



Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Headteacher: Ms C Senior
Chair of Governors: Mr W Stone

	Date	Name	Signature
Policy Date	September 2025		
Review Date	September 2026		
Review Period	Annually		
Lead Person	Deputy Headteacher	Ruth Makepeace	
Prepared by	Deputy Headteacher	Ruth Makepeace	
Verified by	Headteacher	Carrie Senior	
Approved by	Chair of Governors	William Stone	

Blackfen School for Girls

Statutory statement:

Blackfen School provides a written statement of general principles to guide the head teacher in determining measures to promote good behaviour in the school and review it with governors every year. This policy forms part of our Behaviour Policy (July 2025) and is linked to the non-statutory advice from the Department for Education (July 2013) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification on the use of force by staff to ensure that they feel confident about using this power. Reasonable force covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with students.

Outcomes:

A positive attitude to learning leads to success. Good behaviour has a positive impact on the life of the school community. Our expectation is that all students have respect for each other, the environment and themselves. Good behaviour ensures a safe school for all. Sometimes reasonable force is necessary and this covers the broad range of actions used that may involve a degree of contact with students.

Procedures:

Reasonable force can be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

Reasonable force can be used for two main purposes – to control students or restrain them.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The member of staff will use their judgement and consider the student's behaviour and level of risk at the time of the incident, the degree of force used, the effect on the student or member of staff and the student's age.

Reasonable force can be used:

- To remove disruptive students from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- To prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- To prevent a student leaving a classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- To prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight.
- To restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- To conduct a search for a set list of prohibited items if you are the headteacher or an authorised member of staff (see Screening, Searching and Confiscation Policy for list of prohibited items).

The use of reasonable force policy acknowledges that there is a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with SEND.

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. In the context of Blackfen, these may include:

- comforting a distressed student.
- congratulating or praising a student.
- demonstrating the use of a musical instrument.
- demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- giving first aid.

If reasonable force is used the Designated Safeguarding Lead will record the incident and will inform parents of the use of reasonable force.

Blackfen School for Girls

Procedures if a student complains when force is used on them (See Appendix 1)

Recording

- Any incident where reasonable force is used on a student must be recorded on the Blackfen School Restraint Form (See Appendix 2)
- Any incident where reasonable force is used on a student must be reported **immediately** to the line manager of the member of staff involved.
- Any incident where reasonable force is used on a student must be reported **immediately** to the school Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead must record the incident and inform parents of the use of force.

Key roles

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. Any person who has been put temporarily in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit also have the power to use reasonable force.

Blackfen School for Girls

Appendix I – Procedure if a student complains when force is used on them.

The complaint must be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated (see Complaints Procedure). The investigation must be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the complaint is about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Headteacher should decide on the person who will carry out the investigation.

The onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that the allegations are true.

The school must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved. Suspension must not be an automatic response.

If a person is suspended the school must ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

Governing bodies should always consider whether a member of staff has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action.

As an employer the school has a duty of care towards the employee.

Related documents: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) Behaviour Policy, Home School Agreement, Screening, searching and confiscation policy, Complaints procedure, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Blackfen School for Girls

Appendix 2 – Blackfen School Restraint Form



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

Physical Restraint Incident Form

Staff Name:		Location:	
Student Name:		Time of incident:	
Student Year:		Date of incident:	

Description of Incident: <i>mention time, location, main causes, progress, words spoken by student and restrainer, duration and nature of incident</i>

Why was the restraint needed? <i>mention steps taken to defuse situation and possible consequences should the restraint not be applied</i>

Restraint described <i>mention degree of force and how force was applied and duration of force</i>

Was anyone injured? Yes/ No

If yes, was this recorded in the accident book? Yes/ No

Was the student checked for injuries by a member of staff who was not involved in the incident? Yes/ No

Further details:

Members of staff involved:	
Adult witnesses to restraint:	
Student witnesses to restraint:	

Parent informed of incident on:

Parent informed by: