Policy on the Use of Force by Staff to Control or Restrain Pupils (which reflects a number of the Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but in particular Article 36-a child's right to be safeguarded from accomplishing acts which may harm him/her)

Objectives

Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr is a caring environment where each individual is respected. We do not routinely use force when dealing with pupils, but we need to ensure that we have a policy that recognizes the rare occasions where staff need to physically intervene with a pupil. We will not use force except for rare occasions where it is necessary to:

- ensure the safety of pupils and staff;
- prevent serious breaches of school discipline;
- prevent serious damage to property; and
- to protect the rights of children and young people.

Minimising the need to use force

We should always focus on preventing the need to use force, by:

- creating a calm, disciplined and supportive school that reduces the risk and the threat of violence of any kind;
- developing effective relationships between pupils and staff which are central to good discipline;
- effective management of individual events. It is important to communicate calmly with the pupil, using non-threatening words and body language, and ensure that the pupil can see a way out of the situation.
- wherever practicable, warning the pupil that force may be used prior to use;
- only using force as a last resort when the risks of doing so outweigh the risks of not using force.

Staff authorised to use force

All teachers and staff authorised by the Headteacher to have control or be responsible for pupils have an automatic statutory power to use reasonable force.

Deciding whether to use force

- Do not use force except in exceptional circumstances. For example, staff should only use force when:
    - the potential consequences of not intervening would be considered sufficiently serious to justify the use of force;
    - the likelihood of achieving the desired result by other means is low, and
    - the risk associated with not using force outweigh the risk of the use of force.
- Staff should ensure that they reduce the most significant risks:
    - For example by calling the police if it is considered that a pupil who has a suspected weapon is likely to refuse a search.
- Some examples of situations where reasonable force might be used
    - To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, or another pupil, or to prevent two or more pupils from fighting;
    - Prevent a pupil from doing intentional serious damage to property;
    - Prevent a pupil causing injury or damage by accident; through rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
    - Ensuring that a pupil leaves the classroom when the pupil refuses to consistently follow instruction to do so;
    - Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson or;
    - Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.

Using force

- It must be ensured that any physical intervention uses the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result:
    - A clear verbal warning should be given to the pupil that force may be used;
    - As far as possible, staff should not use force unless or until a responsible adult is present to support, to observe and to call for help
- Before using force, staff should, when possible, tell the pupil to stop misbehaving and communicate in a calm and measured way throughout the event.
    - ***Staff should not act due to anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil, and should clearly explain the physical contact or restraint will cease as soon as the need to do so ends.***
- In schools, force is generally used for two different purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them:

- Control can mean either passive physical contact (e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path) or active physical contact (e.g. leading a pupil by the hand or arm, or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back).
- When members of staff use "restraint" they physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing after they have been told to stop.

  Restraint techniques are usually used in more extreme circumstances, such as when two pupils are involved in a fight and physical intervention is needed to separate them.

- Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use the minimum force required to achieve the desired result).
- Staff should make every effort to avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. However, in the most extreme circumstances it may not always be possible to avoid injuring a pupil.
- Staff should always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

Recording incidents
Any incident requiring the use of force will be recorded in writing without delay, using the general Incident Report Form and a copy of the report provided to the Headteacher.

Reporting incidents
Parents or guardians of children involved should be informed of any incident requiring the use of force as a matter of course, and as soon as possible.
The Headteacher will consider whether the incident requires reporting to external agencies such as other local authority children's services, the local Children's Safeguarding Board, the Health and Safety Executive, youth offending teams or the police.

Post-incident support
Serious incidents that require use of force can be upsetting to all concerned and may result in injuries to the pupil or to staff. Immediate action should be taken to provide first aid for any injuries and to access medical help for any injuries that go beyond first aid. It is also important to ensure that staff and pupils are given emotional support.

A letter to parents informing them about the use of force can also be used to engage them in discussing the incident and for setting out subsequent actions and support. It is good practice for parents to be involved in agreeing appropriate support arrangements. For parents of pupils whose behaviour is associated with ALN and/or disabilities, it is advisable to agree an individual

behaviour plan. Such plans would include strategies to prevent and deal with any recurrence of behaviour that could lead to the use of force.

Monitoring and review
This Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

General Points
We are aware of the sensitive nature associated with any physical contact with pupils. We should avoid physical contact as far as is practicable.
It is not justifiable to use force to prevent minor misbehaviour. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, abolished by Section 548 of the Education Act 1996.

(Revised: July 2026)