

Freegrounds Junior School

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy 2026-2027

1. BACKGROUND

This policy has been created to align with our legal duties, including our obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 and outlines the requirements for recording and reporting incidents where restrictive physical intervention or seclusion has been used.

This policy is based on guidance from the Department for Education Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026) which **must** be read alongside the model policy and HCC guidance document.

The following definitions inform this policy and how we might support pupils in our setting:

- **Restrictive physical intervention** - a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil.
- **Reasonable force:** a term used in legislation which includes restrictive physical 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.
- **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.

All staff within this setting help pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and all behaviour is viewed as a communication. We do this through a combination of approaches, which include:

- Relational practice.
- Trauma informed practice.
- Positive role modelling.
- Unconditional positive regard and trusting relationships.

- Teaching a broad and balanced curriculum that is well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Setting appropriate boundaries and holding high expectations for all.
- Providing supportive feedback.
- Consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive.
- Sharing best practice for whole class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces.
- Training staff in effective communication strategies.
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive physical intervention to inform future plans.
- Working closely and collaboratively with parents of individual pupils
- Develop strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs
- Meeting the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 through provision of reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils can benefit from what our setting offers.
- Using preventative de-escalation techniques giving pupils time, space and taught strategies to be co-regulated or self-regulated.

More details about our positive approach to behaviour can be found in our Positive Behaviour Policy.

There are times when pupil's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require restrictive physical intervention and the use of reasonable force. These occasions will be rare and intervention will only be used, when necessary, appropriate and in the best interests of the pupil following the use of de-escalation strategies.

This policy sets out our expectations for the use of such intervention. It is not intended to refer to the general use of physical contact which might be appropriate in a range of situations:

- To give first aid
- To support physical care
- 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

This policy is consistent with our Child Protection, Safeguarding and Equal Opportunities policies and with national and local guidance for schools on safeguarding pupils.

We exercise appropriate care when using physical contact and acknowledge that for some pupils, physical contact would be inappropriate. Although, it is acknowledged that in an emergency situation physical contact may be required. For example, those with a history of physical or sexual abuse or those from certain cultural or religious

groups. We pay careful attention to issues of sex and privacy, and to any specific requirements of certain cultural or religious groups.

2. When can restrictive physical intervention be used

- To prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to cause injury to themselves or others.
- To prevent a pupil from committing or continuing to commit a criminal offence.
- To prevent a pupil from doing damage or continuing to do significant damage to property.
- To prevent a pupil from causing disorder among pupils at the setting, whether during a teaching session or otherwise or continuing to cause disorder among pupils at the setting. (However, we would not consider restrictive physical intervention or the use of reasonable force to be appropriate unless there was a direct risk of harm to a pupil, their peers or the staff involved as a result of the disorder.)

The decision to use restrictive physical intervention will be informed by the following questions as part of a dynamic, in the moment, risk assessment:

- Is it necessary?
- Is it proportionate?
- Has the pupil's welfare been considered?
- Is it a last resort?
- Is there an alternative less intrusive reasonably practicable action?

3. Who can use restrictive physical intervention

All staff can use restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force to maintain safety in an emergency.

All teachers and any other person, who by virtue of their contract, have control or charge of pupils are authorised to use restrictive physical intervention including reasonable force under the conditions listed above.

At times the Headteacher may authorise additional staff to have control or charge of pupils and therefore be able to use restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force.

All staff in our school receive regular training in relation to managing behaviour including coregulation, de-escalation and planning for behaviour change. Records of this are maintained by the school and monitored by the governing body.

Where it is likely that a member of staff may be required to support a pupil through the use of restrictive physical intervention they access training from an accredited provider and risk assessments are used to ensure that this can happen as safely as possible.

4. What type of physical intervention can be used

We all have a duty of care towards the pupils in our setting. This applies as much to what we **don't** do as what we **do** do. We have a responsibility to intervene to keep pupils safe, taking control for the pupil, not control of them.

We do not use restrictive physical intervention for the purpose of punishment. We do not make use of any technique that could affect a pupil's breathing, risk positional asphyxia or affect circulation or apply pressure to their neck or abdomen. Pupils are not held on the ground. If a pupil goes to ground independently, they are immediately released.

Staff do not act in ways that might reasonably be expected to cause injury for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck or collar.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against the joint.
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear.

