



Ark Walworth  
Academy

---

## Use of Reasonable Force Guidance

---

### What is reasonable force?

1. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
2. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
3. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.
4. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control.
5. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the student.

### Who can use reasonable force?

- This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Principal has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or temporary staff.

### When can reasonable force be used?

- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will depend on the individual circumstances.
- This power can be used on SEN and disabled students and on school trips if necessary.
- Schools can use reasonable force to:
  - remove a disruptive student from the classroom if they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
  - prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
  - prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
  - prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight;
  - restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- Schools cannot:
  - use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

### Power to search students without consent

- In addition, the Principal and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following prohibited items:
  - knives and weapons
  - alcohol
  - illegal drugs

## Use of Reasonable Force Guidance

- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- anything that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.
- force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

### Telling parents when force has been used on their child

- It is up to schools to decide whether it is appropriate to report the use of force to parents.

### What happens if a student or parent complains when force is used on them?

- If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defense against any accusations
- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

### What about other physical contact with students?

- It is not illegal to touch a student. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary.
- Examples of where touching a student might be proper or necessary:
  - To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
  - To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching;
  - To give first aid.