



Gosfield School

Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions Policy

Whole School, including EYFS

Purpose and Scope

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity, rights and safety of all pupils and staff. This policy sets out the School's approach to physical contact, restrictive interventions, reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. It applies across the whole School, including EYFS.

The School's primary objective is to prevent the need for restrictive interventions wherever reasonably possible through effective safeguarding, positive behaviour support, appropriate supervision, early identification of need, reasonable adjustments, individualised support, effective communication and de-escalation. Restrictive interventions will only be used where they are lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances, and for the shortest time necessary. 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.

This policy should be read alongside the School's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Equality and Diversity Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- First Aid and Medical Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Complaints Policy; and
- procedures for managing allegations against staff.

The policy has regard to:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, including section 93;
- the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requirements concerning recording and reporting use of force;
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025;
- the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the Human Rights Act 1998;
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*;
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*; and

- the Department for Education's *Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools* guidance, effective from 1 April 2026.

Principles

The School will ensure that:

- the welfare and safety of pupils is paramount;
- restrictive interventions are avoided wherever reasonably possible;
- prevention, early intervention, positive behaviour support and de-escalation are prioritised;
- staff consider what may be driving a pupil's behaviour and whether there are unmet communication, sensory, emotional, developmental, medical or other needs;
- any intervention is lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate;
- only the minimum degree of force necessary is used and only for the shortest time necessary;
- restrictive intervention is never used as punishment, retaliation, humiliation or to secure compliance for its own sake;
- staff take account of a pupil's age, understanding, developmental stage, sex, disability, SEND, communication needs, medical needs, known trauma, vulnerabilities and individual circumstances;
- reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils and pupils with SEND;
- pupils are treated with dignity throughout and after an incident;
- parents/carers are informed
- every relevant incident is recorded promptly and accurately;
- incidents are reviewed to identify learning, safeguarding concerns, patterns, disproportionality and opportunities to reduce future use;
- staff involved in incidents are appropriately supported;

The School recognises that pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions. Individual needs must therefore be considered carefully when assessing whether intervention is necessary and proportionate.

Physical Contact Between Pupils and Staff

The School does not operate a "no contact" policy. There are circumstances in which appropriate physical contact between staff and pupils is proper and necessary and does not constitute a restrictive intervention.

Examples include:

- administering first aid;
- providing necessary medical care;
- assisting a pupil with a disability or physical need;
- physical assistance in sport, games, dance or technical activities;
- teaching musical instruments where appropriate;
- providing appropriate physical guidance or support;
- reassuring or comforting a distressed pupil where appropriate;
- congratulating or encouraging a pupil where the contact is appropriate and welcomed;
- helping a young child safely with an everyday activity; and
- preventing an immediate accident where no restrictive intervention is intended.

Staff must always consider the age, developmental stage, individual circumstances and safeguarding context of the pupil. Physical contact must never be sexualised, humiliating, punitive or inappropriate. Where a member of staff is uncertain whether physical contact is appropriate, they should seek advice from a senior member of staff.

Staff Training

All members of staff will receive training about the use of reasonable force appropriate to their role to enable them to carry out their responsibilities. Additional and refresher training will be provided where necessary.

The use of reasonable force should make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN). A judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil concerned. Verbal de-escalation where possible is a preferred alternative to use of reasonable force and staff should be aware of individual needs and who this may relate to in the school setting.

Definitions

Restrictive intervention

A restrictive intervention is an action that prevents, restricts or subdues the movement of a pupil or part of the pupil's body. Restrictive interventions include physical and non-physical measures.

They may include, depending on the circumstances:

- physical restraint;
- holding;
- preventing or restricting movement;
- immobilisation;
- physically preventing a pupil from leaving an area;
- removing or restricting access to an aid or equipment where this restricts the pupil's movement; and
- seclusion.

Reasonable force

Reasonable force is physical force that is reasonable in the circumstances. The School will use no more force than is necessary and will use it for no longer than is necessary. All members of staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in appropriate circumstances.

The existence of this power does not create an expectation that staff should routinely use force. Staff should use their professional judgement and consider whether intervention is necessary to protect the pupil, other people or property.

Restraint

Restraint involves physical restriction of a pupil's movement. It must only be used where necessary and proportionate to manage an immediate or significant risk and must cease as soon as the need for restraint has ended.

Seclusion

Seclusion is where a pupil is placed alone in a space from which they are prevented from leaving, or where they believe they cannot leave freely. Seclusion may only be used as a safety measure, where necessary to protect the pupil or others from serious harm and where less restrictive measures are insufficient.

