

FOOTSTEPS TRUST BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Footsteps Academy is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, respectful and nurturing environment where all students can learn, achieve and develop positively.

We recognise that positive behaviour supports educational achievement, wellbeing and safeguarding. Expectations are high, consistent and fair, while recognising that many students attending Alternative Provision may have experienced adversity, trauma, disrupted education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs or other vulnerabilities.

This policy is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Behaviour in Schools Guidance
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- SEND Code of Practice
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

The Academy recognises that behaviour and safeguarding are closely linked. All behaviour incidents are considered through a safeguarding lens and appropriate action will be taken where behaviour indicates a child may be at risk of harm.

The key to managing behaviour successfully is a consistent approach. It is important therefore that all staff adopt and uphold this policy. Whilst it is accepted that there must be room for individual preferences, staff who do not put the core principles of our Behaviour Policy at the forefront of their approach make life more difficult for their colleagues and increase the workload of Team Leaders and Senior Leaders. We also believe that this makes it harder for some learners to understand and cooperate with the systems that we have that are designed to enable them to achieve.

When a learner enrolls at Footsteps, they and their parents/carers make a commitment to support Footsteps, and Footsteps makes a commitment to the learner and their parents/carers. It is hoped that they will support Footsteps in its endeavours to constantly improve the systems it has in order that learners can make progress in line with their abilities and aspirations.

We will consult annually with learners, parents/carers, members of staff, and the Board of Directors about our Behaviour Policy.

Aims of this Policy

- To support learning at Footsteps.
- To achieve outstanding standards of behaviour
- To allow all learners to learn in a safe and secure environment.
- To encourage respect for others, for property and for the environment.
- To encourage and develop self-discipline and personal responsibility/accountability for actions.
- To promote a positive, calm, and purposeful ethos within Footsteps community.
- To encourage honesty, trust, fairness, and tolerance.
- To recognise the individual needs of learners.
- To reduce 'low level disruption' in learning sessions.
- To eliminate persistent absence issues especially amongst vulnerable learners.
- To eliminate the necessity for all forms of exclusion from learning.

Trauma-Informed Practice

Footsteps Academy adopts a trauma-informed and relational approach to behaviour management.

Many learners attending Alternative Provision may have experienced:

- Adverse childhood experiences.
- Interrupted education.
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Special educational needs.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Family or community trauma.

Staff recognise that behaviour is often a form of communication. Our responses seek to understand underlying need while maintaining clear boundaries, expectations and consequences.

Staff will:

- Build positive relationships.
- Promote emotional regulation.
- Use restorative approaches.
- Consider SEND and individual vulnerabilities.
- Implement reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Support learners to develop self-regulation and resilience.

Any behaviour intervention will be proportionate, educational and focused on supporting future success.

Principles of Support

- All staff and learners have a responsibility to create outstanding order at Footsteps and to maintain high standards of behaviour. Learning Mentors have a duty to maintain outstanding order in their learning spaces and should take steps to correct behaviour which does not conform to this policy.
- Every member of staff is empowered to praise, reward and challenge learners for actions that they consider to be anti-social, dangerous, or disruptive.
- Everyone at Footsteps has the right to be treated in a courteous and considerate way. Bullying, harassment, and any other form of unkind and upsetting behaviour will not be tolerated – ref: Anti-Bullying Policy
- Individual members of staff are responsible for maintaining a stimulating and purposeful learning environment. Learning Mentors and Academy Leaders will actively support staff in this.
- It is important that parents/carers share the responsibility for their learner's behaviour, and they have the right to be kept informed and involved. By enrolling as a learner at Footsteps, parents/carers undertake a commitment to support the work we undertake.
- When imposing a sanction on a learner, it is the action or behaviour which should be criticised, and not the individual.
- Staff should always seek to model appropriate behaviour, and ways of speaking to and engaging with learners.

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers can expect the schools' aim to provide a positive learning environment for their child(ren). Parents and carers are expected to take responsibility for the behaviour of their child(ren) both inside and outside school. We see the role of parents and carers as a critical factor in maintaining high standards of behaviour and cooperation.

