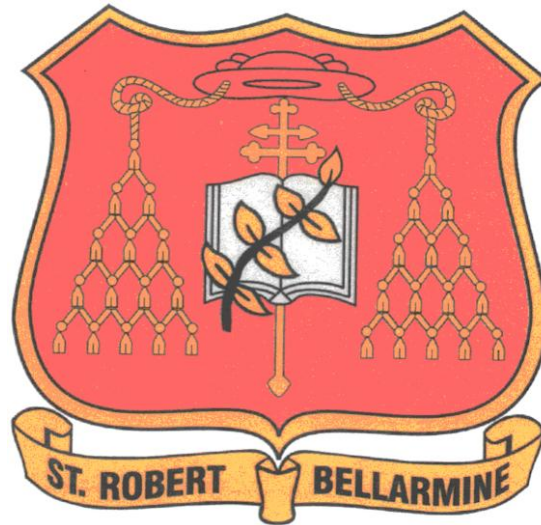


St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary School



Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Our Mission Statement

“We are God’s work of art.”

- Help each other
- Be happy
- Follow the light of Jesus
- Include everybody
- Everybody do their best in every way
- Be friends with everyone
- Be responsible for your own actions
- Follow the light of Jesus
- Work to the best of your abilities
- Parents, teachers and children support each other.

Use of Reasonable Force Policy

1. Aims and scope

At St Robert Bellarmine, a one-form entry primary school, we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where all pupils can learn and thrive.

We recognise that, in rare circumstances, restrictive interventions (including reasonable force and seclusion) may be necessary to keep pupils and staff safe. However, these interventions are always used as a **last resort**, after preventative and de-escalation strategies have been attempted.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through early support and effective behaviour management
 - Ensure staff understand how to use restrictive interventions safely, proportionately and lawfully
 - Set out clear procedures for recording and reporting incidents using CPOMS
 - Protect the dignity, safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff
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2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance and complies with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
 - Education Act 1996 (Sections 550ZA and 550ZB)
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
 - The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
 - DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
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3. Definitions

Restrictive interventions

Actions that prevent or restrict a pupil's movement.

A 'significant incident' is any use of force that goes beyond normal physical contact between staff and pupils, and must always be recorded. Actions that prevent or restrict a pupil's movement.

Examples in our school may include:

- Blocking a pupil from running into unsafe areas (e.g. playground gate or road)
- Standing between pupils to prevent harm
- Escorting a pupil to a safe space

Reasonable force

Physical contact used to prevent harm, using the **minimum force necessary for the shortest time possible**.

Examples:

- Guiding a pupil by the arm
- Separating pupils fighting
- Preventing a pupil from hurting themselves or others

Restraint

Restricting a pupil's movement, with or without physical contact.

Seclusion

Keeping a pupil in a space away from others and preventing them from leaving, for safety reasons.

In our school, this may involve:

- Use of a calm/wellbeing room under supervision

Seclusion is **never used as punishment**.

Seclusion does not include supervised time-out or withdrawal where a pupil is free to leave.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Governing board

- Approve and review this policy
- Monitor data on restrictive interventions
- Ensure procedures are followed

Headteacher

- Oversee implementation
- Ensure staff training is provided
- Monitor CPOMS records
- Ensure parents are informed

All staff

- Use de-escalation strategies first
- Record incidents on CPOMS the same day
- Report incidents to the DSL
- Participate in training and debriefs

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Ensure incidents are reviewed on CPOMS
- Inform parents/carers promptly (usually same day)
- Maintain secure records

SENCO

- Support risk assessments and behaviour plans
- Advise staff on SEND needs
- Monitor patterns and triggers

5. Acceptable uses of force

Staff may use reasonable force to:

- Prevent injury to pupils or staff
- Stop serious damage to property
- Prevent serious disruption or unsafe behaviour

Any use must be **necessary, proportionate and reasonable**.

6. Unacceptable uses of force

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Use of force as punishment
- Any action restricting breathing or circulation
- Use of force on the ground (unless unavoidable and released immediately)

7. Searching pupils

The headteacher and authorised staff may search pupils if there is reasonable suspicion of prohibited items.

Reasonable force may only be used to search for **prohibited items**, not items banned under school rules (e.g. toys or phones).

8. Prevention and de-escalation

Our school prioritises prevention through:

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils
- Clear routines and expectations
- Consistent behaviour management

De-escalation strategies include:

- Calm communication and tone
- Giving space and time
- Removing audience
- Offering a safe, calm space
- Distraction or redirection

9. Decision-making: necessity and proportionality

Staff must consider:

- Is it necessary?
- Is it proportionate?

- Are there safer alternatives?

The **least restrictive option** must always be used.

10. Considerations for SEND

We recognise that pupils with SEND may require additional support.

We will:

- Complete risk assessments where needed
 - Develop behaviour support plans
 - Make reasonable adjustments
 - Work closely with parents/carers
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11. Training and risk assessments

- Staff receive training appropriate to their role
 - Risk assessments are in place for pupils where needed
 - Staff working closely with high-need pupils receive additional support
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12. Recording and reporting (CPOMS)

The school has a **statutory duty** to record and report all significant incidents involving force, seclusion and restraint in line with current legislation.

Recording

All incidents must be recorded on **CPOMS as soon as practicable and, in any event, on the same day wherever possible.**

Records must include:

- Names of pupils and staff involved
- Date, time, location and duration
- What happened before, during and after
- De-escalation strategies used
- Reason for intervention
- Any injuries
- Follow-up actions

Reporting to parents/carers

- Parents/carers will be informed **as soon as possible (usually the same day)**
- This is typically carried out by the DSL or a senior leader

Information shared will include:

- What happened
- Why intervention was necessary
- Type of intervention used
- Any injuries

Exceptions

Parents will not be informed if this would place the child at risk of harm. In such cases, the local authority will be informed.

13. Complaints and allegations

- Managed through the school complaints policy
 - Allegations against staff handled in line with safeguarding procedures
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14. Monitoring and review

- Policy reviewed every 3 years
 - CPOMS data monitored regularly
 - Patterns and trends analysed to improve practice
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15. Links with other policies

- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy
- SEND policy
- Health and safety policy
- Complaints policy

