



ROYAL
BALLET
SCHOOL

SETTING THE STANDARD

RESTRAINT POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Ballet School recognises that on some occasions it may be necessary, in the interests of all students and for the safety of all students, to use reasonable force to restrain or control students. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use such force, as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing any offence, causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student himself/herself)
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its students, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise
- OR, to remove a disruptive child from a classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction or because of a physical outburst.

This policy recognises that there is a need to be sensitive to cultural and religious expectations of parents, students and staff, and to make reasonable adjustments for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This policy follows Government guidelines, including 'Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies', July 2013.

Any reference to 'teachers' will include any member of staff.

Physical contact and reasonable force

As a general principle, teachers should not make unnecessary physical contact with their students. However, there are occasions when physical contact is appropriate and/or necessary, for instance when a student is being shown how to play a musical instrument or use a piece of equipment, or while demonstrating a move or exercise during ballet or PE, when a pupils is being congratulated or praised and when comforting a distressed student.

The administration of First Aid will inevitably involve physical contact and First Aiders should ensure that, where possible, others are present in circumstances when physical contact could be misconstrued.

The policy on Appropriate Physical Contact in Dance explains the School's policy in artistic classes.

The term '**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.

'**Force**' is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

'**Control**' means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.

‘Restraint’ means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention. Restraint may involve blocking the path of students, positioning oneself between students, touching, holding, pushing, pulling or leading a student by the arm or shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the student. Staff should not act in a way that could be expected to cause injury, for example:

- holding a student around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the student's ability to breathe or to speak
- slapping, punching or kicking a student
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a student
- holding or pulling a student by the hair or ear
- holding a student face down on the ground
- using items of clothing or belts to restrict movement
- or use any other form of restraint not identified as falling within the definitions of ‘force’, ‘control and ‘restraint’ above.

Power to restrain

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force should it be deemed necessary. The power also applies to people whom the School has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on individual circumstances. Staff do not require parental consent to use force on a student should it be necessary.

School staff should, however, **never** use force as a punishment as this is unlawful.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a student in a way that might be considered indecent and they should ensure, where possible, that the student maintains his/her dignity.

Students should not be authorised to use force to restrain or control another student.

Reporting and reviewing

All instances involving the use of force should be reported to the Principal (Academic & Pastoral) or the Assistant Principal (Pastoral & Welfare). These instances will be thoroughly and appropriately investigated and a written record kept by completing the Use of Reasonable Force Record Form.

In the case of significant incidents a decision will be made with regard to informing parents about the use of force. This will depend upon the student's behaviour, the level of risk presented at the time of the incident, the degree of force used, the effect on the student or member of staff and the child's age.

Record keeping

A written record (Use of Reasonable Force Record Form) of any use of restraint on a student, the action taken and the reason given for the restraint, will be held centrally by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputy during their absence).

Complaint

A complaint by a student about the use of force used on him/her will be speedily and appropriately investigated.

The onus will be on the complainant to prove that his/her allegations are true and not for the member of staff to show that he/she acted reasonably. Where an allegation of use of excessive force is used against a member of staff by a student the School will refer to the Complaints Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

Where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher, in line with the DfE Guidance “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff”, suspension is not an automatic response. The school will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant the staff member being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate. The Governing Body of the school will always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action.

Appropriate pastoral care will be provided for a member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident as well as to the student.

Power to search students without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force the Artistic Director, Principal (Academic & Pastoral), the Assistant Principal (Pastoral & Welfare) and Senior House Staff may use 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 and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property. *See Searching a Student Policy.*

Force cannot, however, be used to search for other items which are banned under the school rules.