Where staff require specific training in the use of restrictive physical intervention and reasonable force, we arrange that they receive training via the Hampshire County Council Primary Behaviour Service Team Teach training courses. This training is accredited by the Institute of Conflict Management (ICM). Staff have access to annual refresher training.

Seclusion is only ever used as a safety measure to protect others from harm whilst a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent.

This is an emergency response and seclusion does not form part of our wide range of planned interventions.

Where seclusion has been the only safe and practicable response in an emergency situation, we ensure that the pupil is confined in a safe and non-threatening or intimidating environment. We supervise the pupil at all times and as soon as the risk of immediate harm has reduced, we enter the space to support the pupil to regulate.

As part of our duties all instances of restrictive physical intervention, reasonable force and seclusion are recorded and reported.

5. Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

All staff are aware that some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. We acknowledge the potential triggers that may include:

- pain / medical needs
- sensory overload
- unfamiliar situations or environments
- feelings of fear and anxiety.

We seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND. We are aware that pupils with SEND may become disproportionately subject to the use of physical intervention and the use of reasonable force. We seek ways to mitigate this risk through working with pupils, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Possible strategies would 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

Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, we have risk assessments in place.

We make use of coproduced behaviour support plans which outline adjustments to the school environment and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively. Our behaviour support plans detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. Support plans are reviewed periodically with the pupil and their parents/carers.

Where a pupil has a disability, we have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage so that the pupil can fully participate in the education provided by our school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

6. Recording and Reporting

Our Governing Body ensure that all instances of the use of restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force and seclusion are recorded and reported in line with Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act (2006).

We complete records as soon as possible after the incident and no later than the same day. We record incidents despite restrictive physical intervention being used with prior agreement of the parents / carers.

Our records include:

- Name of pupil and all staff involved – participants and observers.
- Any relevant needs including the SEND status code (K, EHCP)
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention or series of short interventions.
- What was happening before?

- What do you think triggered this behaviour?
- What de-escalating techniques were used prior to physical intervention?
- Any other information relevant to include.
- Why was restrictive physical intervention used?
- Post incident support.

We report each incident of restrictive physical intervention to parents no later than the same day. If we believe that reporting the use of restrictive physical intervention to a parent will place a pupil at risk of significant harm we report the incident to either the other parent if there is no risk of significant harm or the local authority via pbs.teamteach@hants.gov.uk with the title **RPI Report – Risk of Significant Harm**. We report to parents verbally and then follow up in writing sharing a copy of the record form. Our report to parents will include:

- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- Why intervention was deemed appropriate.
- What type of intervention was used including the amount of force.
- Details of any injuries sustained by the pupil.

As part of our commitment to working collaboratively with parents we arrange follow up meetings to discuss potential triggers for behaviour, review the behaviour support plan in place, reflect on de-escalation strategies and what might be done differently moving forward.

In addition, we review risk assessments, ensuring that all pupils where there is a risk of the need to use restrictive physical intervention have an individual risk assessment in place.

As per the school's duty under the schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025 we record and report instances of seclusion and non-force related restraint as per the procedure above.

7. Pupil and Staff Support

We acknowledge that any restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force may be distressing for both pupils and staff. We ensure that any necessary medical assessment and treatment is sought following an incident. Injuries to the pupil are recorded on the restrictive physical intervention record and the school's accident book, staff report injuries via the HCC online reporting system in addition to the restrictive physical intervention record.
[HCC - Report an accident or incident](#)

To support the wellbeing of both pupils and staff we hold de-briefs to facilitate reflection as well as repairing and rebuilding relationships and inform future actions. Where possible a member of staff who was not involved in the incident supports the de-brief process.

8. Monitoring

Our named **governorsupports** our school to comply with this policy and the associated DfE guidance. School leaders and governors review

incidents of restrictive physical intervention to:

- Identify and implement improvements to policy and practice paying particular attention to situations where the same intervention has been used over a period of time and remains ineffective.
- Identify areas of learning and development.
- Understand patterns of behaviour, triggers and the effectiveness of pupil plans.
- Identify any disproportionate use of restrictive physical intervention in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, SEN or other vulnerabilities.

These reviews take place at least annually and more regularly if restrictive physical intervention is in frequent use.

Where data is collated, we ensure that we do not over-interpret small sub-groups and appreciate the limitations of our data and what can be inferred from it.

9. Concerns and Complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force can be distressing for all involved which can lead to concerns, allegations or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use.

