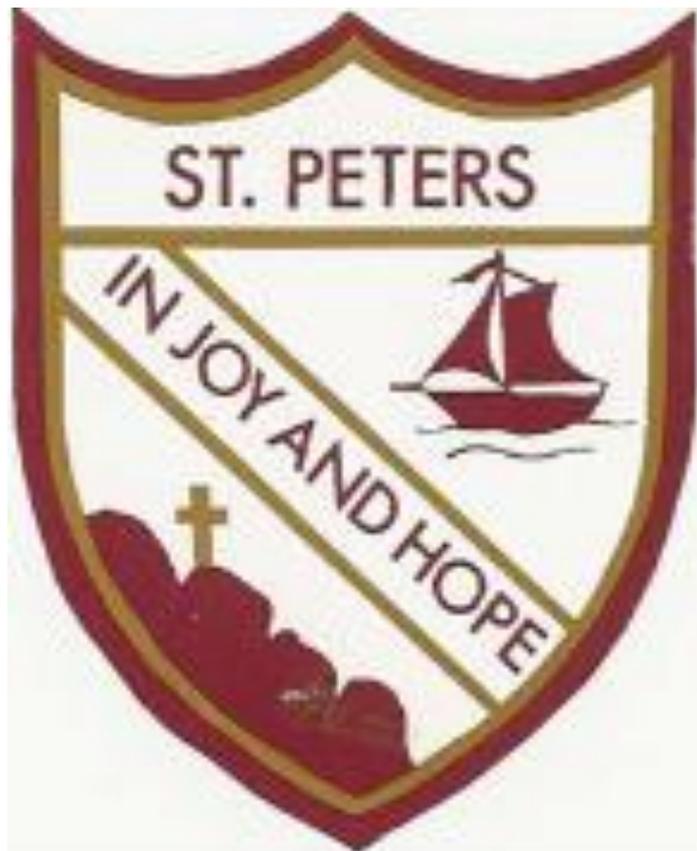


St Peter's Catholic Primary School



Policy upon the use of Reasonable Force

This Policy is based upon Wirral LA Guidance for Safe Handling (2005), Wirral LA Health and Safety Arrangements for Managing Violence and Aggression Towards Staff (2012) and DFE advice for headteachers, staff and Governing bodies upon the Use of reasonable force (July 2013)

St Peter's Catholic Primary School recognises that there are occasions when the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils is necessary. This policy is intended to raise staff awareness of the possibility of such occasions and assist staff in preparing and planning a response if such action is required.

Definitions:

Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It would only be used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Reasonable means using no more force than is needed.

Objectives of using reasonable force:

1. The key objective in using any form of reasonable force is to maintain the safety of pupils and staff.
2. The use of reasonable force may be used to prevent serious breaches of school discipline.
3. The use of reasonable force may be to prevent serious damage to property.

Minimising the need to use reasonable force:

All staff should work together to:

1. Create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force.
2. Use school agreed strategies to prevent the need for Physical Intervention
3. Use Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) approaches to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
4. De-escalate incidents as they arise.
5. Only use force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

Staff authorised to use reasonable force:

Wherever possible, staff should summon support from a member of the senior leadership team if reasonable force is likely to be required. However, all employees are authorised by the Headteacher to use passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the hand or arm to control a pupil. Restraining pupils is not part of common practice in school.

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils:

- from hurting themselves or others
- from damaging property
- from causing disorder

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force may be used:

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

Force will never be used as a punishment - this is always unlawful.

Application of force

Only the minimum force necessary should be used. Listed below are examples of force that may be used in exceptional circumstances

The following are examples of 'force' that may be used in exceptional circumstances:

- Physical interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back

Practical Considerations

As far as possible, staff should not use force unless, or until, another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance. Before intervening physically a teacher will, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop, and what will happen if he/she does not. The teacher should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil. A teacher should not intervene in an incident without help if he/she believes that there is the risk of personal injury. The age and level of understanding of the pupil and the severity of the incident are important factors to consider. Staff must always bear in mind their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with SEN.

Recording Incidents

All incidents which necessitate the use of force to control pupils must be recorded by the staff member/s involved as soon as possible using a serious incident form. The Headteacher must always be given a copy. Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative when compiling a report. A copy of the report should also be kept in the school pupil's IEP file and Head Teachers Serious Incident log file. Parents will always be informed of such incidents on the same day.

Post-incident support

Serious incidents that require the use of force can be upsetting for all concerned and may result in injuries to the pupil or staff. Immediate action will be taken to ensure first aid or medical support is administered if necessary. This should be recorded in the individual staff member or pupils accident record. MV92 forms and relevant accident reports will be completed if appropriate. It is also important that staff and pupils are given emotional support. This includes children who may have witnessed the incident. Class teachers will use their professional judgement in deciding how to respond, eg through Circle Time or individual support. The parents of the pupil involved will be included in discussions about further actions and support. A violence risk assessment, risk assessment of challenging behaviour and Individual Behaviour Plan will be set up if this is deemed to be appropriate. These documents will include strategies to prevent and deal with the recurrence of incidents requiring the use of force.

The Headteacher will decide in consultation with the SENCo whether multi-agency partners need to be involved, e.g. CAMHS, school nurse, Educational Psychologist. The pupil will be required to recognise and repair the damage caused, whether emotional or physical, including to relationships with staff and pupils affected by the incident, and to develop their social and emotional skills. In some cases the decision may be taken to exclude the pupil.

Support and Training

Training in behaviour management and control techniques to apply reasonable force to control will be provided annually for the staff most likely to need to use force. Staff will be kept informed about pupils who may be at risk to themselves or others through the SEN records, Behaviour Files and through discussion with relevant staff members. Those children seen as presenting particular risk will have individual programmes drawn up which will include targets and strategies. They may include input from external services together with further suggested strategies. Parents will be kept informed of the pupil's needs and how we are trying to support the pupil.

A Pastoral Support Programme may also have been drawn up, especially if the pupil is in danger of exclusion.

Dealing with complaints and allegations

If a specific allegation of abuse or maltreatment is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Wirral LSCB Procedures for allegations against adults who work with children will be followed. A referral to the LADO will be made. See St Peter's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2013. Other complaints will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Procedure.

Other Physical Contact with pupils

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. It is deemed proper and necessary to have physical contact with children e.g., during PE lessons, giving First Aid, dealing with young distressed children and children with Special Educational Needs. Teachers will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.

Presented to Governors _____

Approved by Governors _____

Chair of Governors _____