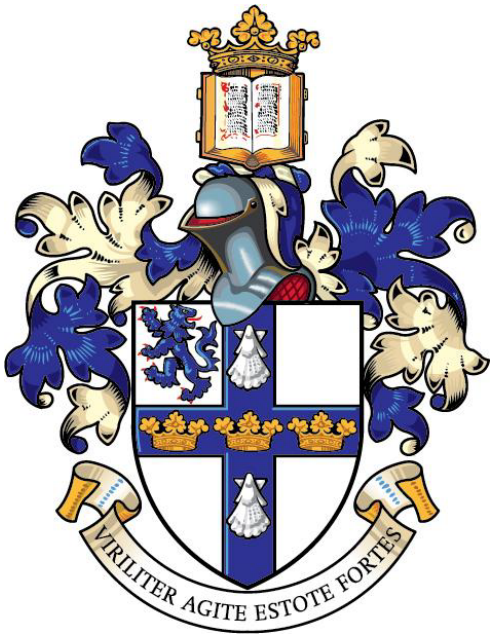


Culford School

Restrictive Interventions, including the use of Reasonable Force Policy

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1. Introduction

Culford School understands that there may be times when the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions by staff will be required when managing pupil behaviour.

The school recognises the importance of creating a positive culture that aims to minimise the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions, by developing and utilising a range of alternative prevention strategies aimed at de-escalation.

Restrictive interventions can only be used when there is a need to keep individuals and the wider school community safe i.e. to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, and/or from causing disorder.

It is important to minimise the use of restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation.

This policy will set out whole school measures , including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) the school will employ, as well as tailored approaches for individual pupils.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- to provide consistent and straightforward guidance on circumstances in which staff may use reasonable force and seclusion.
- to protect every individual against any unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful physical intervention, whilst clarifying the power of teachers and other staff who have lawful control, and/or who are in charge of pupils, should they have to intervene for reasons of safety, whether they are on or off the school site.
- Clarify when physical contact is appropriate and necessary.
- Clarify the statutory requirements for reporting , recording and sharing information when restrictive intervention is necessary.

3. Terminology

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways. This could include seclusion, restraint or immobilisation of a pupil in addition to reasonable force.

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.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this document. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

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.

4. Principles

Staff should refrain from physical contact with children, except where:

- it is a necessary part of teaching such as Sport, Drama, Dance or Music
- it is to prevent serious injury or save them from danger
- a child requires first aid or sports therapy
- personal or intimate care is required
- a child is in distress
- a child needs additional support in relation to their stage of development, such as hand holding for younger children
- a child needs additional support where SEND or neurodivergent traits are identified

Staff should use their own professional judgement as to whether to intervene physically when managing a situation. It must always be proportionate to the context and circumstances, including the potential risk of harm, and will also be dependent on the age and needs of the pupil.

The use of reasonable force, or/and other restrictive intervention, must only be done with the knowledge and authorisation of the Head and there must always be a staff witness, unless in exceptional situations where there is an imminent risk of harm and immediate intervention must be taken.

Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs:

- at the time
- of limited duration
- appropriate to their age
- stage of development
- gender
- ethnicity
- background

It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary.

- The extent of the contact should be made clear and undertaken with the permission of the pupil.
- Contact should be relevant to their age and understanding and staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the pupil.

Pupils are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, including, for example, when changing, toileting and showering.

Under their obligations, before undertaking any physical intervention, the school will ensure that pupils have a right to respect for their private life in that they expect a reasonable level of personal privacy (Article 8, European Convention on Human Rights). However, this right is not absolute and the school's powers to intervene in the Education Act 1996 are compatible with Article 8; that said, any interference with this right by a school must be 'justified' and 'proportionate'.

Corporal punishment is illegal. Therefore, this policy does not authorise or permit the use of corporal punishment or threat of corporal punishment under any circumstances, whether on or off the school premises. Furthermore, staff must never threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a pupil's emotional well-being.

