

# GILBERT INGLEFIELD ACADEMY



## SAFE HANDLING POLICY

Date of Policy:	March 2023
Approved by Head Teacher:	March 2023
Next Review Date	March 2026
Staff Responsible:	SLT Director of Pupil Wellbeing

This policy is to ensure the correct implementation of DfE circular 10/98, relating to section 550A of the 1996 Education act, 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' and to reflect the guidance found in 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children and Young People' (DCSF, 2009)

This policy, which forms part of our whole school Discipline & Behaviour policy, must be adhered to by all members of staff in order to safeguard all pupils and themselves.

### AIM

The aim of this policy is to identify what forms of physical contact are allowed, to make all staff aware of the circumstances in which physical intervention might be appropriate and to identify factors that staff should bear in mind when deciding whether to use physical force. It also serves as a mechanism for informing parents of the legal situation surrounding the use of force in school.

### RATIONALE

#### Corporal punishment

The school does not authorise, in any way, the use of corporal punishment to discipline children. As section 550A states 'The law forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation.'

#### Authorised use of force

Wherever possible, staff should attempt to use 'verbal' strategies for dealing with difficult situations. There are however certain instances when the use of physical force may be the only option to ensure the safety of both an individual pupil or groups of pupils, or to maintain discipline and behaviour. Section 550A allows teachers and other persons who are authorised by the head teacher to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence.
- Injuring themselves or others.
- Causing damage to property - including the pupils' own property
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline, either on school premises or on an educational visit.

To be consistent with our Behaviour policy, all members of staff are authorised by the head teacher and Governors to use reasonable force under the above circumstances. Parents and voluntary helpers who may be helping either in school or on educational visits, must only use reasonable force in situations where there is a significant risk of injury either to an individual child, other children or themselves.

Physical force is not justified to prevent a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that could be resolved without force.

### **Reasonable Force**

There is no legal definition of reasonable force, so it is not possible to set out conclusively when staff are justified in using force or the degree of force that should be applied. However, any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result and should also be in relation to the age and physical size of the pupil.

### **Application of Force**

Once again it is impossible to establish set rules regarding what type of contact is justified in different situations, however the following are the types of contact that are warranted, subject to the principle of reasonable force being used.

We have a number of staff trained in physical restraint or safe handling and these staff members are called when a student is at risk of unsafe physical behaviour. This training is renewed every two years.

- Physically intervening between pupils who may be fighting
- Blocking the path of a pupil who may be about to commit a criminal offence
- Holding a pupil by the upper arm using a 'Friendly C'\* if they are in physical danger or are causing severe disruption
- Leading a pupil away from a conflict situation by holding the hand or using a 'Friendly Hold'\*
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

Under no circumstances should staff or authorised personnel act in a way that might deliberately cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil by the neck, collar or any other way that might restrict breathing
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

### **Recording incidents**

It is important that staff immediately report any incident of physical contact that takes place between themselves and a pupil, to the Head teacher or most senior member of staff in school at the time. This should be followed by completing a full report of the incident, using the proforma in Appendix A. Parents will also be informed of any incident involving their child and will be given an opportunity to discuss the incident at the earliest possible convenience.

The SLT keep a record book of physical incidents where a student has had to be restrained or handled.

### **Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances**

There are inevitably some other occasions when physical contact with children is necessary. In particular, physical contact may be necessary during P.E or D.T lessons, or if a member of staff has to give First aid. All staff should be aware of the possible misinterpretation of actions such as this, so wherever possible any such contact should only be used where another member of staff is present, or the contact made in such a way that it cannot not be misinterpreted. Staff should be particularly aware of cultural and gender issues around physical contact.

Please also see: Safeguarding policy for further guidance.

- \*Friendly Hold – Link arms with the pupil and both people's elbows should be bent, adult holding the lower arm
- \*Friendly C – Adult shaping their hand in a C shape holding the upper arm without gripping i.e. keeping the fingers straight

## Appendix A

### Record of an incident of force to control or restrain a pupil

Name of pupil involved \_\_\_\_\_

When did the incident take place?

Where did the incident take place?

Name of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident:

The reason that force was necessary:

How the incident began / progress?

Details of pupils' behaviour:

What was said by different parties:

The degree of force used / how it was applied / for how long:

What was the parents' response and the outcome of the incident?

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil or a member of staff and / or damage to property