

Restrictive Interventions including the Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Document Management Information

Version Number:	V1.0
Policy Author:	Head of Operations & Compliance
Approved By:	Board
Date Approved:	17 th September 2026
Review Cycle:	Internal review annually, with formal Committee approval required every three years or earlier if significant updates are necessary.
Next Internal Review Due:	Spring Term 2027
Next Committee Approval Due:	Spring Term 2029
Dissemination:	This policy will be published on the Foundation and individual school websites. It will also be accessible to all staff via the Foundation Policies SharePoint.

Revision History

Version	Description of Revision	Date Approved
1.0	New version on Foundation template.	17/09/2026

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Legislation and Guidance
3. Aims
4. Key Definitions
5. Scope and Application
6. Recording and Reporting Duties
7. Support following an incident
8. Other types of Physical Contact
9. Seclusion
10. Pupils with SEND and Individual Support
11. Monitoring and Review

1. Introduction

Where necessary, reasonable force can be used to control or restrain pupils. Physical contact with pupils may also be appropriate or necessary in other circumstances.

The above applies when a member of staff is on the school premises, and when they have lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere, e.g. on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

Everyone, whether authorised by the Head or not, has the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so. Similarly, in an emergency, for example if a pupil was at immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been written using advice taken from Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force for Schools, Guidance for Schools in England, April 2026. The Foundation acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND); Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

The Foundation recognises that all school staff members have a legal power to use reasonable¹ force, but it is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety and to maintain good order and discipline.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and each school's Behaviour and Sanctions Policies.

It is not intended to encourage the use of inappropriate force or corporal punishment. The illegality of corporal punishment in schools was extended to include the independent sector under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.131.

3. Aims

Our policy on the use of force to control or restrain pupils aims to:

- Protect every person in the school community from harm.
- Protect all pupils against any form of restrictive physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- Provide adequate information and training for staff, so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively

with violent or potentially violent situations.

- Give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others

The Foundation will reduce the need for restrictive interventions through consistent, whole-school measures that promote safety, predictability and inclusion for all pupils. Whole school measures will include:

- Having clear, positively framed routines and expectations taught explicitly and revisited in lessons, assemblies and tutor time and a curriculum that builds social, emotional and self-regulation skills.
- Creating a calm, predictable school and classroom environment by ensuring that there is a visible staff presence at transition points; structured starts/finishes to lessons; the use of visual timetables and cues; creating quiet zones and designated regulation spaces; staggered dismissals, corridor one-way systems, low-arousal classrooms and such like.
- Practicing restorative approaches including the use of recognition and reinforcement of positive behaviours and restorative conversations to repair harm and relationships following incidents and build trust.
- Ensuring staff receive regular training and reminders on de-escalation, communication, trauma-informed practice, autism and ADHD awareness, and lawful decision-making on the use of restrictive interventions.
- Monitoring behaviour and restrictive-intervention data to identify patterns, triggers, and disproportionality to inform improvement planning, environmental adjustments and staff training. The Governing Body and the Head will regularly review data on use of force, seclusion and restraint.
- Communicating with parents and pupils, providing clear information on our approach to behaviour and safety and providing opportunities to share pupil preferences, regulation strategies and communication needs.

4. Key Definitions

Restrictive intervention: any action that prevents, restricts, or subdues a pupil's movement (or part of the body), including physical and non-physical measures, used to reduce immediate risk of harm.

Reasonable force: the minimum degree of physical force necessary, used for the least time, to prevent immediate risk of harm or to conduct a lawful search for a statutorily prohibited item.

Restraint: a form of restrictive intervention involving the use of force to hold back, physically prevent, or otherwise restrict a pupil's movement; this includes non-physical restraint (e.g., removal of a mobility aid).

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary, time-limited safety measure in which a pupil is supervised away from others to reduce immediate risk of harm; it must never be used or threatened as punishment.

Significant incident: any use of force that goes beyond appropriate physical contact, including where the degree, duration or context of force is more than minimal. Staff will use proactive strategies and de-escalation wherever possible; restrictive interventions are only used, when necessary, proportionate and time-limited to address an immediate risk of harm. We communicate this policy to staff, pupils and parents as part of our behaviour culture.

