

Reasonable Force Policy

Holland Park School | 2026-27

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Reviewed by	Billy Egleton Senior Vice Principal			
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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the circumstances in which reasonable force may be used at Holland Park School, the guiding principles for its use, and the reporting and follow-up procedures that must be followed. It is designed to protect the safety of students, staff, and others, while safeguarding the rights and dignity of all members of the school community.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- DfE Guidance: Use of Reasonable Force (2013)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026)
- The school's Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies

3. Definition of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force means using no more force than is necessary in the circumstances to achieve a legitimate aim. It may involve:

- Physical intervention – interposing between students
- Physical restraint – holding a student to prevent harm or damage
- Removing an object from a student's possession if it is dangerous or being used to cause harm

4. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force to:

1. Prevent a student from injuring themselves or others
2. Prevent a student from damaging property
3. Prevent a student from committing a criminal offence
4. Remove a student from a situation where their behaviour is seriously disrupting learning
5. Restrain a student who is refusing to follow a lawful instruction and whose non-compliance poses a safety risk

Reasonable force must never be used as a punishment.

5. Authorised Staff

All teaching staff and any member of staff whom the Headteacher has authorised have the statutory power to use reasonable force. This includes:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Teaching staff
- Support staff with direct responsibility for students (e.g., Learning Support Assistants, Pastoral staff, Behaviour team members)

6. Principles for Using Reasonable Force

When using reasonable force, staff must:

- Use the minimum force necessary and for the shortest time possible
- Act in proportion to the circumstances and risk

- Communicate clearly throughout the incident to reassure and direct the student
- Avoid actions that could cause injury (e.g., holds around the neck, obstruction of breathing)
- Whenever possible, have another member of staff present to witness the intervention

7. Prevention and De-escalation

Holland Park School promotes de-escalation and non-physical interventions as the first approach in managing challenging behaviour. Staff will:

- Use calm, non-confrontational communication
- Offer choices and allow time for compliance
- Move other students away from danger where possible
- Seek assistance from colleagues promptly

8. Reporting and Recording

Following any use of reasonable force:

1. The member of staff involved must inform a senior leader as soon as possible
2. Reporting must be completed using the Reasonable Force Form, which can be found in room in the HR office
3. The form must be completed before the end of the school day and handed directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or, if the DSL is not available, to a member of the Senior Leadership Team
4. The DSL will review the record to assess any safeguarding concerns
5. Parents/carers must be informed of the incident on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable

9. Support After an Incident

- Students involved will be offered the opportunity to reflect on the incident and receive pastoral support
- Staff involved will be offered a debrief and, where appropriate, additional training or support
- Where necessary, a Risk Reduction Plan will be created or updated for the student involved

10. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints about the use of force will be handled through the school's Complaints Policy. Any allegation that a member of staff has acted inappropriately will be managed in line with the Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE guidelines.

11. Training

Staff likely to be involved in situations requiring physical intervention will receive appropriate training, such as accredited Positive Handling or Team Teach courses. Refresher training will be provided regularly.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will ensure all incidents of reasonable force are recorded, reviewed, and monitored. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation or guidance.