5. Physical contact with Pupils

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 provide health care services to pupils by medical professionals (school health professionals have a separate policy appropriate to health care services)
- to support pupils who are injured or unwell who need to be physically supported when accompanied to a medical professional
- to support boarders and pupils who may be sick and need personal care (a sick child vomiting or needing their hair holiday back or mouth wiped)
- 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 EYFS and Pre Prep to provide intimate and personal care.
- to assist in teaching physical theatre
- to guide a pupil to a safe distance in a science lab
- to provide general assistant to younger pupils in Pre Prep and Nursery (see EYFS and Pre Prep section 10)

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 (or any other relevant) policy
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age and stage
- 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

Intimate and personal care is an everyday occurrence in EYFS and Pre Prep and an essential part of making sure a child's basic needs are met. Culford will ensure that it is carried out in a safe, respectful and child-centred way and recorded in line with our intimate care policy.

When providing intimate care, staff should talk children through what they are going to do, and where possible seek consent, encourage independence and offer choice. Intimate care can be changing nappies, underwear, helping a child use the toilet, bathing, showering or washing.

Personal care can be feeding, changing clothing, applying or administering external or oral medication, hair care, washing non-intimate body parts, prompting children to go to the toilet and helping to clean after using the toilet.

The school is unable to enter into a 'no contact' policy request from parents or staff as this can leave the staff unable to intervene where reasonable in circumstances that fully protect pupils.

6. Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.

Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen.

The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

7. Minimising the need to use restrictive interventions

Whole-school measures can include:

- consideration of how the school, nursery, boarding and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive
- sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors, playgrounds, nurseries, playrooms, common rooms, boarding house shared spaces such as kitchens and common rooms
- training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- the building of positive relationships through positive behaviour management strategies and relationship building
- recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

Individual approaches can include:

- working closely with parents, guardians and boarding staff and 1:1 support staff member to support individual pupils
- strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of behaviour support plans and/ or individual risk assessments. 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
- giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates
- effective communication with staff so that they are aware of pupils who may respond negatively or who may be triggered by certain stimuli

