

Higham Lane North Academy

Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy



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1. Policy Statement

Higham Lane North Academy is committed to maintaining a **safe, calm and respectful environment** where all pupils and staff feel safe and supported.

The school's approach to behaviour management prioritises:

- **Prevention**
- **De-escalation**
- **Positive relationships**
- **Restorative approaches**

Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, will **only be used as a last resort** where it is necessary to prevent harm or serious disruption.

Any use of force must always be:

- **Necessary**
- **Proportionate**
- **Reasonable**
- **In the best interests of the child**

This policy complies with:

- **DfE Guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools (2025)**
- **Education and Inspections Act 2006**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**

2. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention

A **restrictive intervention** is any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty, or freedom to act independently.

This may include:

- Physical restraint
- Physical guidance
- Blocking movement
- Removing a pupil from a location
- Seclusion (where a pupil is prevented from leaving an area)

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force is the degree of force that is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances to prevent harm or serious disruption.

The force used must always be:

- **Minimal**
- **Proportionate**
- **Used for the shortest time necessary**

3. Who Can Use Reasonable Force

Under **Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**, all members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force.

This includes:

- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Support staff
- Senior leaders

Where possible, staff who may need to use restrictive interventions should receive **appropriate training**.

4. Circumstances Where Force May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Injuring themselves
- Injuring others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing serious damage to property
- Causing serious disruption to the learning environment

Examples may include:

- Separating pupils involved in a fight
- Preventing a pupil leaving the classroom where they may be unsafe
- Preventing a pupil from running into a dangerous area
- Removing an object that could cause harm

Force must **never be used as punishment**.

5. Unacceptable Use of Force

The following are **strictly prohibited**:

- Any intervention that **restricts breathing**
- Holding a pupil around the **neck**
- Covering a pupil's **mouth or nose**
- Applying pressure to the **chest or abdomen**
- Using force **as a disciplinary punishment**
- Deliberately placing a pupil **face-down on the floor**

If a pupil is unintentionally brought to the ground, staff must **reposition or release the pupil as quickly as possible**.

6. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used:

- To **protect others from immediate harm**
- When a pupil is experiencing **severe emotional or behavioural dysregulation**

During seclusion:

- The pupil **must be supervised at all times**
- The pupil should be allowed to leave **as soon as the immediate risk has reduced**
- The incident must be **recorded and reported**

Seclusion must **never be used as punishment**.

7. Decision-Making Principles

Before using any restrictive intervention, staff should consider:

- **Necessity**
Is the intervention required to prevent harm or serious disruption?
- **Proportionality**
Is the **least restrictive option** being used?
- **Welfare**
Does the intervention respect the pupil's **dignity and wellbeing**?

Staff should also consider:

- The pupil's **age**
- **Size and strength**
- **Medical conditions**
- **SEND needs**
- **Known triggers or trauma history**

8. Pupils with SEND or Additional Needs

Some pupils may have needs that increase the likelihood of behaviour incidents.

In these cases the school will:

- Carry out a **risk assessment**
- Identify **triggers and preventative strategies**
- Develop a **Behaviour Support Plan**
- Work with **parents and professionals**
- Provide **staff training where necessary**

The school is committed to ensuring interventions are **not used disproportionately with vulnerable pupils**.

9. De-escalation and Prevention

Staff should prioritise **de-escalation strategies**, including:

- Calm tone of voice
- Open body language
- Clear instructions
- Offering time to regulate
- Allowing space
- Avoiding large numbers of staff surrounding a pupil

Whole-school strategies include:

- Consistent behaviour expectations
- Identifying behaviour hotspots
- Effective supervision
- Consistent language for behaviour correction

10. Actions Following a Restrictive Intervention

After any incident involving restrictive intervention:

1. **Ensure immediate safety**
2. Provide **first aid or medical assessment if required**
3. Record the incident **as soon as possible**
4. Inform **senior leaders**
5. Provide **support for the pupil and staff involved**
6. Hold a **post-incident reflection discussion**
7. Review whether **additional support or behaviour planning is needed**

Where appropriate, **restorative conversations** will be facilitated.

11. Statutory Recording Requirements

From **1 April 2026**, the school must record all significant incidents involving:

- Restraint
- Seclusion
- Use of force

Records should be completed **on the same day wherever possible**.

The record must include:

- Names of staff and pupils involved
- Date, time and location
- Duration of the intervention
- Description of the incident

- Triggers and escalation factors
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type and level of force used
- Injuries sustained
- Follow-up support provided
- Relevant pupil needs (including SEND)

12. Statutory Reporting to Parents

Parents/carers will be informed **as soon as possible and normally on the same day** when a restrictive intervention has been used.

The written report must include:

- Date, time and location
- Reason the intervention was necessary
- Type of intervention used
- Duration
- Any injuries
- Any support provided following the incident

The report must **not identify other pupils involved**.

13. Monitoring and Governance

The school will regularly review data on restrictive interventions to:

- Identify patterns or triggers
- Improve behaviour strategies
- Ensure interventions are not used disproportionately
- Identify staff training needs

The **Governing Body / Trust** will review this information periodically to ensure:

- Compliance with statutory guidance
- Appropriate safeguarding practice
- Continuous improvement in behaviour management.

14. Staff Training

The school will ensure staff receive training on:

- Behaviour management
- De-escalation techniques
- Safeguarding
- Trauma-informed practice
- Appropriate use of restrictive interventions

Staff who may need to use physical intervention will receive **appropriate training where required**.

15. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- **Annually**
- Following any significant incident
- Following updates to DfE statutory guidance.

Appendices

Three operational documents aligned to the DfE guidance “Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools” (Dec 2025) and the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint (England) Regulations 2025) effective 1 April 2026. (They are designed so they can be lifted directly into Word templates or safeguarding/behaviour recording system (e.g., CPOMS, Parent Mail, etc.))

Appendix 1 - Restrictive Intervention Incident Recording Template

(DfE Statutory Recording Compliant – From 1 April 2026)

School:
Date of Incident:
Time of Incident:
Location:
Duration of Intervention:

Pupil Information

Pupil Name:
Year Group:
Date of Birth:

Does the pupil have SEND?

- No
 Yes – SEN Code:

Relevant medical conditions or additional needs:

Staff Involved

Staff member(s) directly involved in the intervention:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Other staff witnesses:

Description of Incident

Brief description of what occurred (including events leading up to the incident):

Include:

- Known triggers
- Escalation of behaviour
- Actions taken by staff prior to intervention

De-escalation Strategies Attempted

Tick all that apply:

- Verbal instruction
- Calm reassurance
- Redirection

- Time to regulate
- Removal of audience
- Environmental adjustment
- Support from additional staff
- Other:

Reason Intervention Was Necessary

Tick all that apply:

- Prevent injury to the pupil
- Prevent injury to others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Prevent serious disorder or disruption

Brief explanation:

Type of Restrictive Intervention Used

Tick all that apply:

- Physical guidance
- Blocking movement
- Holding or restraint
- Seclusion
- Removal from classroom/location
- Other:

Use of Reasonable Force

Was reasonable force used?

- Yes
- No

If **Yes**, describe:

- Type of force used
- Degree of force
- Why this was necessary and proportionate

Injuries

Were any injuries sustained?

Pupil

- No
- Yes – details:

Staff

- No
- Yes – details:

First Aid Provided

- Yes
 - No
- Details

Post-Incident Support

Tick if applicable:

- Medical assessment completed
- Pupil supported to regulate
- Restorative conversation held

- Staff debrief completed
- Behaviour plan reviewed
- Parents informed

Details:

Parent Notification

Parent informed?

- Yes – Date & Time:
- No – reason:

Method:

- Phone
- Written notification
- Meeting arranged

Follow-up Actions

- Behaviour support plan review
- Risk assessment updated
- SEND team involved
- Staff training required
- Safeguarding review

Details:

Completed by:

Name:
Role:
Date:

Reviewed by SLT:

Name:
Date:

Appendix 2 - Parent Notification Letter/Email Template -(Required under statutory reporting guidance)

Subject: **Notification of Behaviour Incident Involving Restrictive Intervention**

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

I am writing to inform you that earlier today an incident occurred at school involving **[Child's Name]** where staff needed to use a **restrictive intervention** in order to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

Under the Department for Education guidance "*Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools*" (2025), schools are required to inform parents when such an intervention takes place.

Incident Summary

Date:

Time:

Location:

During the incident, staff assessed that it was necessary to intervene in order to:

- prevent injury to the pupil
- prevent injury to others
- prevent serious damage to property
- prevent serious disruption to the school environment

A **[brief description of the intervention used]** was used for approximately **[duration]**.

Welfare and Support

Following the incident:

- [Child's Name] was supported by staff to calm and regulate
- [First aid/medical assessment provided if applicable]
- Staff reviewed the situation to ensure appropriate follow-up support

At present, **no injuries were reported / the following minor injuries were recorded:**
[details if relevant]

The school will continue to support [Child's Name] and review whether any additional strategies or support may help prevent similar incidents in the future.

If you would like to discuss this incident further, please contact the school office to arrange a conversation with a member of the senior leadership team.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

[Name]

Headteacher / Senior Leader
Higham Lane North Academy

Appendix 3 - Staff Decision Flowchart - (When is Restrictive Intervention Lawful?)

Step 1

Is there an **immediate risk of harm or serious disruption?**

Examples:

- Pupil may injure themselves
- Pupil may injure another pupil or adult
- Pupil is causing serious damage to property
- Pupil may commit a criminal offence

↓

NO

→ Use normal behaviour management strategies

↓

YES

Proceed to Step 2

Step 2

Have **de-escalation strategies been attempted where possible?**

Examples:

- Calm instructions
- Redirection
- Giving space
- Removing audience
- Additional staff support

↓

If safe to do so, attempt de-escalation.

If not possible due to **immediate danger**, proceed to Step 3.

Step 3

Is the intervention **necessary and proportionate?**

Consider:

- Pupil age
- Pupil size
- SEND needs
- Medical needs
- Risk of escalation

↓

If **YES**, proceed.

Step 4

Use the **least restrictive intervention for the shortest time necessary**

Ensure:

- Breathing is not restricted
- No pressure to neck/chest
- Not used as punishment

Step 5

After the Incident

You **must**:

1. Ensure pupil and staff safety
2. Record the incident **on the same day**
3. Inform SLT
4. Notify parents **as soon as possible**
5. Provide support to pupil and staff
6. Review behaviour support plans if necessary

Simple Staff Reminder

Restrictive intervention should always be:

- ✓ Necessary
- ✓ Proportionate
- ✓ Reasonable
- ✓ Last resort