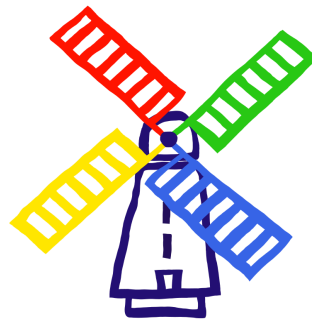




Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Unity
Trust
Courage
Curiosity
Respect
Kindness



A community for learning. Raising expectations. Fulfilling high standards.

Policy Revised: **October 2025**

Policy Review Date: **October 2027**

Headteacher: **Mrs Gemma Hillier**



Introduction

Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School shall be referred to as 'the school' in this document.

This policy gives guidance and standards after all other de-escalation techniques have been used and proved unsuccessful. It is only to be used as a last resort.

Situations involving decisions about whether to use force can occur in any school. Both using force and deciding not to can entail significant risks for pupils and staff. This policy is designed to minimise these risks. The policy has been written in light of the DfE "Use of Reasonable Force" guidance dated July 2013.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

1. Committing a criminal offence (or for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
2. Causing personal injury or damage to property
3. 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.

Objectives

- To maintain the safety of pupils and staff
- To prevent serious breaches of the school's positive behaviour policy
- To prevent serious damage to property

Minimising the need to use force

- In order to minimise the occasions on which the use of force would be required, the school will:
- Create an environment that is calm and minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force
- Teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings through our values-based curriculum and teaching and learning strategies that foster and develop confidence and resilience
- Use strategies and procedures within the school's positive behaviour policy to de escalate incidents if they do arise
- Only use force when risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force
- Put in place risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils
- Seek support from the PRU to help manage difficult behaviour
- Nurture trusting relationships with pupils and parents and ensure staff can provide a safe space



in which pupils feel able to discuss problems and feelings before they become overwhelming.

Staff authorised to use force

Authorisation is granted to all teachers and staff if faced with a situation that requires reasonable force to be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder. All staff at Widmer End have attended 'Step Up' or 'Step On' training. Training will be reviewed every three years.

Deciding whether to use force

Force should be used as a protective measure and never as a disciplinary penalty. The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case and be based on professional knowledge of the child and their individual circumstances including any SEN and/or disabilities information.

Staff will make judgements about:

- The probability of achieving the desired result by other means
- The seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder which is likely to result if force is not used
- The relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies.

Risk assessments

The leadership team will regularly assess the frequency and severity of incidents requiring use of force that are likely to occur in the school. Where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil (such as a pupil whose SEN / disability / MHWB is associated with extreme behaviour) an individual risk assessment will be carried out.

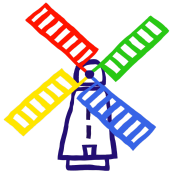
An individual risk assessment will be carried out for all pupils whose SEN / disability / MHWB are associated with:

- Communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication
- Physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- Conditions that make them fragile, such as haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy
- Dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs, breathing or feeding tubes.
- Emotional Dysregulation

Using Force

Before using force, staff should ensure they are emotionally regulated themselves and engage the pupil in a calm and measured tone, making clear that they are here to help (connect before you direct).

Staff should never give the impression of acting out of anger, frustration or punishment. Staff should make it clear that they only intend to use physical intervention as a last resort to keep everyone safe.



The use of force must always be proportionate to the level of risk and should always be reduced at the earliest possible time. De-escalation should always be the primary focus, behavioural structures and boundaries can be dealt with later once a stable and calm environment has been re-established.

Force may be used for two different purposes:

1. To control – either passive physical contact (e.g. standing between pupils) or active physical contact (e.g. leading the pupil by the hand or the arm)
2. To restrain using restraint techniques. This can involve using appropriate restrictive holds, which may require expertise or training. Parental consent is not required to restrain a pupil.

Staff Training

The staff induction process will set out staff member's responsibilities in relation to the school's policy on the use of force and behaviour policy. Where applicable, staff will receive accredited 'Step Up' or Step On' training. Staff who have not received accredited training are not precluded from using reasonable force where needed. Risk assessments and procedures will be included on staff meeting agendas at least every half term.

Recording Incidents

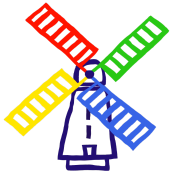
The Headteacher, or in their absence the Deputy Head, Pastoral Lead or SENDCo, in consultation with the members of staff involved in the incident, will determine whether the incident should be deemed 'significant'. This decision will consider:

- A. The pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time
- B. The degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour
- C. The physical and emotional effect on the pupil or member of staff
- D. The age of the child
- E. Any special educational need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant.

and take account of:

- A. An incident where unreasonable use of force is used on a pupil would always be a significant incident
- B. Any incident where substantial force has been used (e.g. physically pushing a pupil out of a room) would be significant
- C. The use of a restraint technique is significant
- D. An incident where a child was very distressed (though clearly not overreacting) would be significant.

All significant incidents where physical force has been used will be recorded on CPOMS. The record must be made as soon as practical after the incident. All information will be treated in confidence. The record will form part of the child's educational record and is open to inspection by parents. Any member of staff involved in a physical restraint will be required to attend a debriefing meeting.



Reporting incidents

All significant incidents where physical force has been used will be reported to parents. The record must be made as soon as practical after the incident. If it is likely that reporting the incident to a parent will result in significant harm to the pupil, then the incident should be reported to the safeguarding team at County. The information will be treated in confidence.

Post incident support

The school will ensure that staff and pupils affected by an incident have continuing support for as long as necessary in respect of:

- Physical consequences
- Support to deal with any emotional stress or loss of confidence
- Opportunity to analyse, reflect and learn from the incident.

Complaints and allegations

Complaints will be dealt with under our school's complaints procedures. Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by Widmer End Community School & Pre-School staff. If a specific allegation is made against a member of staff then the school will follow guidance set out in 'Managing a Allegations' guidance.