



Aysgarth School

Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy

Reviewed: April 2026 and to be reviewed October 2026

Responsible Member of Staff: Jonathon Anderson

Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy

1. Introduction:

This policy explains how the school uses restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, non-physical restraint and seclusion, in line with Department for Education guidance and applicable legislation. It sets out definitions, decision-making principles, unacceptable practices, and statutory recording and reporting duties so that staff and parents understand when and how restrictive interventions may be used, the procedure that staff must follow and how the school works to reduce the use of these interventions over time.

1.1 Appropriate Physical Contact

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:-

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:-

- the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the Behaviour Policy
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
- any other material factors, including but not limited to whether:-
 - the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities
 - any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used

1.2 Terminology

A significant incident: is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. 'Restrictive interventions' is an umbrella term used to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

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.

2. Scope

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.

Members of staff (including non-teaching staff) may use reasonable force at any time on school premises and 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).

3. Policy Content

3.1 When restrictive interventions may be used

Restrictive interventions may only be used when necessary to address an immediate risk of harm. They must be proportionate and time-limited.

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. Staff should not:-

- hold the pupil around the neck or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- slap, punch or kick a pupil
- twist or force limbs against a joint
- trip a pupil
- hold or pull a pupil by the hair or ear

Staff should always avoid touching a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Staff will not restrain a pupil in a way that affects the airway, breathing or circulation (for example, pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen, or covering the mouth or nose). Prone or ground restraints carry elevated risk and will be avoided wherever possible; if a pupil is taken to the ground, staff will release or reposition as quickly as possible.

Holds designed to inflict pain will not be used.

Staff will immediately ensure that a medical assessment is undertaken where any injury may have occurred.

Any seclusion will occur in a safe, non-threatening space. The pupil will be continuously supervised and the seclusion will last only as long as necessary, and end as soon as the immediate risk reduces.

3.2 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.

3.3 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment (see the appendix to this policy for a proforma) will be completed by the Headmaster in consultation with relevant staff after any incident which involves a physical restraint, non-physical restraint or seclusion. This will be shared with relevant staff and with parents. It will be reviewed and updated if subsequent incidents take place involving the same pupil. The risk assessment will be stored as a part of the pupil's record on CPOMS.

3.4 Parental Meeting

Parents should be invited to a meeting following any significant incident in which a restrictive intervention is used (including incidents of non-physical contact and seclusion) to discuss:-

- 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
- risk assessment

This does not apply in the very rare instances where notifying a parent would likely cause significant harm to the pupil and the incident has been reported to the local authority in which the child is ordinarily resident.

3.5 Recording and reporting restrictive interventions using force

All significant incidents in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil must be reported to the DSL and the Headmaster by the member(s) of staff involved. They should use Form 1 to record details of the incident (one form per incident). This must be done as soon as practical after the event and must be done within 24 hours of the incident occurring, wherever possible on the same day.

The parents of the child involved must be contacted and informed in writing that a significant incident in which a member of staff has used force on their child has occurred. This must be done as soon as practical after the event, and must be done within 24 hours, wherever possible on the same day. Standard Letter 1 should be used to communicate with the parents (it sets out all the statutorily required information). If the DSL/School has reason to believe that communicating with a parent would likely cause serious harm to a pupil, then the school must report it to any parent(s) where this would not be the case. If there are none, it must be reported to the local authority of the area in which the child is ordinarily resident.

All documentation in relation to any incident must be attached to the child's CPOMS record.

This procedure must be followed after all significant incidents in which force is used even if there is an agreed behaviour support plan in place.

3.6 Procedure for reporting and recording the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

All incidents in which a member of staff uses seclusion or non-force related restraint must be reported to the DSL and Headmaster by the member(s) of staff involved. They should use Form 2 to record details of the incident (one form per incident). This must be done as soon as practical after the event and must be done within 24 hours of the incident occurring, wherever possible on the same day.

The parents of the child involved must be contacted and informed in writing that an incident in which a member of staff has used seclusion or non-force related restraint in relation to their child has occurred. This must be done as soon as practical after the event, and must be done within 24 hours, wherever possible, on the same day. Standard Letter 2 should be used to communicate with the parents (it sets out all the statutorily required information). If the DSL/School has reason to believe that communicating with a parent would likely cause serious harm to a pupil, then the school must report it to any parent(s) where this would not be the case. If there are none, it must be reported to the local authority of the area in which the child is ordinarily resident.

All documentation in relation to any incident must be attached to the child's CPOMS record.

This procedure must be followed after all incidents in which seclusion or non-physical restraint is used even if there is an agreed behaviour support plan in place. If this occurs at the same time as an incident in which force is used, staff need only fill out one set of documentation and send a single letter to parents. Staff should adapt Form 1 and Standard letter 1 so that they capture the whole incident.

3.7 Statutory records

The school is required to maintain a statutory record of all incidents in which a restrictive intervention (physical interventions involving the use of force, non-physical interventions, seclusion) is used. This record is maintained in the form of a record book/CPOMS summary.

3.8 How the school will work to reduce the need for restrictive interventions

The school will reduce the need for restrictive interventions through consistent, whole-school measures that promote safety, predictability and inclusion for all pupils. Whole school measures 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.
- Practising 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.
- Monitoring behaviour and restrictive-intervention data to identify patterns, triggers, and disproportionality to inform improvement planning, environmental adjustments and staff training.
- 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.

3.9 Pupils with SEND and individual support

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

The school understands 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 school 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 school 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 parent 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.

