



Hazelwood Schools

Restrictive Intervention Policy

Reviewed and Adopted: **Summer 2026**

Reviewed by: FGB

Next Review: **Summer 2029**

“There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use ‘reasonable force’ to safeguard children. The term ‘reasonable force’ covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. ‘Reasonable’ in these circumstances means ‘using no more force than is needed’. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil’s path or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.” (KCSIE September 2025)

The following policy should be read in conjunction with the DFE guidance - Restrictive intervention, including use of reasonable force, in schools, April 2026.

At Hazelwood Schools, we are committed to a positive behaviour policy, which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. We do, however, recognise that children sometimes may make negative choices. On rare occasions, this may result in a situation that requires some form of restrictive intervention by staff to keep the pupil/s safe. Our policy for restrictive intervention is based upon the following principles: -

- Restrictive intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any restrictive intervention must be necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- Restrictive intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible
- Parents will be informed of each incident

1. The Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows all members of school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- 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.

2. Definitions

This policy uses the term restrictive interventions as an umbrella term for actions used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement. Reasonable force refers to physical restrictive interventions, used only where necessary and proportionate. The school also recognises the definitions of restraint, seclusion, and significant incident set out in the DfE April 2026 guidance.

3. Our approach

At Hazelwood Schools we aim to avoid the need for restrictive intervention and regard this as a last resort in a tiny minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Positive Behaviour Policy. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate, and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the school’s policy on behaviour particularly when dealing with disruptive behaviour. Any member of staff can use physical restraint as a last resort in an emergency situation; Hazelwood SLT have received PRICE training and are available at all times during the main school day. As such, it is an expectation that any member of staff dealing with an

incident that may require the use of physical restraint, seeks immediate help with the situation from SLT so that they can support the de-escalation of the situation and support the child to regulate.

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all pupils' safety and well-being. Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

4. Other Physical Contact

Appropriate physical contact is a normal and necessary part of working in a school. The school recognises that not all physical contact constitutes a restrictive intervention. Staff may use reasonable, appropriate physical contact in line with their professional judgement to support pupils and enable effective teaching and learning.

Examples of appropriate physical contact include, but are not limited to:

- providing first aid or medical assistance
- comforting or reassuring a distressed child (where this is appropriate and welcomed)
- guiding, escorting or prompting a pupil (e.g. holding a hand, guiding an elbow, or positioning for safety)
- demonstrating techniques in PE, sports or practical lessons
- preventing an accident (for example, guiding a pupil away from danger)
- supporting pupils with personal care or mobility, where this forms part of agreed arrangements.

Such contact should always:

- be appropriate to the age, stage and individual needs of the pupil
- take account of any known sensitivities, SEND needs or past experiences
- be carried out with respect for the pupil's dignity
- be open and transparent, not secretive

The school does not operate a "no physical contact" policy. Avoiding all physical contact may place pupils at greater risk and may prevent staff from carrying out their duties safely and effectively.

Where physical contact becomes restrictive in nature (for example, preventing movement or controlling a pupil's body), this will be treated as a restrictive intervention and must meet the legal tests of being necessary, proportionate and reasonable, and be recorded and reported in line with this policy.

5. Use of physical restraint

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as punishment. Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. Physical restraint must be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary. In all circumstances, alternative methods should be used as appropriate with restrictive intervention or restraint, a last resort.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, Hazelwood will, in considering the risks carefully, recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. We will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and our Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour and positive handling plans for more vulnerable children and agreeing them

with parents and carers, we can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force. Staff will seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect to attempts to keep people safe during a critical incident. Staff will always assess a child following the use of physical restraint to ensure any first aid is required and /or record if any injury is sustained during the use of trained techniques.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, members of staff may use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”. These include:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal or controlled drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco, cigarette papers or vapes
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that staff reasonably suspect has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Staff should refer to the [Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance](#) document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

When physical restraint becomes necessary: DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible, e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil’s compliance

DON’T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Hold the pupil on the ground; reposition or release as quickly as possible should this occur
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil
- Use physical restraint or restrictive intervention as a punishment

6. Seclusion

Seclusion refers to the supervised confinement of a pupil in a room or enclosed space from which they are not free to leave. Seclusion is considered a restrictive intervention and is not a disciplinary sanction. The school’s approach is to avoid the use of seclusion wherever possible. It is not used routinely and would be considered only in exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary to prevent a real and immediate risk of serious harm to the pupil or others, and where other strategies have been ineffective or are inappropriate.