Our school's complaints policy outlines how to make a complaint as well as the timescales for responses.

Where an allegation of assault or abusive behaviour is made, our Headteacher is immediately informed. If the allegation relates to the Headteacher then the Chair of Governors is immediately informed.

We follow our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies in these instances.

Safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff is our upmost priority, and we always seek to avoid injury. It is possible that as part of a restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force a pupil may accidentally be scratched or bruised. This should not necessarily be seen as a failure of the professional technique but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of making sure the pupil remains safe.

10. Reviewing

We have updated this policy in line with the DfE guidance Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England which became statutory in April 2026.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

Appendices

- **Appendix One: Summary guidance for staff on the use of physical intervention**

Introduction

This guidance for staff is a summary of our school's detailed policy on the use of physical intervention. Where staff are in any doubt about the use of physical intervention, they should refer to the full policy.

This summary guidance refers to the use of restrictive physical intervention (restraint) which we define as "when a member of staff uses force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will". Staff should not feel inhibited from providing physical intervention under other circumstances, such as providing physical support or emotional comfort where such support is professionally appropriate. The use of such support must be consistent with our Safeguarding policy.

Who can restrain? Under what circumstances can restraint be used?

Everyone has the right to use reasonable force to prevent actual or potential injury to people or damage to property (Common law power). Injury to people can include situations where a child's behaviour is putting him or herself at risk. In all situations, staff should always aim to use a less intrusive technique (such as issuing direct instructions, clearing the space of danger or seeking additional support) unless they judge that using such a technique is likely to make the situation worse.

Teachers and other authorised staff (see full policy for more details about this) may also use reasonable force where a child's behaviour is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order. Staff should be very cautious about using restrictive physical intervention under such circumstances, as it would only be appropriate in exceptional circumstances.

Statutory power - Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act (2006) enables school staff under statutory power to use such force as is reasonable and proportionate to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- committing an offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself) and prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise).

Restraint should never be used as a substitute for good behaviour management, nor should it be employed in an angry, frustrated, threatening or punishing manner.

Although all staff have a duty of care to take appropriate steps in a dangerous situation, this does not mean that they have to use restraint if they judge that their attempts to do so are likely to escalate the situation. They may instead issue a direction to stop, call for additional assistance or take appropriate action to make the environment as safe as possible (e.g. by clearing the room of children).

Where it is anticipated that a individual pupil's behaviour makes it likely that they may be restrained, a risk assessment and intervention plan should be developed and implemented.

What type of restraint can be used?

Any use of restrictive physical intervention should be consistent with the principle of reasonable force. This means it needs to be in proportion to the risks of the situation, and that as little force is used as possible, for as short a period of time, in order to restore safety.

Staff should:

Before physical contact:

- Use all reasonable efforts to avoid the use of physical intervention to manage children's behaviour. This includes issuing verbal instructions and a warning of an intention to intervene physically.
- Try to summon additional support before intervening. Such support may simply be present as an observer or may be ready to give additional physical support as necessary.
- Be aware of personal space and the way that physical risks increase when a member of staff enters the personal space of a distressed or angry child. (Staff should also note that any uninvited interference with a student's property may be interpreted by them as an invasion of their personal space.) Staff should either stay well away or close the gap between themselves and the child very rapidly, without leaving a "buffer zone" in which they can get punched or kicked.
- Avoid using a "frontal", "squaring up" approach, which exposes the sensitive parts of the body, and which may be perceived as threatening. Instead, staff should adopt a sideways stance, with their feet in a wide, stable base. This keeps the head in a safer position, as well as turning the sensitive parts of the body away from punches or kicks. Hands should be kept visible, using open palms to communicate lack of threat.

Where physical contact is necessary:

- Aim for side-by-side contact with the child. Staff should avoid positioning themselves in front of the child (to reduce the risk of being kicked) and should also avoid adopting a position from behind that might lead to allegations of sexual misconduct. In the side-by-side position, staff should aim to have no gap between the adult's and child's body. This minimises the risk of impact and damage.
- Aim to keep the adult's back as straight and aligned (untwisted) as possible. We acknowledge that this is difficult, given that the children we work with are frequently smaller than us.