3.10 Staff Training

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. Staff likely to use restrictive interventions will receive relevant training, including how to de-escalate incidents and how to prevent incidents from occurring, trauma-informed practice, autism and ADHD awareness, and lawful decision-making in regard to the use of restrictive interventions.

3.11 Monitoring

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.

Consideration will be given as to 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.

The Governing Body through its Safeguarding Committee will regularly review data on use of force, seclusion and restraint to identify any disproportionate use affecting pupils with protected characteristics or SEND.

4. Policy Owner

The Headmaster.

5. Related Policies and Guidance

- Behaviour Management Policy
- "Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Guidance for Governing Bodies", DfE, September 2015
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, DfE, September 2025
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) (as amended)
- Handbook for the inspection of association independent schools, including residential (boarding) schools and registered early years settings, September 2025
- ISI Inspection Framework, September 2025
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools', DfE, April 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

6. For Additional Early Years information on Restrictive Interventions, please refer to the EYFS Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy

Appendices

Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy

Form 1: Use of Force Record of Incident

Name of pupil:		Name of member(s) of staff:	
SEND:		Any other relevant pupil circumstances:	
Date of incident:		Time of incident:	
Location of incident:		Approximate duration of the intervention:	
Brief account of the incident	What led up to the incident? Potential triggers? Preventative or de-escalation strategies used? What type of reasonable force was applied? What was the degree of force? Details of any physical injuries sustained:		
Why was the use of force assessed as being necessary?			
Details of post incident support e.g. details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts			
<i>For completion by the [DSL/Deputy Head/Head delete as appropriate]</i> How and when were parents informed of the incident? (Written communication is required: see standard letter)			
Details of follow up actions:			

Please gather and append:

- pupil and/or witnesses' accounts of the incident
- written communication to parents (see standard letter 1)

Standard Letter 1

Use of Force Standard Letter to Parent

Dear [Insert Name of Parent]

I am writing to inform you that on [insert date of incident] at [insert time of incident] staff used [describe the nature of the intervention i.e. what type of force was applied, and the degree of force applied] for [describe the length of time of the intervention]. Staff assessed this as being necessary in this instance as [explain briefly why the intervention was judged as necessary]. [include any details of physical injuries sustained if applicable].

I should like to invite you into school for a follow up discussion to consider [insert name of pupil] [behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident, whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed, amendments to your child's support plan, the de-escalation strategies that were used and how effective they were, what might be done differently in the future} {INSERT here details of how an appointment can be made or details of time and date of appointment].

Yours sincerely,

[Insert name of sender]

Form 2

Use of Seclusion and Non-Force Related Restraint (restraint incidents that occur without physical contact) Record of Incident

Name of pupil:		Name of member(s) of staff:	
SEND:		Any other relevant pupil circumstances:	
Date of incident:		Time of incident:	
Location of incident:		Approximate duration of the intervention:	
Brief account of the incident	What led up to the incident? Potential triggers? Preventative or de-escalation strategies used? What type of non-force related restraint was applied? Was seclusion used? Details of any physical injuries sustained:		
Why was the intervention assessed as being necessary?			
Details of post incident support e.g. details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts			
How and when were parents informed of the incident? (Written communication is required: see standard letter 2)			
Details of follow up actions:			

Please gather and append:

- pupil and/or witnesses' accounts of the incident
- written communication to parents (see standard letter 2)

Standard Letter 2

Seclusion and/or Non-Force Related Restraint (restraint incidents that occur without physical contact) Letter to Parent

Dear [Insert Name of Parent]

I am writing to inform you that on [insert date of incident] at [insert time of incident] staff used [describe the nature of the intervention] for [insert the length of time the intervention lasted]. Staff assessed this as being necessary in this instance as [explain briefly why the intervention was judged as necessary]. [include any details of physical injuries sustained if applicable].

I should like to invite you into school for a follow up discussion to consider [insert name of pupil, behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident, whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed, amendments to your child's support plan, the de-escalation strategies that were used and how effective they were, what might be done differently in the future] [INSERT here details of how an appointment can be made or details of time and date of appointment].

Yours sincerely,

[Insert name of sender]

Pupil Risk Assessment

Pupil's Name:	
Class/Year Group:	
Risk assessment date:	
Pupil Information including details of any identified SEND:	

		Severity of Impact →				
		negligible	mild	moderate	significant	extreme
Probability of Frequency & occurrence of Behaviour	very likely	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM/HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK
	likely	LOW RISK	LOW/MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM/HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK
	possible	LOW RISK	LOW/MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM/HIGH RISK	MEDIUM/HIGH RISK
	unlikely	LOW RISK	LOW/MEDIUM RISK	LOW/MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM/HIGH RISK
	very unlikely	LOW RISK	LOW RISK	LOW/MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK

Review of incident				
Behaviour	When <i>(Time of day; potential triggers)</i>	Who was at risk?	Potential harm <i>(No Harm, Harm, Serious)</i>	What happened?
What strategies are currently being used to minimise risk?				
Are any changes to these strategies required?				
Are there any activities that cannot be safely managed as far as it is possible to foresee? If so, please list them.				

Overall risk assessed as:	High		Medium		Low	
---------------------------	------	--	--------	--	-----	--

Assessment completed by:		Reviewed by:	
--------------------------	--	--------------	--

Parental agreement:

I confirm I have read and understood the content of my child's risk assessment.

Name of Parent/Carer:		Date:	
Signed:			