Code of Conduct for Students

As a member of Footsteps student cohort, students are expected to:

- Attend
- Be punctual
- Be smart and have the correct equipment
- Work hard
- Act sensibly
- Treat everyone and everything with respect
- Make it easy for everyone to learn and for staff to explain/demonstrate/guide/coach/assist
- If in doubt, ask, listen to the answer, and then act accordingly
- Be tolerant and respectful of all members of the Footsteps team
- Promote a peaceful school environment by behaving in positive manner and not being aggressive, bullying, or fighting with others
- No eating in lessons - or chewing gum
- Remove hoodies when in the school building
- Always Use appropriate language (No swearing)
- Keep Footsteps tidy
- No use of mobile phones during lessons (phones to be handed in)

Students are also expected to:

- Follow staff instructions promptly.
- Act safely online and offline.
- Respect individual differences and protected characteristics.

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Date of Review: September 2027

- Refrain from discriminatory language or conduct.
- Report bullying, harassment, abuse or safeguarding concerns.
- Use technology responsibly.
- Contribute positively to the Academy community.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Footsteps Academy recognises that some behaviour incidents may constitute child-on-child abuse.

This may include:

- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Online abuse.
- Coercive behaviour.
- Prejudice-based incidents.
- Exploitation.

Incidents of this nature will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Behaviour concerns which indicate a safeguarding risk will always take precedence over disciplinary procedures.

Positive Recognition

- The Academy promotes a culture where positive behaviour is recognised through:
- Verbal praise.
- Merit awards.
- Achievement certificates.
- Attendance awards.
- Positive communication with parents/carers.
- Celebration events and assemblies.
- Personal development awards.
- Student leadership opportunities.

Recognition will celebrate effort, progress, resilience, kindness, attendance and contribution to the Academy community.

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Green Cards endeavour to promote a culture of rewarding consistent outstanding achievement. The exact criteria for awarding the 'Points for Prizes' rewards are obviously a matter for individual members of staff to determine as they know their learners best. However, likely reasons are:

- Consistent excellent attendance and punctuality throughout the year, e.g. 95%+ each term with no late marks recorded
- Commitment to the values and purpose of our learning culture
- Learners striving for excellence
- Consistent high achievement
- Learners who consistently meet assessment deadlines
- Learners who set themselves challenging targets and who are regularly learning new skills
- Learners who show full commitment to catching-up or developing revision skills

Progress Reports

Parents, carers and referring agencies are issued with a weekly report of their child(ren)'s classroom conduct. These reports are in a coloured coded indication of green representing excellent behaviour, yellow being satisfactory and red which indicates poor behaviour; as well as merit and penalty scores of 5 points for merit and a demerit of -5 points. Following assessments, Half termly reports are issued. These indicate each subject grade, target grades and predicted grades with a summary data on pupil behaviour, behaviour targets, and to inform of appropriate interventions.

Sanctions

Learners have a right to expect fair and consistently applied sanctions for poor behaviour that make a clear distinction between serious and minor infringements of this policy. An appropriate sanction is one that is designed to put matters right and encourage better behaviour in future. Thus, it is inappropriate to punish whole groups for the misdemeanours of a few or to impose a sanction that is designed to humiliate a learner or group.

In learning sessions, sanctions should be incremental and proportionate to the misdemeanour:

- Staff acknowledge to the learner that they have broken the code of conduct, without doing so publicly
- Informal verbal warning and rule reminder
- Issue of Red Card

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- Formal verbal reminder and second rule reminder – learner must remain at the end of the session to discuss the matter
- Exit – the learner is escorted by a Learning Mentor of the group to a pre-arranged location to be isolated by the appropriate Academy Leader for the remainder of the session – a sanction letter will be sent home and suitable imposition, evening detention (replacing an Enrichment activity) or report card will be actioned with a note made in the learner's MIS file

Consistent use of assertive language: For example, “You know Footsteps rules about ... if you choose to ... then you are choosing ...” is most effective when giving verbal warnings. Sanctions, and in particular detentions, only work if there is consistent application of the Code of Conduct and consequences.

Where a learner does not improve their behaviour because of the sanctions above, the Learning Mentor should refer the matter to the appropriate Academy Leader who will arrange a meeting with the learner and parents/carers.

Behaviour Support and Consequences

Consequences will be:

- Fair.
- Consistent.
- Proportionate.
- Reasonable.
- Age appropriate.