8. Restrictive Intervention

8.1 Determining when the use of restrictive intervention is appropriate

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

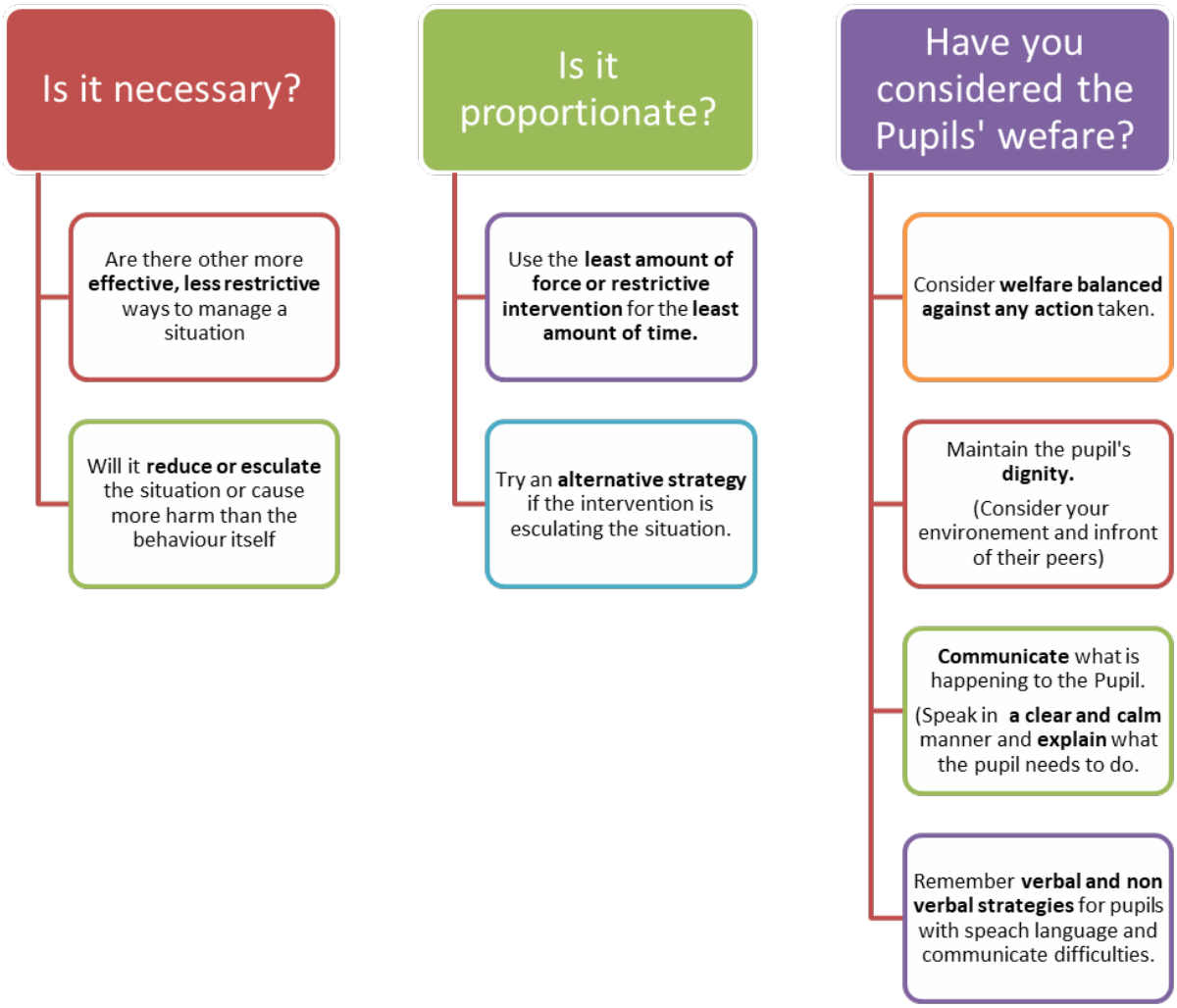
- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, Equality Act 2010 10 past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations.

Determining when the use of restrictive intervention is appropriate



8.2 Reasonable Force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances, to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- 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.

8.3 Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Staff have statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item.

To search a pupil or their possessions there has to be reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item such as;

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal or controlled drugs
- stolen items
- 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 property of; any person (including the pupil).
- an article specified in regulations:
    - tobacco and cigarette papers
    - fireworks
    - pornographic images

A search for a prohibited item or any other reason such as; suspicion that a pupil is involved in or at risk of being involved in antisocial behaviour, criminal behaviour including gang involvement, and in some cases may be involved in or at risk of being involved in child and/or sexual exploitation or extortion, may also play a vital role in identifying pupils who may benefit from a referral to the authorities so that they can receive support as per Culford's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy.

The school will follow the DfE advice for schools on Searching, Screening and Confiscation . Culford's Pupil and Boarder Search policy must be followed by all staff.

8.4 Seclusion

Seclusion, as defined in this guidance, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom.

A member staff secludes a pupil if they detain that one pupil in a place apart from any other person (except the member or members of staff) otherwise than as a disciplinary penalty, including:

- physically obstructing the pupil's way of leaving the place;
- securing the place so that the pupil cannot leave it; or
- causing the pupil to believe that they will be punished if they leave the place.

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving and should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

Incidents of seclusion must be recorded in the same way as use of reasonable force.

8.5 Restraint

Restraint is defined as a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.

A member of school staff restrains or immobilises a pupil if they restrict the pupil's movement other than as a disciplinary penalty, including by

- holding or binding the pupil's body or part of it;
- securing the pupil to a fixed or heavy object; or
- depriving the pupil of an auxiliary aid that they usually use to help them move

Incidents of use of restraint must be recorded in the same way as use of reasonable force.

9. SEND

Some pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

Staff should utilise their knowledge of individual pupils 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.

Staff should use the pupil information sheets, liaise with their school learning and development professional. They should also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

These could include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention
- an individual risk assessment to ensure all staff are aware of prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Any behaviour support plans should be reviewed 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.