Seclusion must never be used as:

- a punishment;
- a disciplinary sanction;
- a means of securing compliance;
- a convenience for staff;
- a routine behaviour-management technique; or
- a substitute for appropriate staffing, support or provision.

Any seclusion must be appropriately supervised, must take place in a safe environment and must end as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives school staff a power to use reasonable force in specified circumstances.

Reasonable force may be used where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- committing a criminal offence;
- injuring themselves;
- injuring another person;
- causing serious damage to property; or
- engaging in behaviour which seriously prejudices the maintenance of good order and discipline at the School or among its pupils.

The particular circumstances must always be considered. The fact that a pupil is refusing an instruction, refusing to enter or leave an area, or displaying challenging behaviour does not by itself justify the use of force.

Before using force, staff should, where practicable, consider whether the situation can safely be managed through:

- verbal de-escalation;
- giving the pupil time and space;
- reducing sensory or environmental demands;
- moving other pupils away;
- seeking assistance;
- offering choices;
- using known calming strategies;
- allowing the pupil an appropriate opportunity to regulate; or
- implementing an individual behaviour/support plan.

Where immediate intervention is required to prevent harm, staff should act in accordance with their professional judgement and this policy.

Necessity and Proportionality

Where a pupil has a disability, schools have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers.

Before using a restrictive intervention, staff should consider the context and actions with regard to risk and make reasonable adjustments where possible. Staff should continue to communicate calmly with the pupil during an intervention where practicable. An intervention must stop as soon as it is no longer necessary.

Prevention and De-escalation

The School will seek to minimise the use of restrictive interventions through:

- positive and consistent behaviour management;
- strong relationships between staff and pupils;
- early identification of safeguarding and welfare concerns;
- effective pastoral support;
- appropriate SEND provision;
- reasonable adjustments;
- individual behaviour/support plans where required;
- risk assessments where appropriate;
- effective communication with parents/carers;
- understanding known triggers and early warning signs;
- appropriate sensory and environmental adaptations;
- staff training;
- appropriate staffing and supervision; and
- multi-agency working where required.

Where a pupil has repeated incidents involving restrictive intervention, the School will consider whether an individualised plan or risk assessment is required or should be reviewed. Where appropriate, the pupil and their parents/carers should be involved in developing and reviewing such plans.

While the School is not required to obtain the consent of parents to use force on a pupil, parents will be informed of serious incidents involving the use of force.

Pupils with SEND, Disabilities and Other Vulnerabilities

The School recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Staff must not assume that behaviour which presents as challenging is deliberate or that a pupil is simply refusing to comply.

Consideration should be given to whether behaviour may be associated with:

- communication difficulties;
- sensory needs;

- neurodevelopmental differences;
- anxiety or emotional distress;
- disability;
- medical conditions;
- unmet SEND;
- trauma or adverse experiences;
- safeguarding concerns;
- difficulties with transitions or changes in routine; or
- other individual circumstances.

Reasonable adjustments must be considered and implemented where appropriate.

For pupils who may be at increased risk of restrictive intervention, the School should consider proactive planning with parents/carers and, where appropriate, relevant professionals.

Individual plans should identify:

- known triggers;
- early warning signs;
- preferred communication;
- successful de-escalation strategies;
- reasonable adjustments;
- strategies that should be avoided;
- relevant medical or sensory considerations;
- the pupil's preferences where these can reasonably be identified; and
- appropriate post-incident support.

Prohibited Use of Force and Restrictive Intervention

Restrictive intervention must never be used:

- as punishment;
- to humiliate or intimidate a pupil;
- to cause pain;
- for staff convenience;
- merely because a pupil is refusing to comply;
- as a routine response to challenging behaviour;
- as a substitute for appropriate support or supervision;
- to force a pupil to perform an educational task;
- to discipline a pupil; or
- for longer than is necessary to address the immediate risk.

Staff must not use techniques that are known to present an unacceptable risk of harm. The School will ensure that staff training identifies techniques which must not be used.

Seclusion

Seclusion is an exceptional safety measure.

It may only be used where:

- the pupil presents an immediate or significant risk of serious harm to themselves or others;
- less restrictive approaches are insufficient;
- the intervention is necessary and proportionate; and
- the pupil is supervised appropriately.

The pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of serious harm has reduced. A seclusion space must be safe, suitable and appropriately supervised.

