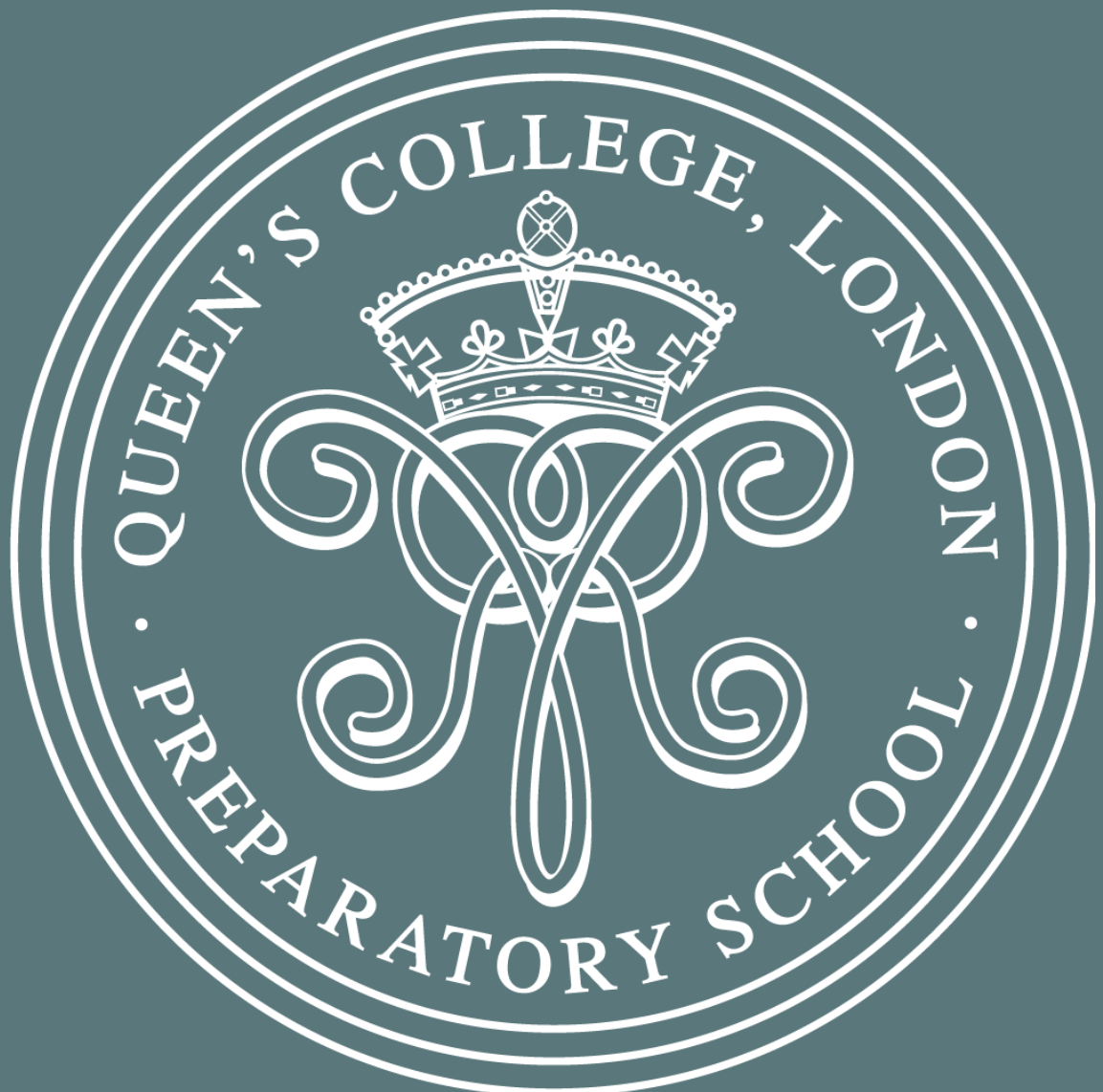


Queen's College Preparatory School (including Early Years Foundation Stage)

Reasonable Force in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

*Due for review during
Michaelmas Term 2026*



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Queen's College Preparatory School complies with all statutory requirements relating to reasonable force, including those set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (September 2025). Within the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception and Little Corgis), the wellbeing and safety of our youngest pupils are paramount, and all practice is underpinned by the principles of care, nurture, and respect. The concepts of *reasonableness*, *proportionality*, and *gentle guidance* are used at all times in relation to any physical intervention.

