Weston Green Prep School

Restrictive Interventions Policy, including the use of reasonable force

This policy applies all pupils in the school, including in the EYFS

Date Reviewed	July 2026
Next Review	July 2027
Responsibilities	Education Directors and school leadership are responsible for the monitoring review for this policy, all staff should read this policy and appendices

This policy draws on

- pages 53 and 54 of KCSIE 2026
- Appendix 6 of the Employment Manual.
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England, April 2026

Policy Principles

Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property. The use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. All forms of corporal punishment are unlawful and the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

The policy on restraint should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Safeguarding policies. Weston Green School's policy on the use of restrictive interventions to all members of the community is an important way of building and maintaining the school's culture and makes expectations transparent to all. This policy is made available to all staff, pupils and parents.

Minimising the use of restrictive interventions

Using reasonable force or restraint will be minimised. The school will undertake whole-school measures, including tailoring approaches for individual pupils. Whole-school measures will include ensuring the school and classroom environment supports all pupils, training staff in behaviour management and communication, recording and analysing data to inform improvement planning. The school will work closely with parents and, where necessary, professionals to support individual pupils, including the development of behaviour support plans.

The Application of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force 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.

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".

Reasonable force applies where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene. The use of force or physical contact may be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property

4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Further staff guidance on the use of reasonable force is in Appendix B.

SEN

In line with the Equality Act the school is aware that the needs of pupils with SEN be considered within the context of this policy, in line with the SEN and Behaviour policies for the school. Some children with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others; this can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions. Addressing SEND within the school is covered fully within the SEND Policy, the school will take steps to minimise the use of restrictive interventions as outlined in the policy.

SEND and Behaviour Plans

Where appropriate, school staff will work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans.

Behaviour support plans may detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. and parameters around its use stated clearly in the plan. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, schools must have risk assessments in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through training and prevention strategies. Whether the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan.

Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- 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

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.

Recording the use of force

The process below outlines the procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil. Incidents must be recorded

- in writing as soon as practicable after the event, no later than the same day by the staff member(s) involved

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.

The school will record the following details as a minimum in CPOMS

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

Reporting Incidents to Parents

A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

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

In addition to any verbal discussion, schools should communicate this information to parents in writing. For example, via email or online messaging system. Parents should be invited to a follow-up discussion of the incident to include;

- 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

The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

Exceptions to the requirement to report

When the staff member has reason to believe that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others. This may include non-physical restrictive interventions and restraint that does not include direct physical contact e.g. preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Recording the use of seclusion or non-force related restraint

The process below outlines the procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil. Incidents must be recorded

- in writing as soon as practicable after the event, no later than the same day by the staff member(s) involved

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.

The school will record the following details as a minimum in CPOMS

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

Reporting Incidents to Parents

A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

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

In addition to any verbal discussion, schools should communicate this information to parents in writing. For example, via email or online messaging system. Parents should be invited to a follow up discussion of the incident to include;

- 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

The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

Exceptions

When the staff member has reason to believe that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil there may be exceptions to the requirement to report. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

Where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, schools only need to follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force incidents.

Monitoring and Reviewing Restrictive Interventions

Individual Incidents - Schools should evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils. Schools should also hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation should be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look 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. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary. This process should ideally be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident and may also benefit from the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support.

Pupil and Staff Wellbeing - The school will monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources.

Data Evaluation and Governance Review - The leadership of the school should keep a record of all incidents enable the monitoring and review of any patterns and trends, on an individual or group basis, to enable how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan. The record will be referenced in senior team pastoral meetings internal to the school and in governance meetings.

Other physical contact with pupils

The school does not have a 'no contact' policy, nor will the school grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils. Failure to physically restrain a pupil who is subsequently

injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time, staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Appendix C outlines a number of areas of practice where physical contact with pupils may be necessary, as well as providing staff with general and specific guidance on physical contact in a school context.

Appendix A - Definitions

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.

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.

Appendix B - Guidance of Staff Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

Before intervening physically you should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. You should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. You should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. You should also avoid any form of aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting which could amount to a criminal assault, nor act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury.