- When attempting to make safe if a child has hold of another person (adult or child), ensure they are able to release their grip, but stabilise their position for balance, and make safe by ensuring they cannot pull away.
- Beware in particular of head positioning, to avoid clashes of heads with the child.
- Hold children by “long” bones, i.e. avoid grasping at joints where pain and damage are most likely. For example, staff should aim to hold on the forearm or upper arm rather than the hand, elbow or shoulder.
- Ensure that there is no restriction to the child’s ability to breathe. In particular, this means avoiding holding a child around the chest cavity or stomach.
- Do all that they can to avoid lifting children.
- Keep talking to the child (for example, “When you stop kicking me, I will release my hold”) unless it is judged that continuing communication is likely to make the situation worse.
- Don’t expect the child to apologise or show remorse in the heat of the moment.
- Use as little restrictive force as is necessary in order to maintain safety and for as short a period of time as possible.

After an incident

It is distressing to be involved in a restrictive physical intervention, whether as the child being held, the person doing the holding, or someone observing or hearing about what has happened. All those involved in the incident should receive support to help them talk about what has happened and, where necessary, record their views.

If needed the child or staff member will be medically assessed and injuries treated.

We also encourage staff, where necessary, to contact the [Employee Support Line \(ESL\)](#), at [Employee Support \(Employee Assistance Programme\) | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#) or contact the [Teacher Support Line on 0800 0280199](#)

Staff should inform the headteacher as soon as possible after an incident of restrictive physical intervention; parents/carers should also be informed.

The physical intervention record and ABCC form should be completed as soon as possible and in any event within 24 hours of the incident.

There will be a review following the incident which will include coaching for the staff.

There will be shared reflection so that lessons can be learned to reduce the likelihood of recurrence in the future.

We will continue to monitor wellbeing of the pupil and staff providing additional support where needed.

- Appendix Two: Reasonable Force - Staff Quick Prompt



Reasonable Force – Staff Quick Prompt (2026)

☐ When can I use reasonable force?

Only if **necessary to prevent**:

- Injury to a pupil or others
- A criminal offence
- Serious damage to property
- Serious disruption

☐ Key principles (always apply)

- **Last resort** – try de-escalation first
- **Proportionate** – no more force than needed
- **Time-limited** – shortest possible duration
- **Safe & respectful** – protect dignity and welfare

☐ Never do this

- Use force as **punishment**
- Restrict **breathing or circulation** (e.g. neck pressure, face-down holds)
- Use excessive, unnecessary or prolonged restraint

☐ Think before acting

- What is the **risk right now**?
- Is force **really necessary**?
- Is there a **safer alternative**?
- Does this protect the **pupil's dignity and welfare**?

☐ After any significant incident

You **must**:

- Record what happened (reason, type of force, duration, injuries)
- Report it according to school procedures
- Inform parents **as soon as possible (ideally same day)**
- **Specifically record seclusion if it was used as part of the response to ensure safety**

☐ Remember

Prevent > De-escalate > Use force only if absolutely necessary

Seclusion

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Seclusion is generally defined as:

Forcing a pupil to spend time alone and preventing them from leaving.

So, two crucial elements:

1. **Isolation/separation from their peers**
2. **Lack of freedom to leave (i.e., imposed, not chosen)**

Example 1:

At times, it may be necessary to support a pupil to a safer space away from others in response to behaviours that present a risk of harm to themselves or others (emergency response). Where physical intervention is used to guide or move a pupil to this safer space, and the pupil is then prevented from leaving because it would be unsafe to do so, this constitutes seclusion and must be recorded as such on every occasion.

- Only use seclusion as a **last resort**.
- It must be **reasonable, proportionate, and necessary** to maintain safety.
- Use for the **shortest time possible** and end as soon as safe.
- Ensure **continuous supervision** and maintain the pupil's **dignity and wellbeing**.

Example 2:

A bespoke timetable that includes periods of working away from peers **would not be classed as seclusion if:**

- It is part of a **planned, proportionate educational provision**
- It is **in the pupil's best interests** (e.g., SEN need, anxiety, sensory regulation)
- The pupil is **not being forced to remain there against their will**
- It is **regularly reviewed** and agreed with parents/carers (and ideally the pupil)
- It is about **supporting access to education**, not managing behaviour through removal

It becomes much more likely to be considered **seclusion or an unlawful restrictive practice** if:

- The pupil is **placed away from peers as a response to behaviour**
- They are **prevented from rejoining others**
- It is used as a **default or long-term measure without review**
- There is **no clear educational or therapeutic rationale**
- The pupil experiences it as **punitive or isolating**
- It is effectively **"informal exclusion" or internal isolation**

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