



## **Avenue Junior School Positive Handling Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Staff at this school are trained in Norfolk Steps de-escalation techniques to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on the website or request a hard copy from the office.

### **Introduction**

The term 'positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of physical intervention to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance See national guidance document The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils: Guidance for Schools, DCFS, 2010, Crown Copyright). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils with behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the school's Ready to Learn: Behaviour and Discipline Policy, as well as the most recent local and national guidance. This policy is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

## School Expectations

The school takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by clear and consistent protocols, as well as the SLT and governors. This policy has a clear focus.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

## Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour, as well as implementing appropriate and consistent sanctions. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading to foreseeable risk. Parents and pupils are encouraged to participate in the development Risk Reduction Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

## Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff can take effective action to reduce risk and reduce the need to physically intervene. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

## Modifications to Environment

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at this school may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is good practice to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?

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- What small items are available to pupils in crisis who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the furniture layout safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage pupils in crisis to take themselves to a safer place?

## Scripts

Staff will use a standard, non-inflammatory, script that they can say when they encounter behaviour that could result in harm. All scripts are positively phrased and can help to avert an escalating crisis and give staff the confidence to be proactive about the negative behaviour. Scripts also serve the purpose of disempowering negative behaviours such as swearing, as pupils realise that all staff follow the same protocols and that such behaviour does not 'get a reaction'. See Appendix A for standard scripts.

## The Last Resort Principal

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

"If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future."

### ***Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children***

*Act 1989” – London: H M S O*

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

## Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous, provided that it is an agreed part of a Risk Reduction Plan (Appendix B). Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

## Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Staff should always remain objective and calm. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be fully supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

Where staff can answer these questions, physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

Examples of situations where reasonable force might be used are:

- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, or another pupil;
- to stop a fight between two or more pupils;
- to prevent a pupil causing deliberate damage to property;
- to prevent a pupil causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or object;
- to ensure that a pupil leaves a classroom where the pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so;
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson;
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.

The above examples of situations where reasonable force might be used are set out in the DFE 'Use of Reasonable Force Guidance' 2013, Crown Copyright (See Appendix D).

## Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items":

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images

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- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules. Separate guidance is available on the power to search without consent in 'Screening, Searching and Confiscation' DFE 2013.

## Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use physical intervention simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk of harm. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Only approved handling techniques should be used (refer to Norfolk Steps techniques); under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, physical intervention should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

## Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff *always* offer help and *always* accept it. Help does not necessarily mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

## Norfolk Steps

It is the policy of this school that *all* staff are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive de-escalation strategies of Norfolk Steps ('Step On' training) and that those staff working closely with pupils with BESD are trained in the positive handling and physical intervention strategies and techniques of Norfolk Steps ('Step Up' training). These skills complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour and Pastoral Care Policy. Further details of the Norfolk Steps approach can be found on the Norfolk Steps website ([Norfolk Steps](#)). For staff joining the school mid year training will be arranged as soon as it is practically possible.

## Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as

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dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. In this school, this is the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in her absence. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important to.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

## **Risk Assessment**

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit harmful behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In such cases, the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

## **Risk Reduction Plans**

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Risk Reduction Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Risk Reduction Plans should be considered alongside a Statement of SEN and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Risk Reduction Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in Pastoral Support Plans or IEPs.

## Getting Help

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEP's and Behaviour Support plans and Risk Reduction Plans are kept on file in each classroom to ensure all information about each relevant pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Weekly briefing sessions during Staff Meetings to update staff on current issues and to share information.
- Use of help protocols and scripts to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Annual refresher meetings on the Norfolk Steps strategies and techniques for all staff, and continuous review by SLT to inform these.

## Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or defusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. If staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

## The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Any injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident

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support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

### Recording

The school will follow statutory guidance to report all significant incidents involving physical intervention as set out in *The Use of Reasonable Force to Control: Guidance for Schools*, DfE, 2013, Crown Copyright . Whenever overpowering force is used, the incident must be recorded using the approved forms ( Appendix C). Record of Harm sheets are kept in folders in the staff room. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. The details recorded on the forms are kept confidentially in a locked filing cabinet.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

### Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

### Complaints

The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for safeguarding (the headteacher). If an allegation is made against a teacher the quick resolution of that allegation should be a clear priority to the benefit of all concerned. At any stage of consideration or investigation, all unnecessary delays should be eradicated. The school will refer to the guidelines on allegations against staff set out in the guidance 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff' DfE October 2012 and guidance for schools document 2013, Crown Copyright.

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### **Other Relevant Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:  
Ready to Learn; Behaviour & Discipline Policy  
Health & Safety Policy  
Safeguarding Policy  
Touch Policy  
Complaints Procedure

## **9 Monitoring and review**

This policy was formulated with staff and the Teaching , Learning and Pupil Welfare Committee in March 2014 with regard to most recent guidelines and approved by the Full Governing Body on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. It is due to be reviewed Spring 2017. Any updates to documents mentioned in the policy will be reported to the committee and the policy amended.

APPENDIX A :

Scripts

**General**

“Reading/Listening/Working, \_\_\_\_\_, thanks.”

**Inappropriate language and insults to individuals**

“Kind words please”

**Unwanted contact with others**

“Hands to yourself please”

**Running in School**

“Walking, thanks”

**Settling to Tasks**

“Finish your work, thanks”

Leave two minutes if appropriate return and repeat as necessary.

**Distracting Noises e.g. calling out**

“Save it for playtime, thanks”

**Inappropriate physical activity e.g. press-ups/lying down/squatting on chair**

“Sitting, thanks”

Wait & repeat

**When displaying the beginnings of anger/frustration**

“Come on; let’s go to the chill out room”.

