



# Restrictive Interventions Policy

*Based on Buckinghamshire PRU Policy*

*Reflecting updated DfE guidance on Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)*

<b>Last updated:</b>	<b>April 2026</b>
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## 1. Introduction

Situations involving decisions about whether to use force can occur in any school. Using force or deciding not to can entail significant risks for pupils and staff. This policy is designed to minimise these risks. The policy has been written in light of the DfE guidance Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools, April 2026

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- a) Committing a criminal offence (or for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
- b) Causing personal injury or damage to property
- c) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at High Ash, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

## 2. Definitions

**Restrictive interventions** are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. Restrictive interventions include physical and non-physical actions aimed at restraining pupils' movement. For example, putting a pupil in a room and not allowing them to leave is a restrictive intervention.

**Reasonable force** is the amount of force that staff members can (in certain circumstances) legally use to temporarily restrict a pupil's movement. It means using no more force than is necessary, for the least amount of time for the desired outcome.

A **significant incident** is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact (see definition below) between a member of staff and a pupil.

**Appropriate contact** might include a handshake to congratulate a pupil, giving first aid, or demonstrating how to use a musical instrument. See pages 7 and 8 of the guidance (linked above) for more examples of contact that is generally appropriate.

**Seclusion** is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room is a form of seclusion.

The objectives of using reasonable force are therefore:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

### **3. Positive behaviour management & minimising the need for force**

In order to minimise the occasions on which the use of force would be required, the school will:

- Create an environment that is positive, predictable and safe and minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force
- Teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings
- Use strategies and procedures within the behaviour policy to de-escalate incidents if they do arise
- To follow the approved approach to de-escalation following the Steps approach. Details of Steps and the school's approach to de-escalation are available on the website for from the school office.
- Only use force when risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force
- Put in place risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils.

All staff and volunteers adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem, and promote a safe environment for students and staff. All staff work in partnership with those who know the child to help those concerned:

- a) Find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- b) Understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- c) Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidence of extreme behaviours and makes sure that the use of physical intervention is rare.

### **4. Staff authorised to use force**

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. This includes teaching staff on permanent and fixed term contracts and learning support assistants.

It can also be used by anyone who's been put in charge of pupils temporarily by your headteacher, such as:

- Unpaid volunteers
- Parents accompanying students on a school trip

A risk assessment will be completed for anyone who regularly works with pupils where the use of restrictive interventions is likely.

### **5. Deciding whether to use force**

A restriction intervention should be used as a protective measure and never as a disciplinary penalty. The judgement on whether to use a restriction intervention and what restriction intervention to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case and in the case of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, information about the individual concerned.

Before using a restrictive intervention (see 'Definitions' section, above) with a pupil, staff will consider:

- **If it's necessary:** there might be alternative ways to manage the situation and achieve the desired outcome, and staff will consider whether the intervention is likely to reduce risks or might escalate the situation further
- **If it's proportionate:** staff will use the least restrictive intervention for the least amount of time, and consider the individual circumstances of the pupil such as their age, size and any medical conditions
- **The pupil's welfare:** staff will consider the impact that the use of force or restrictive interventions can have on a pupil, for example for pupils who have experienced adverse life events. They will also seek to maintain respect for their dignity

## 6. Risk assessments

SLT will regularly assess the frequency and severity of incidents requiring use of force that are likely to occur in school. Where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil (such as a pupil whose SEN and/or disability is associated with extreme behaviour) an individual risk assessment will be carried out. An individual risk assessment will consider:

- Communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication
- Physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- Conditions that make them fragile, such as haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy
- Dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs

Where appropriate, the school will work with the pupil, their parents/carers, and other professionals to develop:

- Prevention and de-escalation strategies
- A [behaviour plan](#) that sets out prevention strategies and the types of physical interventions that will be used

## 7. Using force

Before using force, staff will engage the pupil in a calm and measured tone, making clear that their behaviour is unacceptable and setting out how the pupil could choose to change their behaviour. Staff will not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil, and should make it clear that they only intend to use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure that the situation is addressed as safely as possible. The use of force must always be proportionate to the level of risk and should always be reduced at the earliest possible time. The school will monitor the pupil's dignity during any intervention and communicate clearly what is

Force may be used for two different purposes:

1. To control – either passive physical contact (e.g. standing between pupils) or active physical contact (e.g. leading the pupil by the hand or the arm)
2. To restrain using restraint techniques. This can involve using appropriate restrictive holds, which

may require expertise or training. Parental consent is not required to restrain a pupil happening.