Reasonable Force: will always depend on all the circumstances of the case. The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force could not be justified to prevent a student committing a trivial misdemeanor, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force. Also, the degree of strength involved must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is trying to prevent. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

5. Scope and Application

5.1 When restrictive interventions may be used

The Foundation does not operate a “no contact” policy. Staff may make appropriate, non-force physical contact in context (e.g., first aid, assisting with personal care in line with care plans, guiding a pupil, comforting a distressed pupil, or demonstrating activities) and consistent with discharging safeguarding duties.

Like all schools, we reserve the right for our staff, to use reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil in specific circumstances. Staff may use restrictive interventions only when necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- (a) causing injury to themselves or others;
- (b) seriously damaging property where this creates a risk to safety; or
- (c) posing an immediate risk of disorder that presents a risk of harm.

Any intervention used will be the least restrictive option likely to be effective and used for the minimum time to reduce the immediate risk.

Before intervening, and while an intervention is ongoing, staff will always

consider:

- **Necessity:** Is there an immediate risk of harm that cannot be addressed safely by de-escalation or other less restrictive alternatives?
- **Proportionality:** Is the degree and duration of restriction the minimum necessary to reduce the risk?
- **Welfare and context:** Has the pupil's age, size, medical conditions, SEND, trauma, dignity, communication needs and the environment been considered?

Staff will pause or stop where the intervention escalates the risk. It is unlawful to use force as punishment.

5.2 Application of Reasonable Force

Before intervening physically, a member of staff shall, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and what will happen if he or she does not, in line with the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. The staff member shall continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and shall make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff shall never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration or punishing the pupil.

Reasonable force can take several forms either in the form of control or of restraint. It might involve staff:

- Blocking a person's path.
- Physically interposing themselves between people.
- Holding, pushing or pulling people, to calm an aggressive situation.
- Leading a person by the hand or arm to shepherd them away.

Staff shall **NOT**:

- Hold a student by the neck, collar, hair or ear or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe.
- Slap, punch or kick a student.
- Twist or force limbs against a joint.
- Trip up a student.
- Hold a student face down on the ground.
- Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Reasonable force will only be used for two main purposes – to control pupils or ensure pupil and staff safety. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where force would be reasonable:

- Remove disruptive pupils 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.
- Preventing a pupil leaving the classroom e.g. such as absconding, whereby allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that impacts on the behaviour of others.
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight between pupils.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force, the Head and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances, to conduct a search for prohibited items:

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

Reasonable force cannot be used for any other items which are not on this list even if they are banned by the school rules.

5.3 Practical Considerations

Staff members can sometimes be worried that using force will lead to false allegations of unreasonable or unlawful conduct in the form of a complaint or legal action. But if the force used is reasonable, all staff will have a robust defense against any accusations. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the circumstances of the case and the test is whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

A calm and measured approach to any incident must be maintained. Where practicable, a verbal warning should precede the use of physical force. It is always best to try and have another member of staff present.

Any physical force should stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

There may be occasions – when dealing with older or physically large pupils, or more than one pupil – when the teacher should not intervene without help (unless

it is an emergency). Members of staff should not put themselves at risk. Staff would not be seen as failing in a duty of care by not using force to prevent injury, if in doing so this threatened their own safety.

5.4 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 Head has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

All staff are trained in the circumstances in which reasonable minimum force may be used, both as part of their induction and regular refresher training on managing pupil behaviour. Anyone likely to use restrictive interventions will receive relevant training, including prevention and de-escalation. The school will undertake risk assessments to support all adults to act safely and lawfully, in line with our duty to protect staff and others, health, safety and welfare.

All adults are advised always to use their voices first and to use the minimum force necessary to restrain a pupil for the shortest possible period. The use of force can include either passive contact (such as standing between pupils or blocking a path) or active contact (such as leading a pupil by the arm away from a situation).

Members of staff (including support staff) and other authorised adults may use reasonable force at any time off the school premises when they have lawful charge of the pupil elsewhere (e.g. on a school trip or other authorised out of school activity).

6. Recording and Reporting Duties

In the event of a pupil having to be restrained physically, the adult involved will inform the Head at the earliest opportunity of the incident, both verbally and on the school's electronic recording system (CPOMS). The schools will record and report restrictive interventions, including significant uses of force, seclusion and non-physical contact.

Incidents will be recorded as soon as practicable, and where possible the same day. The record will include.