APPENDIX B :

Risk Reduction Plan (**CHILD**)

Child's Name:	
No.of Plans	<i>Sheet of</i>
DoB:	
Age:	
Risk Assessment Coordinator:	
Issue No:	
Issue Date:	
Closing Date:	
Risk Score	

Potential Harm	
Behaviour resulting in potential Harm	

Risk Reduction Measures	Notes
<p><b>Strategies BEFORE a Crisis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will inform all school staff of the <b>consistent</b> approach that the school is taking with Child X.</li> <li>We will communicate with parents to establish a consistency of approach with them. We will share with them the tactics that we find successful....and vice versa we will seek their advice.</li> <li>Staff will create a standard, non-inflammatory, script that they can say when they encounter Child X in an anxious/running-off state.</li> <li>A small team (class teacher/assistant/HT) will consistently handle the 'heavy end' of rewarding/sanctioning.</li> <li>We will seek all the extra help that we need to meet the needs of Child X eg. Involve the Educational Psychologist. Perhaps try and enlist some more Family Support/Strengthening Families. Ask for support from Advisory Teachers at the Area PRU. Make all these professionals part of <b>our</b> consistent plan. We will try to get these professionals to sign up to any suggestions they make.</li> <li>We will create a space in the classroom/school where Child X can have 'time out/withdrawal' perhaps with a bean bag/soft chair and story</li> </ul>	

<p>book/photo book/comic.</p>	
<p><b>Strategies DURING a Crisis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will use the Help Script and adopt a De-escalation Stance.</li> <li>• We will Guide and Escort Child X to a quiet area in the room/removal place using ‘Escorting Open Mittens’ over elbow(s).</li> <li>• We will use ‘Open Mittens’ to prevent Child X hitting out and guide him away from others.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Strategies AFTER a Crisis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will find a quiet time and a quiet place after Child X has run off/shouted/hit out, to listen and learn from the event.</li> <li>• We will use emotional literacy (SEAL) and restorative approaches to connect the ‘harm’ consequences of Child X’s actions. Eg. Because we care about you we don’t want to see you hurt yourself!’ ‘Making that noise scared the other children and meant that they couldn’t have their lesson today!’ This may help Child X to realise the consequences of his actions. We realise that some children do not have any concept of consequence, remorse or harm. We realise that saying ‘Sorry!’ is sometimes a way of Child X not accepting/avoiding responsibility for their actions.</li> <li>• We will attempt to find a way of learning from the situation. We will try and find out how Child X <b>felt</b> before and during the crisis rather than just ask ‘Why did you do that?’ We will offer suggestions such as ‘If you feel like that again just...’ Or even ‘What should we do to help you when you feel like that?’ (Restorative Approaches.)</li> <li>• We will consider holding a ‘Restorative Conference’ if there has been significant harm to others....physical and/or emotional.</li> <li>• We will record and report all incidents. (Please see attached).</li> <li>• We will revise and evaluate this current plan in the light of any incidents.</li> </ul>	

APPENDIX C :



**PART A** (to be completed for all incidents involving unruly or unacceptable behaviour by pupils)

<b>NAME OF SCHOOL:</b>	
<b>PUPIL NAME:</b>	
<b>STAFF NAME AND STATUS:</b>	
<b>INCIDENT DATE/TIME/PLACE:</b>	

<b>Nature of incident:</b> <i>(tick boxes as appropriate)</i>	<b>Vandalism</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Physical Control</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Bullying</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Absconding</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Assault</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Substance Abuse</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Diversion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Non-compliance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Isolation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Serious Disruption</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Time out</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other (please state)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**ANTECEDENTS:** (events leading up to incident)

**BEHAVIOUR:** (how did the pupil respond, describe what actually happened)

**CONSEQUENCES:** (how did the staff intervene, how did the child respond, and how was the situation resolved)

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<b>NAMES OF THOSE INVOLVED:</b> <i>(staff and pupils)</i>	
<b>NAMES OF WITNESSES:</b> <i>(staff and pupils)</i>	
<b>SIGNATURE OF REPORT COMPILER:</b>	

**PART B** *(to be completed if the use of "restraining" physical controls has occurred)*

**WHAT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES WERE USED PRIOR TO PHYSICAL CONTROLS:**

*(tick the appropriate box below)*

<p><b>Defusing</b></p> <p><b>Deflection</b></p> <p><b>Distraction take up time</b></p> <p><b>Humour</b></p> <p><b>Proximity control</b></p> <p><b>Hurdle help</b></p> <p><b>Planned ignoring</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Time out</b></p> <p><b>Changes of task</b></p> <p><b>Choices</b></p> <p><b>Limits</b></p> <p><b>Consequences</b></p> <p><b>Another member of staff</b></p> <p><b>Other <i>(please state)</i></b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
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**JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF PHYSICAL CONTROLS:**

*(tick the appropriate box below)*

<p><b>To prevent/interrupt;</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>A criminal offence</b></p> <p><b>Injury to pupil/staff/others</b></p> <p><b>Serious damage to property</b></p> <p><b>Disruptive behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Pupil absconding</b></p> <p><b>Other <i>(please state)</i></b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
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**NATURE OF PHYSICAL CONTROLS USED:** *(include estimate of duration of use of physical controls)*

*(please tick appropriate box)*

Standing 
 Sitting 
 Kneeling 
 Prone 
 Duration

**RESPONSE AND VIEW OF THE PUPIL:** *(this field must be completed)*

**DETAILS OF ANY RESULTING INJURY:**

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*(injury to whom and action taken as a result, e.g. first aid, medical treatment)*

**ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

**NAME OF SENIOR PERSON NOTIFIED:**

**TIME/DATE**

**HEADTEACHERS COMMENTS:**

**SIGNATURE OF HEADTEACHER:**

**DATE:**

**Appendix D The Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013**