10. EYFS and Pre Prep

In Early Year Foundation Stage and Pre Prep, the young age of the children creates a need for staff to have physical contact with the children to support their stage of development and learning.

Examples of the type of physical contact with the children not detailed above in this policy are as follows:

- Supporting the children in various activities by so they are able to succeed examples include but are not exclusive to helping them sit correctly on the carpet (crossed legs for example), getting on to bikes, trike, climbing equipment, moving their fingers for pencil grip, lifting them on to play equipment, correct writing positions on a chair and similar.

- Restraining a child with parent consent and presence for example : Parents will often physically pass a distressed child to a parent at drop off in the morning.

Other examples of when physical contact may be required for this age group include:

- children seeking comfort through e.g hug or arm around
- physically moving away from danger during play, sports, physical lessons, learning, or trips and visits

- physically moving or prevent a child from unintentional self-harm or sensory seeking behaviours: if they have climbed an unsafe object, or got into a too small space, or are running towards a fire at forest school)

11. Incident Response

11.1 Injuries

Immediately after the incident, staff and pupils must be medically assessed and treated for any injuries as soon as possible.

Injuries must be recorded as an incident on the school's accident reporting system, Smartlog.

11.2 Investigation

The school must carry out an investigation of the incident where restrictive intervention is used by staff as soon as practicable. This should be carried out by a member of staff not connected with the incident. This can be carried out by talking with any staff and pupils involved or asking them to provide a written statement of events.

Areas to be evaluated are:

- Why was restrictive intervention used
- How can restrictive intervention be avoided in the future
- The impact on The pupil
- The impact on the staff
- The impact on other pupils

Support for pupils and staff

Staff and pupils involved in the incident will be provided with support from the school.

A follow up discussion will be held to review the incident and with the aim to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue. This should be facilitated by someone unconnected to the incident to provide impartiality. The pupil may wish to have a member of staff along for pastoral support.

The school will continue to monitor the staff and pupils' wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, such as wellbeing chats or counselling in some circumstances.

12. Reporting and Communication

Culford has reporting procedures in place for recording a significant incident when a member of staff uses force on a pupil to meet its statutory duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The requirement to record applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Staff must immediately notify the Head, The Head of Prep or the Head of Pre Prep following a significant incident.

12.1 Recording of an incident internally

A record must also be completed as soon as practicable after the event by the staff involved, and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

A reporting form can be found in the shared drive in google docs - Restrictive Interventions Report Form.

When it comes to making the record it sets out specific details which should be recorded as a minimum. These include:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil has identified SEND and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- in the case of reasonable force being used, a brief account of the incident, any known identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and the type and degree of reasonable force applied
- why the intervention was deemed necessary
- details of any physical injuries sustained
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

The form will be submitted to the school office of the appropriate school who will log on the central restrictive intervention and use of force log.

12.2 Communication with parents

Culford will ensure that they provide information about the seclusion or restraint incident in writing to parents.

A written report should be made to parents by the relevant heads office, as soon as practicable after the incident, but no later than the same day. However, the duty to make a report to the parents will not apply if:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over
- making a report would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil, in which case the report should be made to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority where the pupil is ordinarily resident.

Best practice would also include inviting parents to a follow-up discussion about the incident, where appropriate to review triggers, behaviour plans, deescalation strategies and future approaches.

Communication to parents must include:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body will routinely monitor and evaluate the restrictive intervention log and significant incidents.

14. Training

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

15. Risk Assessment

Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Therefore, schools should carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

Use of Restrictive Intervention and Use of Force Risk Assessment

16. Related guidance

- Section 93A of the Education and Inspection Act 2006
- The Schools recording and reporting of Seclusion and Restraint (No.2 (England) Regulations 2025
- Behaviour in Schools (2024)
- DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools
- Searching__Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf
- The Human rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023

17. Related policies

- Behaviour policy
- Senior Boarding handbook
- Prep Boarding handbook
- Security Policy
- Nursery Handbook
- Pupil and Boarder Search Policy