Staff will seek to separate the behaviour from the individual and maintain positive working relationships wherever possible.

Restorative conversations and reflection will be used wherever appropriate to repair relationships and support behaviour change.

Recording and Monitoring

All significant incidents will be recorded on the Academy's management information system.

Records may include:

- Behaviour incidents.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Suspensions.
- Prejudice-based incidents.
- Child-on-child abuse concerns.
- Physical intervention records.
- Risk assessments.
- Interventions and outcomes.

Behaviour data will be monitored regularly by senior leaders to identify trends and support vulnerable learners.

Suspension

The Principal may suspend a student in accordance with current Department for Education guidance.

Suspensions will only be considered where:

- Serious breaches of behaviour expectations have occurred.
- A student's behaviour poses a risk to others.
- A student's behaviour seriously disrupts education.
- Alternative strategies have been unsuccessful or are inappropriate due to the seriousness of the incident.

When considering suspension, the Academy will take into account:

- Safeguarding concerns.
- SEND.
- Vulnerabilities.
- Previous interventions.
- Proportionality and fairness.

Following suspension, a reintegration meeting and support plan will normally be implemented.

Zero tolerance in relation to Fixed Term Suspensions and Placement Withdrawal.

There are a number of circumstances when having to establish a pupils' responsibility for unacceptable behaviour and consideration of SEN (if applicable) the pupil will be suspended. Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the incident, subject to further investigation, the pupil may have their Footsteps place withdrawn. Note that the pupil will not usually have their Footsteps place withdrawn in the first instance – although this option is always available. Placement withdrawal will be preceded by a fix term suspension to provide an opportunity to fully investigate student culpability.

The circumstances that apply where a student may lose their Footsteps place are:

- Physical aggression against a member of staff
- Serious acts of physical aggression against other pupil(s) leading to injury or repeated act of violence
- Possession of weapons
- The use of weapons including knives, firearms, imitation weapons, clubs, or hardware
- Discriminatory behaviour
- Behaviour which could publicly defame the reputation of the school or bring the school in disrepute
- The possession of any narcotics or alcohol
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Commencement of Formal Disciplinary Procedures

The outlined procedures seek to guide actions which will ensure that instances of indiscipline are being dealt with in a fair and just manner and consistently seek to promote personal and collective responsibility. The desired outcome of an effective sanction is to separate the behaviour from the child to set positives for the next lesson or interaction. Staff should build, repair and use praise when appropriate. The purpose of the discipline procedure is to set out the stages in which Footsteps will respond and to facilitate effective learning and positive personal development.

Stage 1 Meeting

Following an incident, an investigation and/or meeting will take place. Staff must decide whether disciplinary action is appropriate and justified, or not. If so, a meeting will be called, inviting the learner, their parent/carers, and an officer from their referring agency. This is a Stage 1 meeting. At the meeting, the learner and parents/carers, and referring agency, will be informed of the nature of the incident/behaviour that is causing concern and give the learner the opportunity to explain why he/she is behaving in this particular manner. Ways forward will be discussed, and a strategy put in place. The learner will also have to sign a contract that binds them from future involvement in

disciplinary issues. It will clearly state what is acceptable, and appropriate behaviour, and what is not. (Fixed period suspensions will not exceed 45 days in a school year).

The Stage 1 meeting clearly will set out the nature of the misconduct and the change in the behaviour required, and a timescale. It will be indicated that the warning is part of the disciplinary process and what the consequences will be of a failure to change behaviour. The consequences could be a Stage 2 meeting, or a permanent placement withdrawal from Footsteps. A record of these meetings will be kept.

Stage 2 meeting

Where there is a failure to improve or change behaviour in the timescale set out at the Stage 1 meeting, or where the offence is sufficiently serious, the learner will normally be issued with a Stage 2 meeting. The Stage 2 meeting will give details of the nature of misbehaviour and warn that failure to improve may lead to placement withdrawal. The protocols of the Stage 2 meeting are along the same lines as the Stage 1 meeting.

Each of the above two stages may use a fixed term suspension as part of the process for dealing with the poor behaviour. This may be an internal or external suspension i.e. served at Footsteps or where the learner is actually at home.

