



West Winch Primary School Reasonable Force Policy 2025-2026

Our Aim

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment. This policy is based on guidance outlined in the July 2013 document - "Use of Reasonable Force". The circular refers to the 1996 and 1997 Education Acts which clarify the position regarding the use of physical force by teachers and other staff working in schools, to control or restrain pupils.

When Force Should Be Used

At West Winch Primary School, we believe that the use of reasonable force is only necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Injuring themselves or others,
- Causing damage to property, including their own,
- Engaging in any behaviour that causes great disruption or a breakdown in discipline among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in the classroom or elsewhere on the school grounds,
- Committing a criminal offence.

The use of physical restraint will always be the last resort. All other behavioural management strategies, including Norfolk Steps, will be used before physical intervention.

When considering using reasonable force staff should, in considering the risks, carefully recognise any specific vulnerabilities of the pupil, including SEND, mental health needs or medical conditions.

Force, where used, should always be reasonable. There is no definition of 'reasonable force'. It should always be proportional to the circumstances of the incident. It should be used only to control or restrain and never with the intent to cause pain or harm. It must, therefore, be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Norfolk STEPS

West Winch Primary School adopts the 'Norfolk Steps' approach of positive behaviour management. The aims of using 'Norfolk Steps' in our school is:

- To have a shared understanding of how to use diversion and de-escalation techniques,
- To use the correct procedure when physical intervention is needed (flat hand guidance).

All Teachers and Teaching Assistants have been trained in Steps techniques. Two staff will be Lead Professionals and certificates will be displayed on site. In the event where it is necessary to use force or physical restraint on a child, the school will ensure that at least two members of staff will be made available immediately.

For more information about Norfolk Steps, and information on training for parents, please visit:
<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/child-development-additional-needs/behaviour-sleep/norfolk-steps/>

Responsibility

All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the procedure to follow should a situation arise. Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered inappropriate. In using physical restraint, the level and duration of the restraint will always be the minimum necessary to restore safety. In any action, due regard has to be taken to the age and understanding of the pupil. Knowledge of the pupil is a key factor in the judgement that will be made.

Strategies and techniques that may be required for an individual will be included in the pupil's Individual Behaviour Plan or equivalent. Written guidelines on the use of positive handling techniques need to be agreed or approved by all relevant parties including parents, guardians or carers.

Recording Incidents

Where restraint has been necessary, the incident must be reported immediately to the Head Teacher. In the event of their absence, the Senior Leader must be informed. The incident must be logged by ALL staff involved via our MIS, Bromcom, as soon as possible after the incident. This will also be recorded and reported to Norfolk Steps. Pupils that have been restrained are given time to 'de-brief' with a third person present (Head Teacher or Senior Lead). The pupil's comments will be recorded on the incident form via Bromcom. The school will ensure that time is given to 'repair' relationships between staff involved in the restraint and the pupil. In the event of an injury occurring, the appropriate accident reporting procedures must be followed.

Parents /guardians/carers of the pupils involved will always be advised of an incident and it may be necessary for it to be followed up by other disciplinary action or pastoral support. Restraint is an extremely rare incidence in any school and will only be used as an absolute last resort.

Physical Restraint Policy Adopted: Autumn 2025

Physical Restraint Policy Review: Autumn 2026



Heather Habbin - Chair of Governing Body