- The name(s) of the staff (adult) and pupil(s) involved and details of the pupil's needs/SEND status, if any
- When and where the incident took place.
- The names of any other staff/persons or pupils who witnessed the incident.
- A description of the incident- the reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the pupil, another pupil, member of staff or others).

- How the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the type and degree of force used, how that was applied and for how long it took.
- The pupil's response and the outcome of the incident
- The details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, staff member or other and of any damage to property.
- Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts and details of any post-incident support required.

Incidents will be reported to each parent of the pupil concerned (unless the pupil is aged 20 or over) as soon as practicable, in writing and, where possible, the same day by either the DSL, DDSL, Head of Section or Head of Year. Parents of EYFS pupils will be informed of the incident on the same day.

The report to parents will include the time/date/location/duration of the incident, details of why the use of force was necessary, the type and degree of force used, and details of any injuries sustained. Parents will be invited to the school, so that we can, if necessary, agree to a plan for managing their child's behaviour. This could involve a discussion about:

- Any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident.
- Whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed.
- What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were.
- What might be done differently in the future.

The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed

There are limited exceptions to this procedure where safeguarding is a consideration, and it appears that reporting the incident to a parent would likely result in significant harm to the pupil. If that is the case, then a report will not be made to that parent and if a report cannot be made to any parent for this reason, then a report will instead be made to the local authority where the pupil is ordinarily resident.

The school will ensure that records kept will be accurate, factual and completed by any staff involved (and quality-assured by a senior leader). The school will keep records in line with the Foundation's retention schedule.

As required under the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, senior leaders will monitor the use of restraint and take appropriate action to prevent the inappropriate use of restraint. They will take effective action when inappropriate restraint has been used.

In addition, the Head will consider whether staff require any additional training

and support to enable them to de-escalate potential confrontations between pupils, or potentially violent behaviour, to minimise the need for restraint.

7. Support following an incident

The immediate focus following an incident will be on the wellbeing and safety of any pupils and staff involved. The school will provide medical assessment/treatment for injuries where appropriate and, once appropriate to do so, will facilitate a debrief conversation(s) with the pupil and involved staff, led by a non-involved member of staff to learn and repair relationships. The school will provide ongoing wellbeing support for pupils, staff, and any witnesses as needed.

As soon as practicable the school will evaluate the incident to understand why it occurred and identify how to reduce any future need for the use of reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions.

8. Other Types of Physical Contact

There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary, other than those covered by Section 550A of the 1996 Act on which these notes are based. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during P.E. lessons, sports coaching, music lessons, or CCF, or if a member of staff must give first aid or intimate care who have their own procedures in place. Therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction such policies and procedures and with the Physical Contact in Music, Sport and CCF Policies.

Pupils with SEND may need staff to provide physical prompts or help as set out in the individual profiles or care plans.

Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comfort. Staff will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support but always considering Child Protection and Safeguarding principles.

Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence, and staff should bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

9. Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary safety measure used only to protect others from immediate harm when a pupil is highly dysregulated (possibly emotionally or behaviorally) and not acting with intent. It will never be threatened or used as punishment.

Any seclusion will occur in a safe, non-threatening space. The pupils will be

continuously supervised, and the seclusion will last only as long as necessary and end as soon as the immediate risk is reduced.

All incidents of seclusion will be recorded and reported in line with the above Recording and Reporting Duties.

10. Pupils with SEND and individual support

The Foundation recognises the risk that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions. The Foundation also recognises that some pupils, without SEND, such as those who have experienced past trauma, may require individual support.

The schools understand the importance of identifying and understanding any underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide individual, proactive support and create an inclusive environment.

The schools will where possible utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used.

The schools will work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to

- Develop prevention and de-escalation strategies. This may include removing stimuli that may be causing distress, giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates or engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of
- Develop a behaviour support plan to include details of any adjustments required and the pupil's communication preference. The behaviour support plan will also clearly set out the parameters where staff may have increased physical contact with a pupil.
- Review the behaviour support plan with the pupil and their parents periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed biannually and in the light of any incidences.

The governing body will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the schools' procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with. The Governing body shall regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to ensure each school:

- evidences the provision of adequate information and training to staff on the policy and procedures
- identifies and implements improvements to policies and practices
- identifies areas of learning and development for school staff
- understands pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures
- shares this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan
- identifies any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

The governors shall consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis shall be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of people.