A room used for ordinary withdrawal, reflection, regulation or removal from a classroom is not automatically "seclusion". However, if the pupil is prevented from leaving or reasonably believes they cannot leave freely, the arrangement may constitute seclusion, and the statutory recording and reporting requirements will apply.

EYFS

The School recognises that children in EYFS require particular consideration because of their age, developmental stage and communication abilities. Staff should use age-appropriate prevention, supervision, communication and de-escalation strategies.

Physical intervention may be necessary to prevent an immediate risk of harm, including where a young child is unable to understand or respond to verbal instructions.

For example, staff may physically assist or guide a young child to safety where necessary. Carrying a young child is not permitted simply as a behaviour-management measure or because the child is refusing an instruction. Where carrying or another restrictive intervention is necessary to prevent harm, the intervention must be lawful, necessary, proportionate and for the shortest time necessary.

All relevant incidents involving restraint, immobilisation or seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the statutory requirements and this policy.

Staff Training

The School will provide appropriate training for staff whose roles require them to understand or use restrictive interventions.

Training should include, as appropriate:

- legal responsibilities;
- safeguarding;
- prevention and early intervention;
- positive behaviour support;
- de-escalation;
- communication;
- SEND and disability awareness;
- reasonable adjustments;
- risks associated with restrictive intervention;
- safe techniques;
- prohibited or unsafe techniques;
- recording and reporting;
- post-incident support; and

- the School's procedures.

Training will be proportionate to staff roles and responsibilities.

The School will ensure that staff are competent in any physical intervention techniques they are expected to use. Refresher training will be provided where necessary.

Responding to an Incident

Where restrictive intervention becomes necessary, staff should, seek to reduce the risk using verbal and other de-escalation strategies where possible. Communication with pupil's must be calm, seek assistance and monitor the pupil's physical and emotional condition, and stop the intervention as soon as it is no longer necessary;

Staff must ensure that the pupil is supported following the incident, report the incident immediately to the appropriate senior member of staff, and complete the required written record as soon as practically possible. Where an incident raises a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.

Recording

The School will maintain effective written records of restrictive interventions. The School will ensure that recording systems allow incidents to be identified and analysed over time. The Head of EYFS and Prep will maintain the records for the EYFS and prep School and the DSL for the Senior School.

Reporting to Parents and Carers

The School will report relevant incidents to the pupil's parent/carer as soon as practicable in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements.

The record/report supplied to parents will normally include sufficient information to explain:

- what happened;
- why intervention was considered necessary;
- what intervention was used;
- how long it lasted;
- whether the pupil or staff member was injured;
- what support was provided afterwards; and
- what action will be taken to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

The School will consider safeguarding implications before sharing information with a parent/carer.

Where supplying the record to a parent would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil, the statutory safeguarding provisions will be followed, including consideration of whether the information should instead be supplied to the relevant local authority.

The School will not delay urgent safeguarding action while waiting to complete the incident record.

Post-Incident Support

Following an incident, the School will consider the welfare of the pupil and witnesses and staff. Where appropriate, the School will provide support, restorative meetings, review of the pupil's support arrangements, and make a referral to other professionals where necessary.

The pupil's views should be sought wherever this is appropriate to their age, understanding and circumstances.

Safeguarding and Allegations Against Staff

Any concern that restrictive intervention may have been inappropriate, excessive, unnecessary, unsafe or otherwise inconsistent with this policy must be treated as a safeguarding matter where appropriate. A restrictive intervention incident does not prevent a safeguarding referral or allegation being made.

Monitoring and Oversight

The Principal will ensure that records of restrictive interventions are reviewed regularly. The Governors will maintain appropriate oversight and challenge. This approach reflects the 2026 DfE emphasis on prevention, minimising restrictive practice, appropriate support for vulnerable pupils and leadership oversight of restrictive interventions. Where restrictive intervention is associated with wider safeguarding, welfare, SEND, health or behavioural concerns, the School will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals as appropriate. We will share information lawfully and appropriately where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child.

Equality, Dignity and Human Rights

The School will act consistently with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

Restrictive intervention must not be applied disproportionately because of a pupil's:

- disability;
- SEND;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity; or
- other protected or relevant characteristic.

The School will actively consider whether differences in the use of restrictive intervention indicate unmet needs, discriminatory practice, ineffective reasonable adjustments or safeguarding concerns. The School is committed to the welfare and safety of all staff and students, the School will always act in the best interests of the child.

Signed: _____

Rod Jackson, Principal

Date: _____

1/9/26

Date of next review: September 2027