Stage 3 meeting and Withdrawal of Footsteps place

If the learners' behaviour again fails to improve, a Stage 3 meeting, normally the final stage of the disciplinary process, will be called, and will generally lead to withdrawal of the student's place. However, the decision to do so can only be taken by the Principal, having considered all aspects, following meetings with the Chairman of Trustees/Trustees. At the meeting, the learner, their parents/carers, and their referring agents, will be informed of the reasons for this action being taken. Parents/carers have the right of appeal.

As an Alternative Provision, Footsteps Academy does not permanently exclude students in the way maintained schools or academies may permanently exclude. Where a placement is no longer suitable or safe despite interventions, the Academy may recommend withdrawal of the placement following consultation with:

- Parents/carers.
- Referring school.
- Local Authority (where appropriate).
- Relevant professionals.

All placement withdrawal decisions will be evidence-based, proportionate and clearly documented.

Cancellation of Arrangements

This in itself is not a formal sanction by Footsteps. After attempting to improve the situation using all or some of the methods above, plus additional interventions where appropriate, it may be that Footsteps has no further option but to cancel the arrangement between Footsteps, the referrer, and the student. It will be for the referrer to decide what further sanctions, if any, or what further action will be appropriate.

Gross Misconduct

Acts which constitute gross misconduct are those resulting in serious breaches of the Footsteps ethos and / or rules.

Examples of this include (but are not limited to):

- Theft
- Physical violence
- Sexual misconduct
- Bullying
- Deliberate and serious damage to property
- Deliberately accessing inappropriate sites on the internet
- Serious insubordination
- Unlawful discrimination or harassment
- Use of/Bringing illegal drugs or alcohol
- Carrying or using an offensive weapon

Footsteps is aware of the negative impact that gang-related activity may have on students and the community in general. “Gang” as used in this policy shall mean two or more individuals who associate with each other primarily for criminal, disruptive and/or other activities prohibited by law and/or by the related Footsteps policies and contracts, such as the anti-bullying policy and student contract, and the student conduct contract. Footsteps delivers anti-gang workshops as part of the curriculum, using outside agencies and professionals. The PSHE curriculum also includes anti-gang aspects and modules.

Consequently, this policy requires that no student shall:

- Wear hoodies or balaclavas, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing, jewellery, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, or other thing which is evidence of membership or affiliation with any gang.
- Coerce or intimidate any student in order to persuade that person to commit or take part in any acts that they do not wish to.
- Draw gang graffiti or distribute gang-related literature.
- Use any speech or act in furtherance of gang activity.
- Solicit others for membership in any gang.
- Request any person to pay protection or otherwise act to extort any person.
- Commit any other illegal act or other violation of school policies.
- Incite other persons to act with physical violence upon any other person.
- Attend any activity that could be interpreted as relating to gangs or gang activity.

Footsteps work in partnership with many outside agencies to ensure that everything possible is done to reduce gang affiliation and the negative outcomes associated with such associations.

Where a learner is judged to have behaved in a manner that constitutes gross misconduct, they may pass immediately to the permanent exclusion stage of the disciplinary process. It is still important the learner is given every opportunity to explain their actions and parents/carers should be included in this procedure.

The learner and their parents/carers will be informed of the reasons for this action being taken and how to appeal against the decision should they wish to do so.

Prohibitions

Learners with an unauthorised item or whose appearance or equipment is unacceptable should be challenged (rule reminder) and asked to attend to the issue, remove the item, switch it off, put away etc. If a learner does not comply or repeatedly needs to be challenged, then the issue should be referred to the appropriate Academy Leader who may impose a sanction, or as a last resort, confiscate an item.

Any confiscated items should be immediately stored securely to be returned at the end of the day and a note should be made in the learner's file. Parents/carers may also need to be contacted. Matters such as these can escalate very quickly, and it is vital that members of staff do not do anything that could in any way be deemed inappropriate should their actions be called into question at a later stage. Paraphernalia such as cigarettes/vapes, drugs, alcohol and weapons will not be returned to students. Parents/Carers, and police may be contacted.

In general:

- Mobile phones and electronic devices should be switched off and handed in when they are not needed as they present a distraction from the learning activity.
- Food and drink should only be consumed in the specifically designated areas outside of lesson time.
- Inappropriate clothing/footwear, jewellery/accessories and extreme/unnatural hairstyles/colours are not conducive to learning in the professional learning and workplace environment of Footsteps and therefore not allowed.
- Chewing gum is not allowed anywhere in site and will generate a detention.