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. When using force staff will

- consider the alternatives, assess risk and communicate with colleagues, change approach if there is a risk of escalation
- ensure any use of force should be proportionate to the behaviour of the pupil involved and the seriousness of the harm prevented
- communicate continuously with the pupil and colleagues to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped
- recognise the additional vulnerability of children with SEN, disabilities and certain medical conditions before using reasonable force;
- ensure physical force is not used to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour;
- ensure any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result; and
- assess whether it is reasonable to use force and the degree of force that could be reasonably employed might also depend on the age, understanding and sex of the pupil
- maintain respect for a pupil's dignity; consider the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations. Training on the use of restrictive interventions should equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It should also help staff understand how to assess whether their response is reasonable under pressure.

Action taken in self-defence or in an emergency: The law allows anyone to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use more force than is necessary. Similarly, where a pupil is at risk of immediate injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of Staff (whether authorised or not) would be entitled to intervene.

Searching Pupils

Heads and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item, as listed in section 550ZA(3) of the Education Act 1996. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only. Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

Appendix C - Guidance on Physical contact with pupils

The guidance in this section concerns physical contact in circumstances, other than physical restraint. It is inappropriate to rule out all forms of physical contact between adults and pupils in school. In many circumstances, particularly with younger pupils, physical contact is important in providing comfort, reassurance and trust. In a teaching context physical contact with a pupil may be necessary and beneficial in order to demonstrate a required action, or a correct technique in, for example, singing and other music lessons or during PE, sports and games. It is important, therefore, that acceptable parameters for physical contact are understood and followed. Staff should be careful that their actions do not lead to misinterpretation, making themselves vulnerable to accusations of inappropriate contact. Any physical contact should be in response to the pupil's needs, of limited duration and appropriate to the pupil's age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact can be easily misinterpreted and should be limited. Staff should use professional judgement.

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 safeguarding (or any other relevant) 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:
  a) the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities
  b) any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used

Guidance on using physical contact: You should observe the following guidelines (where applicable):

- explain the intended action to the pupil;
- do not proceed with the action if the pupil appears to be apprehensive or reluctant, or if you have other concerns about the pupil's likely reaction;
- ensure the physical contact continues for as short a time as possible;
- ensure that the door is open and if you are in any doubt, ask a colleague or another pupil to be present during the demonstration; and
- consider alternatives if it appears likely that the pupil might misinterpret the contact.

Offering comfort to distressed pupils: Touching may be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. You should use your own professional judgement when you feel a pupil needs this kind of support and should be aware of any special circumstances relating to the pupil. For example, a child who has been abused may find physical contact particularly difficult. You should always notify the Head when comfort has been offered, record the action and should seek guidance if unsure whether it would be appropriate in a particular case.

Where a child has been abused

Where a child has previously been abused, staff will be informed on a "need to know" basis, and will need to be extra cautious when considering the necessity of physical contact. Some children may seek inappropriate physical contact. Staff should sensitively deter the pupil and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such incidents should be reported and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and where appropriate parents, guardians or carers.

Pupils' entitlement to privacy: Children are entitled to privacy when changing or showering. However there still must be an appropriate level of supervision to ensure safety. You should:

- avoid physical contact or visually intrusive behaviour when children are undressed;
- announce yourself when entering changing rooms and avoid remaining unless required;
- not shower or change in the same place as children; and
- not assist with any personal care task which a pupil can undertake themselves.

Intimate care: Sometimes intimate care is required, for example when assisting with toileting or removing wet clothes. You should:

- comply with the School's intimate care guidelines;
- advise other Staff of the task being undertaken and consult where there is any change from the agreed procedure. A record should be kept of the justification for any variations and this information should be shared with parents, guardians or carers;
- explain to the child what is happening;
- comply with applicable professional codes of practice, as appropriate; and
- comply with regularly reviewed, formally agreed plans, as appropriate.

Administering first aid: When administering first aid you should explain to the child what is happening and ensure that another adult is present or is aware of the action being taken. The treatment must meet the School's health and safety at work rules and intimate care guidelines, and parents, guardians or carers should be informed. Staff should:

- adhere to the School's policies on first aid and administering medication;
- comply with the necessary reporting requirements;
- make other adults aware of the task that is being undertaken;
- explain what is happening;
- report and record the administration of first aid;
- have regard to any health plans; and
- ensure that an appropriate health / risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities.

Report concerns: If you are at all concerned about any instance of physical contact, inform the DSL or Head without delay, and make a written record in the appropriate records.