### **7.1 De-escalation and prevention techniques**

The school will use strategies to minimise the need for force and restrictive interventions.

#### ***Whole-school strategies might include:***

- Identifying particular 'hotspots' for behaviour issues, such as corridors or areas of the playground and deploying staff to support in these key areas
- Identifying key times of day when behaviour issues are more frequent, and making sure that enough staff are present and on duty at these times
- Adopting a behaviour policy that includes verbal warnings, offering pupils a chance to correct their behaviour first
- Agreeing a shared language for de-escalation with staff, so that pupils receive the same messaging consistently across the school

#### ***De-escalation strategies for individual pupils might include:***

- Using a calm facial expression and warm, open body language
- Using a warm, calm tone of voice with the pupil
- Calmly reminding the pupil of the consequences of not following an instruction
- Avoiding having too many members of staff present when trying to de-escalate the situation

## **8. Staff training**

The staff induction process will set out staff member's responsibilities in relation to the school's policy on the use of force. Staff will receive accredited training in the chosen approach approved by the school and local authority. Staff who have not received accredited training are not precluded from using reasonable force where needed. Risk assessments and procedures will be included on staff meeting agendas at least once a term.

## **9. Statutory recording requirements**

From 1 April 2026, all schools have a legal duty to record and report all significant incidents (see 'Definitions' section, above) in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil or incidents where a member of staff uses seclusion or restraint on a pupil.

We will record the incident as soon as possible after the event. Ideally, this will be on the same day.

As a minimum, members of staff should record the following details:

- The names of the pupil(s) and staff involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including if the pupil has SEND and their SEN code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention

- Details of any physical injuries
- Any support provided after the incident, including any medical treatment for injuries

If the staff member(s) didn't use reasonable force, include:

- A brief account of why the staff member(s) assessed that it was necessary to use the intervention

If they did use reasonable force, include:

- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to it, any known triggers that were or may have been involved, and any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
- The type of reasonable force and the degree of force that was used
- A brief account of why the staff member(s) assessed that it was necessary to use force

If reasonable force was used in an incident, it does not need to be recorded separately under reports for reasonable force and for restrictive interventions. It should be included in the same report.

## 10. Statutory reporting requirements

The school **must** give a report of the incident to **each** of the pupil's parents/carers as soon as possible, even if the use of force or a restrictive intervention has been agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The school does not need to report an incident to the parents/carers if telling the parents/carers would likely cause significant harm to the pupil (including any form of abuse or neglect). In these cases, the school **must** report it instead to the local authority (LA) where the pupil lives

The report should be in writing, and given to the parents/carers on the same day. It should include at least:

- Time, date location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- A brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries and any post-incident support

It should not **include** identifying details of any other pupil, as this is likely to be a breach of data protection law.

Following an incident, the school will aim to follow best practice to meet with the parents/carers to discuss the incident. This could include a discussion about any behavioural triggers for the pupil, what de-escalation techniques were used, and what could be done differently in the future. If the parents are unable to come into school this may be done over the telephone.

## 11. Analysing data on restrictive interventions and reasonable force

The school will regularly review and analyse data on restrictive interventions to:

- Identify areas for improvement to policies and practices, particularly where strategies and interventions have not been effective
- Identify areas for training and development for staff, for example on how to use de-escalation techniques effectively

- Understand regular patterns or triggers of behaviour for key pupils, to better support them through behaviour support plans
- Identify when the use of restraint was used disproportionately with vulnerable pupils, including pupils with SEND
- The governing board will regularly review and interrogate the data to make sure this is done.

## **12. Post incident support**

The school will ensure that staff and pupils affected by an incident have continuing support for as long as necessary in respect of:

- Physical consequences
- Support to deal with any emotional stress or loss of confidence
- Opportunity to analyse, reflect and learn from the incident.

The school will conduct follow-up conversation with both the pupil and staff members involved, to repair and rebuild relationships, as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

## **13. Complaints and allegations**

Complaints will be dealt with under the school's complaints procedures. Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff. If a specific allegation is made against a member of staff then the school will follow guidance set out in Complaints Policy

## **14. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, School Business Manager and Pastoral Lead. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## **15. Related Policies**

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy

## **Appendix 1**

Department for Education guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>