Purpose

This policy exists to protect every person from harm and to ensure that all pupils are cared for in a safe and supportive environment. It also aims to prevent any unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive, or harmful physical intervention. Staff working with Early Years Foundation Stage pupils are supported to understand what constitutes appropriate and lawful use of reasonable force, always bearing in mind the developmental stage and emotional needs of each child.

The School is fully aware of, and committed to, its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff will always act in accordance with this policy and the School's Behaviour Policy, using calm, positive strategies to de-escalate situations wherever possible.

This policy aims to make clear when such force might be used, so that parents, staff, and children understand the approach and can work together to support the child in the unlikely event that physical intervention becomes necessary. Staff are able to use reasonable force to prevent harm. The School's Preparatory Leadership Team will support staff who act appropriately and in line with this policy.

Introduction

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the use of physical force is extremely rare and not usually necessary. Our approach to behaviour is based on positive guidance, modelling, and helping pupils learn to manage their emotions. However, if a situation arises where intervention is required to ensure a pupil's immediate safety, this policy clarifies the powers of staff and volunteers who have responsibility for the children. This provision applies when a teacher, practitioner, or authorised person is on school premises or has control of the children elsewhere, for example, on an outing or school visit.

This policy does not authorise the use of corporal punishment or any threat of corporal punishment under any circumstances. The School does not permit the use, or threatened use, of corporal punishment during any activity, whether on or off the premises. The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (September 2025) clearly states that corporal punishment must not be given or threatened by any person who cares for, has regular contact with, or works with a child in an Early Years Foundation Stage setting. Failure to meet this standard would constitute an offence.

The School will never threaten or impose any punishment that could adversely affect a child's wellbeing.

Use of Reasonable Force

There are rare occasions where the use of reasonable force may be appropriate to keep a child safe. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage, such intervention would always be minimal, sensitive, and proportionate to the situation. 'Reasonable' means using **no more physical contact than is necessary** to prevent harm. For example, this might include guiding a child gently by the hand or arm away from danger, holding a child who is at risk of running into the road, or preventing a child from hurting themselves or another.

Physical intervention will never be used as a punishment or to make a child comply with an instruction where there is no risk of harm. Staff will always try to avoid acting in a way that could cause injury or distress. In highly exceptional cases, where physical intervention is required to prevent injury, staff will act with care, composure, and in line with training.

The decision to intervene physically rests on the professional judgement of the member of staff involved and will always depend on the individual circumstances. Wherever possible, staff will have already used a range of positive strategies to support the child's behaviour and prevent escalation.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff use calm and proactive approaches such as distraction, redirection and reassurance to help children regulate their emotions and behaviour. These techniques are often sufficient to defuse situations and support children's learning in self-control and empathy. Restraint is always a last resort after all other reasonable methods have been tried.

Training for Staff

A risk assessment will be completed for any child where it is believed that physical intervention may become necessary, for example due to additional needs or known behaviours. The Preparatory Leadership Team will ensure that all staff working in the Early Years Foundation Stage are trained in positive behaviour management, de-escalation techniques, and developmentally appropriate strategies for supporting young children.

Where there is a foreseeable need for physical intervention, selected staff may receive specialist training, for example through *Team Teach*. The Principal and Head of Early Years will ensure that staff feel confident and supported in caring for children's needs safely and sensitively.

Information for Parents

Any incident involving physical intervention will be recorded in the School's Physical Intervention Log. This record will include the date, time, and location of the incident; the staff involved; any witnesses; and a clear description of the circumstances, including the reasons for intervention and the outcomes.

Parents or carers will be informed of any such incident on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2025). The record will also note how and when parents were informed, by whom, and any follow-up discussions taking place.

All incidents will be reviewed by the Head of EYFS and the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to identify whether any further action, support, or staff reflection is needed. All complaints or concerns relating to the use of physical intervention will be investigated fully and in line with the School's Complaints Procedure.

Related documents

Behaviour Policy
Complaints Procedure
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Written	Author/Reviewer	Review Date	Version
October 2025	Katie Paynter	September 2027	2025.01