Where seclusion is used, the following principles will always apply:

- the pupil will be continuously supervised by a member of staff
 - seclusion will be used for the shortest possible time necessary to manage risk
 - the pupil's dignity and welfare will be prioritised at all times
 - the space used will be safe, suitable and proportionate, and will not be locked or unsupervised
 - staff will continue to use de-escalation, reassurance and communication throughout
- Seclusion will never be used:
- as a punishment or sanction
 - to enforce compliance
 - as a planned or routine response to behaviour
 - in a way that restricts access to food, drink, toilet facilities or medical care
- Any use of seclusion will be treated as a significant incident and will be:
- recorded in line with the school's recording procedures – Any use of seclusion will be recorded on CPOM's with the 'use of restrictive intervention' and 'seclusion' tag.
 - reported to parents/carers as soon as practicable (normally the same day), with information provided in writing via written letter or email – copy of written record to parents added to CPOMs incident for reference.
 - reviewed by senior leaders to consider the circumstances, the effectiveness of the response, and any steps required to reduce the likelihood of recurrence

Where a pupil has recurring needs that place them or others at risk, the school will seek to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions through proactive planning, including behaviour support plans, risk assessments, reasonable adjustments and external support where appropriate. As a highly inclusive school, we do have some children who, on occasions, need support or space to coregulate or self-regulate as part of positive behaviour management strategies set out in individual behaviour support plans / positive handling plans.

7. Recording and Reporting

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations, and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Headteacher should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved, and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed. If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural SEND Support Plan and /or positive handling plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENDCo. Post-incident support will take account of any physical, emotional, or psychological impact on the pupil.

In some circumstances, a referral to Early Help (single assessment) may be appropriate to help identify an additional need for a particular child. It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided. The school has a duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for recording each significant incident in which a member of the staff uses force on a pupil for whom education is being provided at the school. All incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. The incident should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

Any use of physical restraint will be recorded on CPOM's (see Appendix A). In the event of any future complaint or allegation, this record will provide essential and accurate information and will inform individual and school risk assessments. A member of staff will contact parents as soon as possible

after an incident; staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it. Follow up written communication of the incident will be shared with parents detailing:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- A brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- The details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable A copy of the written record to parents added to CPOMs incident for reference.

The reporting requirements above apply even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's positive handling plan.

8. Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff
- The appropriate Team Teach responses anticipated to be used for the child.

9. Complaints and Allegations

A clear restrictive intervention policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under the complaints, disciplinary or allegation management procedures. Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be made in accordance with our normal complaints procedure set out in the complaints policy found on our website. Any concerns about physical contact should be raised in line with the school's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents, and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

10. Monitoring Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions

Use of Restrictive intervention in school will be routinely monitored by the Headteacher termly. Feedback from monitoring will be used to help staff learn from experience, determine what specialist help is needed for children, and to assess the appropriateness of the child's placement at the school. Information on trends and emerging problems will be shared within the school. Monitoring information will be reported on a regular basis to school governors.

11. Staff Training

Training in physical intervention methods, such as PRICE Training, that are acceptable within school is available and the school will publish details of training opportunities when they arise. Please refer to the Single Central Record training information for specific details. Staff involved in implementing Positive Handling Plans will be provided with training in the range of intervention techniques they are expected to use in their day-to-day work.

Appendix A

Student Name:	
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D.O.B:	
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Reporting Member of Staff:	
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Location of Incident:	
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Time and Date of Incident:	
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Justification for physical intervention (tick all that apply):		Predicted harm prevented by physical intervention with predicted levels (see Individual Plan) e.g. bruising to peers, lacerations, destruction of computer, 20 mins of geography lost for 15 child or young person's etc.)
To prevent harm to self	☐	
To prevent harm to other children	☐	
To prevent harm to adults	☐	
To prevent damage to property	☐	
To prevent loss of learning (see plan)	☐	

Incident Form/Book Complete	Y/N
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Medical Treatment / Injuries	Y/N
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Damage to Property	Y/N
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Name(s) of additional staff witness:	Name(s) of additional student witness:

Unresolved Harm/ Details of damage to property (costs and details of harm to property and people including medical intervention:

Triggers:
Additional factors:

Primary de-escalation techniques used
(please state order in which they were used)

Verbal advice and support		Offering services of other staff	
Calm talking		Informing of consequences	
Distraction		Taking non-threatening body position	
Reassurance		De-escalation script	
Humour		Clear instruction / warning	
Negotiation		Withdrawal from activity	
Offering choices and options		Diversion	
Number	Description of how technique was employed		
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Restraint techniques including sequence of techniques, time and staff involved:

Time	Technique	Staff name
Duration of restraint:		Duration of incident:

Is there any physical mark or harm caused by the use of restraint?	Y/N	Details:
Has the student indicated that this was caused by the use of physical intervention?	Y/N	Actions: • •

Management:	Comments:	
How was the incident resolved?		
What were the Consequences? Protective and Educational		
Has student reparation/ de-brief taken place?	Y/N	
Has staff de-brief taken place?	Y/N	

Has the Risk Management plan been reviewed or updated?	Y/N	
Was there Police involvement?	Y/N	
Has there been Internal Exclusion / Suspension / PEX?	Y/N	

Incident reporting and monitoring
Incident reported to: Head Teacher by:
Parents / Carer informed by:
Student wellbeing verified by:
Staff wellbeing verified by:
Incident form completed by:

Verification of account of incident:		
Staff name	Staff signature	Date

Reporting staff name:		Signature:	
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Date:	
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