



USE OF REASONABLE FORCE AND POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

Policy review: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

1. Statement of Intent

Fens Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for all pupils and staff.

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which the use of reasonable force is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others.
- Causing serious damage to property.
- Committing an offence.
- Seriously disrupting good order and discipline.
- Leaving a safe environment where doing so would place them or others at risk.

The school is committed to reducing the need for physical intervention through positive relationships, effective behaviour management, de-escalation strategies and proactive support for pupils.

The use of reasonable force will always be a last resort and will be used lawfully, proportionately and in the best interests of the child and others.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
- Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE)
- Behaviour in Schools Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- SEND Code of Practice

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Protect the safety, welfare and dignity of pupils and staff.
- Clarify when reasonable force may be used.
- Ensure that all staff understand their legal powers and responsibilities.
- Promote positive behaviour management and preventative approaches.
- Ensure any use of force is proportionate, necessary and reasonable.
- Establish clear recording, reporting and review procedures.

4. Definitions

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the degree of force used and the manner in which it is applied.

Any force used must be:

- Necessary.
- Proportionate.
- Reasonable in the circumstances.
- Applied for the shortest possible time.

Staff must balance the risks associated with intervention against the risks of taking no action.

Positive Handling

Positive handling includes a range of supportive strategies, including:

- Verbal de-escalation.
- Distraction and diversion.
- Reassurance.
- Environmental adjustments.
- Guidance and support.
- Physical intervention when absolutely necessary.

5. Preventative Practice

The school's primary approach is prevention.

Staff will seek to minimise the need for restrictive interventions by:

- Building positive relationships.
- Providing clear routines and expectations.
- Using restorative approaches where appropriate.
- Employing de-escalation techniques.
- Making reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND.
- Identifying triggers and early warning signs.
- Working closely with parents and external agencies.

Where pupils present foreseeable risks, individual plans and risk assessments may be developed.

6. Who May Use Reasonable Force?

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all members of school staff have the lawful power to use reasonable force.

This includes:

- Teachers.
- Teaching Assistants.
- Learning Support Staff.
- Lunchtime Supervisory Staff.
- Temporary staff.
- Agency staff authorised by the Headteacher.

While all staff have this authority, the school will seek to ensure that appropriate Team Teach trained staff are available whenever possible.

7. Circumstances When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Reasonable force may be used to:

Prevent Injury

- Prevent a pupil from attacking another pupil.
- Prevent a pupil from harming themselves.
- Prevent a pupil from running into a dangerous situation.

Prevent Serious Damage

- Prevent significant damage to buildings or equipment.
- Prevent destruction of property where substantial damage is likely.

Prevent Serious Disruption

- Remove a pupil from a classroom where their behaviour is preventing learning and all other strategies have failed.
- Prevent behaviour that creates significant risk to others.

Maintain Safety

- Stop a pupil leaving an area where they would be exposed to danger.
- Prevent a pupil accessing unsafe areas.

8. Circumstances Where Force Must Not Be Used

Physical intervention must never be used:

- As a punishment.
- To cause pain, injury or humiliation.
- To secure compliance where there is no risk.
- As a substitute for adequate staffing or behaviour support.
- As a response to verbal abuse alone.
- Out of anger, frustration or retaliation.

The use of force must always be necessary, proportionate and lawful.

9. SEND and Additional Vulnerabilities

The school recognises that some pupils with:

- SEND
- Autism
- ADHD
- Speech and language difficulties
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs

may require additional support.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate.

Where there is a foreseeable likelihood of physical intervention, the school may develop:

- Risk Assessments.
- Behaviour Support Plans.
- Positive Handling Plans.
- Individual SEND support arrangements.

These will be developed in consultation with parents/carers and relevant professionals wherever possible.

10. Team Teach and Training

Fens Primary School uses Team Teach principles to support safe and respectful behaviour management.

The school will:

- Maintain an appropriate number of trained staff.
- Provide refresher training as required.
- Promote de-escalation as the primary response.
- Ensure physical intervention techniques are those approved through school training.

Physical intervention should always be the least restrictive option available.

11. Procedures Following an Incident

Where reasonable force has been used:

1. The safety of all involved will be checked.
2. Medical assistance will be sought if required.
3. The incident will be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
4. A formal written record will be completed as soon as possible.
5. Parents/carers will normally be informed on the same day.
6. Appropriate support and debriefing will be offered.

12. Recording and Reporting

A written record will normally include:

- Date, time and location.
- Names of those involved.
- Antecedents and triggers.
- De-escalation strategies attempted.
- Reason for intervention.
- Nature and duration of intervention.
- Outcome of the incident.
- Any injuries sustained.
- Follow-up actions.

Records will be stored securely in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will review incidents regularly to identify patterns, trends and training needs.

13. Communication with Parents and Carers

The school believes that effective partnership working is essential.

Following a physical intervention:

- Parents/carers will normally be informed on the same day.
- The rationale for the intervention will be explained.
- Opportunities will be provided for discussion where appropriate.
- Agreed support strategies may be reviewed.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, information-sharing arrangements will follow safeguarding procedures.

14. Support Following an Incident

The school recognises that incidents requiring restraint or physical intervention can be distressing.

Appropriate support may be offered to:

Pupils

Including:

- Restorative conversations.
- Emotional support.
- Review of support plans.

Staff

Including:

- Debrief meetings.
- Welfare support.
- Occupational health referrals where appropriate.

15. Safeguarding

The use of reasonable force may sometimes involve safeguarding considerations.

Where concerns arise regarding:

- The welfare of the child;
- The actions of adults;
- The appropriateness of an intervention;

the matter will be referred immediately in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Any concerns regarding staff conduct will be managed through safeguarding and allegations procedures.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Monitor incidents involving reasonable force.
- Analyse patterns and trends.
- Review training requirements.
- Ensure compliance with legal requirements.

An anonymised overview of incidents may be reported to governors as part of safeguarding and behaviour monitoring arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local procedures.

Approval

Signed: _____ **Headteacher**

Date: _____

Signed: _____ **Chair of Governors**

Date: _____

Signed: _____ **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Date: _____