



SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST  
Faith Inspired Education

# **SAT USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY**

Date reviewed: Autumn 2024  
Date of next review: Autumn 2025

## USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

### 1. KCSIE 2024 paragraphs 166-168 clarify “The use of reasonable force in schools”

Para 166. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use ‘reasonable force’ to safeguard children. The term ‘reasonable force’ covers the 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 child 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 pupils or blocking a pupil’s path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

Para 167. The department believes that the adoption of a ‘no contact’ policy at a school can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their pupils and students. The department therefore encourages principals, governing bodies, and proprietors to adopt sensible policies, which allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact. The decision on whether or not to use ‘reasonable force’ to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances.

Para 168. When using ‘reasonable force’ in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems or with medical conditions, schools should consider the risks carefully recognising the additional vulnerability of these groups.

They should also consider their duties 46 under the Equality Act 2010 (see paragraphs 84-91), for example in relation to making reasonable adjustments and their Public Sector Equality Duty.

By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents and carers, schools can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use ‘reasonable force’.

Departmental advice for schools is available at [Use of Reasonable Force in Schools](#) and HM Government guidance [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention](#) sets out how to support children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties who are at risk of restrictive intervention in special education settings, however all schools may find the information helpful.

## **2. Definitions**

Reasonable force – Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements in order to prevent or stop (1) a pupil from committing any offence, (2) a pupil causing personal injury to any person including the pupil themselves, (3) damage to property, or (4) disruption to education and good order at the school. Reasonable force can also include physical restraint, such as holding a pupil's arms back to prevent a fight but is not limited to this. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary; for example, guiding a pupil to safety by the arm or blocking a pupil's path.

Restrictive practices – Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive practices may include use of equipment, medication, or seclusion. Seclusion means isolating a pupil by preventing them from leaving a room or space of their own free will.

## **3. Purpose**

The key objective of this policy is to maintain the safety of students and staff by minimising the risk of a harmful, violent and/or dangerous situation arising. It sets out guidance on the use of reasonable force and restrictive practices by members of staff in order to prevent them from harming themselves or others. The use of force will be rare.

All staff are entitled to use physical contact including reasonable force, to protect themselves and their students from harm.

- There is no obligation on staff to use control and restraint techniques.
- The safety and welfare of all students, staff and visitors is paramount to all other issues.
- A full report to the Headteacher will be required in all cases where this policy is implemented.
- Authorised staff only will control, restrain, and search students in a safe and legal manner.

## **4. Application of Physical Intervention (Reasonable Force)**

- Staff should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult students before using force including withdrawal of themselves or others.
- Physical intervention should only be used when other methods have failed.
- Physical intervention can take several forms, including physically interposing between students, blocking a student's path, holding, leading a student by the hand or arm, shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back, or in the extreme circumstances, using more restrictive holds.
- Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example holding a student around the neck or by the collar or in any other way that might restrict their ability to breathe, slapping, punching, or kicking, twisting, or forcing limbs.

- Where there is no direct risk to people, any action taken could exacerbate the situation and should therefore be avoided. The possible consequences of intervening physically, including the risk of increasing the disruption or actually provoking an attack, need to be considered.

## 5. Where Force Can Be Used

Staff may only exercise the statutory power to use force where:

- They and the student are on premises; or
- They are off premises but are in lawful control or charge of the student (for example on a trip or visit).

## 6. Reasonable Force in Physical Intervention

The law allows the use of force to prevent:

- Committing any offence (or, for a student under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older student)
- Causing personal injury to any person (including the student themselves)
- Causing damage to the property of any person (including the student themselves)
- Causing disruption to education and good order at the school.

There is no legal definition of what degree of force is reasonable, it will always depend upon the precise circumstances of the individual case, however the degree of force used should always be:

- In proportion to the consequences, it is intended to prevent; and
- The minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

When reaching a decision about using force, staff will need to consider relevant factors related to any special educational needs or disabilities a particular student may have.

Factors influencing the judgement to physically intervene include:

- The seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder that is likely to result if force is not used
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means
- The relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies.

## 7. Practical Considerations

- **Use your voice first:** verbal instructions should be given before and during any physical intervention.
- **Use physical intervention only when necessary to resolve the incident:** this should be the minimum force required, lasting for the shortest practicable time.
- **Do not strike blows or retaliate against students:** to do so would exceed your authorisation to intervene and create a significant risk of an allegation of assault being made.
- Before intervening physically, the member of staff should, wherever practicable, tell the student who is misbehaving to stop.

- If it is necessary to make physical contact, the member of staff should make it clear that the contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- A calm measured approach is essential. Staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper; are acting out of anger or frustration or to punish the student.
- In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to ask for assistance before intervening (when dealing with a physically large student, for example) if the member of staff feels they may be at risk of injury. In these circumstances, the member of staff should remove other students who may be at risk and request assistance from colleague(s) or where necessary, a member of the leadership team.

## 8. Responsibilities & Authorisation to Restrain

All members of staff are authorised by the Headteacher to use necessary and reasonable force to physically intervene to prevent or stop a potentially harmful/violent or dangerous act taking place where the wellbeing of a person or persons is at risk.

The decision to restrain another individual is to be made solely by the member of staff and they do so under their own instruction/volition. **There is no expectation of staff intervening in a harmful/violent or dangerous situation where they feel their own well-being or health and safety would be at risk.**

Restraint is where a necessary amount of force to prevent a person from causing damage/harm to themselves or others and is used by a member of staff or other authorised person to stop their actions. Where a member of staff has applied necessary restraint appropriately, the schools would support their actions.

Members of staff should be aware that if force was used against a person or persons that were not considered necessary and/or reasonable this may be viewed as a disciplinary offence and may result in disciplinary action.

## 9. Prevention and Implementation

The first step in any response to emergency situations is prevention and de-escalation. All staff are expected to be vigilant in the monitoring of others' behaviour and act to prevent a harmful/violent and dangerous situation arising.

Students should be engaged in purposeful learning activities, where members of staff should be alerted to changes in the climate of the learning environments and/or student group's dynamics and act to prevent negative tensions building.

Members of staff are expected to reinforce the high standards of behaviour expected of students through consistent engagement with students acting outside of those standards. All members of staff should be proactive in approaching people who are not following acceptable standards of behaviour.

Restraint is an action of last resort and is not a substitute for behaviour management strategies. The emphasis of such strategies should be on managing incidents and behaviour through non-physical, non-threatening aggression-free strategies. Physical intervention should only be considered in order to control situations involving imminent danger to students or to others.

Where de-escalation of a situation has not been possible and restraint is deemed necessary the minimum physical force should be used, for the minimum amount of time, ensuring the least restrictive intervention necessary to make the situation safer.

### **10. Recording Incidents**

It is essential that staff make a written report of any occasion using the attached form, immediately following the use of reasonable force, restraint or search incident. All records will be retained in line with our Data Protection Policy.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**Sikh Academies Trust**  
**Reasonable Force, Restraint and Search Form**

<b>Name of School:</b> (delete appropriately)	Pioneer Secondary Academy Khalsa Primary School
<b>Name of student involved:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Names of witnesses:</b>	
<b>Reason:</b> (e.g., prevent injury)	
<b>Details of any injuries or damage to property:</b>	
<b>Summary of incident:</b>	
<b>Outcome of search:</b>	

**Name** ..... **Signed** ..... **Date** .....

Copies of this form should be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (NB: if a group search is carried out, one form with listed variation)