



Reasonable Force Policy for PL6 Learning Hub

1. Introduction

This policy provides guidance on the use of reasonable force in situations where staff are required to intervene to ensure the safety and well-being of children (aged 16 and under) in an alternate provision setting. It ensures that all staff members understand when and how reasonable force can be applied, adhering to legal and ethical standards.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children from harm or injury.
- Ensure staff can effectively manage challenging behavior.
- Promote a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Maintain the trust and respect of children, parents, and guardians.

3. Legal Framework

This policy follows the principles of **Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**, which allows teachers and other school staff to use reasonable force to prevent harm to children or others, damage to property, or disruption to the learning environment. Staff must also adhere to the **Children Act 1989**, **Human Rights Act 1998**, and **Equality Act 2010**.

4. Definition of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the physical contact used by staff to control or restrain a child in situations where it is necessary. The force applied should always be the minimum necessary to manage the situation, and the level of force should be appropriate for the age, understanding, and individual needs of the child involved.

Examples of when reasonable force may be used include:

- To prevent a child from harming themselves or others.
- To prevent serious damage to property.
- To remove a child from a dangerous or disruptive situation.

5. Principles of Reasonable Force

- **Proportionality:** Force must be proportional to the level of threat posed by the child's behavior and should be applied with the intention of restoring safety, not as punishment.
- **Minimum necessary:** Force should be used as a last resort, and the minimum necessary force should be applied to manage the situation.
- **Safety:** The safety of the child, staff, and others must be the primary concern. The use of force should avoid injury, humiliation, or distress.
- **Respect and dignity:** Every effort should be made to de-escalate situations before resorting to force. Children should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- **Training:** Staff members should be trained in managing behavior, conflict resolution, and restraint techniques. Staff should also be aware of individual children's needs and any specific care plans in place.

6. Circumstances Where Force May Be Used

Force may be used in the following situations:

- **Risk of harm:** If there is an immediate risk that the child or others may be harmed (e.g., violent behavior, aggression, or a child attempting to harm themselves).
- **Damage to property:** If the child is at risk of causing significant damage to property that may harm others.
- **Disruption to learning:** If a child's behavior is significantly disrupting the learning environment and other methods of de-escalation have failed.

7. Methods of Restraint

- **Physical intervention:** A staff member may need to use their body to gently guide or block a child's movement to prevent harm or disruption. This could include holding a child's hands, guiding them away from a dangerous area, or using a gentle hold to prevent further aggressive actions.
- **Restraint:** In extreme cases, if a child is actively endangering themselves or others, staff may need to apply controlled restraint. Restraint should always be performed by trained professionals and should involve the least restrictive approach possible.

8. Procedures for Use of Force

- **Prevention and De-escalation:** Before resorting to force, staff should attempt de-escalation techniques, including calm verbal communication, distraction, or redirection of the child's focus.
- **Clear Communication:** The staff member should inform the child of their actions and the reasons for intervention, making sure the child understands that the action is for their safety.
- **Recording the Incident:** Any use of force should be documented in an incident report, including the reason for using force, the type of force used, and any actions taken before and after the intervention. The child should also be given the opportunity to give their version of events.

- **Notification of Parents/Guardians:** After an incident of restraint or force, parents or guardians should be informed as soon as possible. The staff member should discuss the event with the child's family and provide details of any follow-up support.

9. Monitoring and Review

- All instances of force will be recorded and monitored regularly by management to ensure that the policy is being followed and that force is being used appropriately.
- Staff performance in handling difficult situations will be reviewed as part of regular training and supervision.
- A review of the policy will take place annually to ensure it is up-to-date and reflects best practice.

10. Training and Support

All staff working with children should receive regular training in behavior management, including techniques for de-escalation, restraint, and understanding the individual needs of children. Specific training will be provided for those involved in situations where force may be required.

11. Conclusion

The use of reasonable force should always be a last resort and applied only when necessary to protect the safety of children and others in the learning environment. This policy aims to provide clear guidelines on when and how force can be used while promoting a safe, supportive, and respectful atmosphere for all individuals involved.