is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among the pupils;
  - z When the action occurs on the school premises or during an authorised activity off the premises.
2. Three broad categories are described where reasonable force might be used:
  - 2.1 In self defence, where risk of injury is imminent;
  - 2.2 Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property;
  - 2.3 Where good order and discipline are compromised.

Examples of situations that fall within one of the two categories 2.1 and 2.2 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 attempts to abscond from a class or tries to leave who would be at risk out of the classroom or school.

Examples of situations that fall into the category 2.3 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. There is no legal definition of reasonable force, but three criteria are established for guidance:

- ◆ If the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it;
- ◆ The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances;
- ◆ The age, understanding and sex of the pupil.

Minimum force should only be used and never as a punishment.

4. Physical intervention can take a number of forms, for example:

- ◆ Physically interposing between pupils;
- ◆ Standing in the way of a pupil;
- ◆ Holding, pushing or pulling;
- ◆ Leading a pupil away from an incident by the hand or by gentle pressure on the centre of the back.

5. Force that should NOT be used includes:

- ◆ Holding round the neck or any other hold that might restrict breathing;
- ◆ Kicking, slapping or punching;
- ◆ Forcing limbs against joints (e.g. arm locks);
- ◆ Tripping or holding by the hair or ear;
- ◆ Holding face down on the ground.

6. The new DFEE guidance does not allow restraint to be used as a disciplinary action or as punishment. Each and every incident where restraint is used will have to be examined on its merits. Staff and other authorised people should be extremely cautious about using restraint and must be aware of the school policy on discipline. Everyone has the right to defend themselves against attack provided that they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.