



## **WOODTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL**

### **Use of Reasonable Force Policy**

**Updated September 2025**

**Signed: E Bowler (Head Teacher)**

**Signed: C Shepherd (Chair of Governors)**

## **Objectives**

At Woodthorpe Infant School, in line with Every Child Matters, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential. We take the safety of our pupils and staff very seriously and believe that all pupils and staff have the right to be and feel safe whilst at school and on a school-run activity.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Social Awareness, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies (and additional policies and procedures associated with the safeguarding agenda).

## **Policy Development**

This policy is written in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's policy on the same subject, entitled 'Keeping Classrooms Safe for Learning and Teaching' and the DfE guidance 'Use of Reasonable Force' (2011).

## **Minimising the Need to Use Reasonable Force**

As a school we are firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. We use our daily circle times (Zones of Regulation, Restorative Justice) and RHE curriculum to explore and strengthen emotional responses to situations.

We will only use force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will be skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment tailoring them to individuals as closely as possible.

Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using force.

## **Staff Authorised to Use Reasonable Force**

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006) the head teacher of

our school is empowered to authorise those members of the staff who are enabled to use reasonable force.

At Woodthorpe Infant School the head teacher has empowered the following members of staff to use reasonable force:

- Teachers and any member of staff who has control or charge of pupils in a given lesson or circumstance have permanent authorisation.
- Other members of staff such as site management and administrative teams also have the power to use reasonable force if a circumstance should arise in which immediate action should be taken.

### **Deciding Whether to Use Reasonable Force**

Under English law, members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from or stop them continuing:

- committing any offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or,
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how and why to use reasonable force.

To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

- whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person;
- whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property;
- whether the chance of achieving the desired outcome in a nonphysical way was low;
- the age, size, gender, developmental maturity or special needs of the persons involved.

Staff are also expected to remember that physical intervention is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies, including the police.

Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about the plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about SEND, personal circumstance and temporary upset / vulnerability.

### **Using Reasonable Force**

When using force members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome.

Staff should also use force within the context of existing good practice in nonphysical skills and techniques, such as in the RESPONSE© Strategy: see below:

The Assault Cycle (Kaplan & Wheeler 1983)  
The least restrictive **RESPONSE©** strategy

<b>Phases of behaviour</b>	<b>Actions / response / manage</b>
<b>Trigger Phase</b> - is signified by the first movement away from how the service user usually behaves	<b>Relax &amp; neutralize the situation</b> <b>Explain and ask about issues</b>
<b>Escalation Phase</b> - Behaviour deviates more and more from baseline behaviour. Service users can become focused on a particular issue or person.	<b>Explain &amp; ask about issues</b> <b>State what you want</b> <b>Prompt or gesture</b>
<b>Crisis Phase</b> - The child becomes increasingly physically, emotionally and psychologically aroused. Control over aggressive impulses decreases and direct aggression is a possibility.	<b>State what you want</b> <b>Prompt or gesture if that helps</b> <b>Option to Act</b>

**De-escalation Phase –**

Work towards the initial baseline

**Principles:**

Don't deny its happening

Don't challenge

Don't insult

Be calm listen and negotiate

Provide a face saving exit

**Nurture recovery**

**Support**

**Engage and learn**

**Strategies**

Accent, pitch, tone and volume of voice.

Eye Contact.

Facial Expressions.

Posture.

Allow the person space time.

Show that you understand.

Do not be confrontational.

Avoid provocative phrases,

De-personalise the issue.

Empathise

Empower the client.

Token Concession

Use the word 'we instead of you'

	Make a Friendly gesture Physical Intervention
<b>Post Crisis Depression Phase</b> - The child slowly returns to their own baseline behaviour. The child's heightened state of physical and psychological arousal can remain a threat for up to ninety minutes due to the level of adrenaline in the bloodstream.	<b>Support</b> <b>Engage and learn</b>
Base line Behaviour	<b>Engage &amp; learn</b>

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstance where there was no viable alternative.

Staff should avoid using force without another member of staff being present to support, observe or call for assistance, unless absolutely necessary.

**Staff training**

Staff at Woodthorpe Infant School, who have been identified as needing training in this area, will access Physical intervention and Coping with Risky Behaviour (CRB) training through the County Council coordinator who delivers nationally accredited courses. Details of the courses can be accessed through the Nottinghamshire LA website.

These courses provide participants with an insight into recent legislation and guidance that could impact on policy and practice, as well as a range of physical and non-physical strategies to help manage the risks posed by children and young people's behaviour.

These training programmes will be delivered to staff bespoke to the needs of the school.

Staff who receive this training will be accredited to use the physical elements of CRB for a defined period as stated on their certificate. Staff will be expected to attend a refresher course to update their skills and renew their certification every 12-15 months.

## **Recording and Reporting Incidents**

CPOMS will be used for the recording and reporting of **significant incidents** where a member of staff has used force on a pupil. The record must be made as soon as practicable after the incident.

While ultimately only a court of law could decide what is 'significant' in a particular case, in deciding whether or not an incident must be reported, staff should take into account:

- an incident where unreasonable use of force is used on a pupil would always be a significant incident;
- any incident where substantial force has been used (e.g. physically pushing a pupil out of a room) would be significant;
- the use of a restraint technique is significant;
- an incident where a child was very distressed (though clearly not over reacting) would be significant.

In determining whether incidents are significant, schools should consider:

- the pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time;
- the degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour;
- the effect on the pupil or member of staff.

Staff should also bear in mind the age of the child, any special education need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant.

Sometimes an incident might not be considered significant in itself, but forms part of a pattern of repeated behaviour. In this case, although there is no legal requirement to record such incidents, schools are advised to let parents know about them.

Records are important in providing evidence of defensible decision-making in case of a subsequent complaint or investigation. Staff may find it helpful to seek the advice of a senior colleague or a representative of their trade union when compiling a report.

## **Post-incident support**

Following the use of physical intervention staff and pupils will be supported, the

immediate physical needs of all parties will be met and staff will ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

### **Complaints and allegations**

Complaints and allegations will be taken seriously.

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the DfE under the policy adopted by Governors created by the LA.

We will also make clear to pupils that they have a right, and are able, to question/complain about the use of reasonable force.

We will ensure that mechanisms are in place for pupils, parents, carers and staff to voice the opinions, comments or concerns (see Complaints Procedure / Whistle Blowing Procedure).

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed by the governing body at least annually or as required.

### **Further information**

Can be found in the Nottinghamshire County Council's policy on the same subject, entitled 'Keeping Classrooms Safe for Learning and Teaching'.