Online Behaviour

Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviour online.

The Academy may take action regarding online behaviour where it:

- Impacts student or staff welfare.
- Constitutes bullying or harassment.
- Involves child-on-child abuse.
- Damages the reputation of the Academy.
- Causes disruption to learning.

Online incidents will be considered alongside safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Searching, screening and confiscation procedures will be conducted in accordance with current Department for Education guidance.

Searches will be:

- Lawful.
- Reasonable.
- Proportionate.
- Safeguarding-informed.
- Recorded where appropriate.

All prohibited items will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance and safeguarding procedures.

- Hand-held scanners are used randomly, and on a targeted basis.
- School staff can search a pupil for any item if the parents/carers or pupil agrees.
- Academy Leaders, and staff, authorised by them, have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item.

¹ The ability to give consent may be influenced by the child's age or other factors.

Prohibited items are:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers, lighters and vapes
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used:
 - i. to commit an offence
 - ii. to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)

Academy Leaders and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for

Confiscation

- School staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline

Multi-Agency Working

Footsteps Academy will work collaboratively with:

- Referring schools.
- Local authorities.
- Social care.
- Youth offending services.
- Mental health professionals.
- Early Help services.
- Other relevant agencies.

Partnership working supports positive behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and successful outcomes for students.

Reasonable Force

Key points

- School staff have a power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power

What is reasonable force?

1. 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 pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil 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.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

6. 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 pupil.

Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Principal has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

2 Section 93, Education, and Inspections Act 2006

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom when allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop or prevent a fight; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Principals 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 and vapes
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- 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 – see the ‘Further sources of information’ section for a link to this document.

I am a teacher - can I refuse to search a pupil without their consent?

Yes, a Principal cannot require a member of staff to conduct a search. In order to conduct a search without consent, a member of staff must be authorised to do so. Staff can choose whether they want to be authorised, or not.

Is there a risk that I could face legal challenge if I search a pupil without consent?

Principals and authorised school staff have a specific statutory power to search pupils without consent for specific items - knives/weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, and stolen items. As long as the member of staff acts within the limits of this specific power, they will have a robust defence against a legal challenge.

3 Section 550ZB (5) of the Education Act 1996

Communicating the school’s approach to the use of force

- Every school is required to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents, and pupils. The governing body should notify the headteacher that it expects the school behaviour policy to include the power to use reasonable force.
- There is no requirement to have a policy on the use of force, but it is good practice to set out, in the behaviour policy, the circumstances in which force might be used. For example, it could say that teachers will physically separate pupils found fighting or that if a pupil refuses to leave a room when instructed to do so, they will be physically removed.
- Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).
- Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student.

- Schools should not have a ‘no contact’ policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.
- By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils, and parents are clear about when force might be used, the school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

Using force

A panel of experts identified that certain restraint techniques presented an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:

- the ‘seated double embrace’ which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing.
- the ‘double basket-hold’ which involves holding a person’s arms across their chest; and
- the ‘nose distraction technique’ which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.

Staff training

Schools need to take their own decisions about staff training. The headteacher should consider whether members of staff require any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and should consider the needs of the pupils when doing so.

Some local authorities provide advice and guidance to help schools to develop an appropriate training programme.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

- It is good practice for schools to speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force and to consider how best to record such serious incidents. It is up to schools to decide whether it is appropriate to report the use of force to parents.
- In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers should use their professional judgement and consider the:
 - pupil’s behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident.
 - degree of force used.
 - effect on the pupil or member of staff; and
 - the child’s age.

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily, and appropriately investigated.

- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff” guidance (see the ‘Further sources of information’ section below) where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.
- Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- Governing bodies should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.
- As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

What about other physical contact with pupils?

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

- Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:
- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school.
- When comforting a distressed pupil.
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- to give first aid.

Monitoring Impact & Review

- The consistent application and enforcement of an effective policy and the resulting procedures by all staff, with suitable monitoring to ensure this, can improve the behaviour of individual learners and groups and thus contribute to the overall Footsteps experience.
- The policy is to be reviewed annually and is linked to the Attendance & Punctuality Policy, the Equality & Diversity Policy, the Exclusions Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.