The Schools of Woolton Hill

Physical Intervention Policy

April 2026

Reviewed by Paul Davies

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Next Review: April 2028

The Schools of Woolton Hill

Introduction

In our setting we manage behaviour positively. However, there are times when the use of restrictive physical intervention including the use of force may be necessary to keep a pupil or pupils safe or maintain good order within the setting. We have a policy which gives more detailed guidance on our use of restrictive physical intervention including reasonable force. This policy is available to parents and carers on request.

Policy documents regarding restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force should be consistent with other setting related policies including child protection, safeguarding and equal opportunity policies. National and local guidance should be taken into account.

Careful attention should be given to issues related to SEND, sex and privacy and to any specific requirements of cultural and religious groups.

Terms

This document uses the following terms from : Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026).

- **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.

Additional terms used include:

- **School:** used to refer to a school or other educational establishment including an early-years setting or education centre.
- **Pupil:** refers to any child or young person attending an educational setting in Hampshire.

Principles for the use of restrictive physical intervention including reasonable force in schools

Children's Services acknowledges that there may be times where the use of restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force is a reasonable, proportionate and necessary response to the risks present in a given situation. In all cases where restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force is used, it should be in the context of a wide range of positive approaches to promote more appropriate positive behaviour. Restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force should only be used where there is no reasonably practicable less intrusive alternative.

The use of restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force should be consistent with the Department for Education (DfE) Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026) which sets out the conditions under which reasonable force might be used in schools. The joint guidance from the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention - GOV.UK (2019) also details the context in which restrictive physical intervention, including reasonable force should be used. School staff should recognise their duty of care both through what they actively do, and through what they refrain from doing.

Safety is always a paramount concern and as such staff are not required / advised to use restrictive physical intervention including reasonable force if it is likely to put them at risk themselves.

When restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force can 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 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, it is expected that high quality teaching, strong relational practice, deescalation techniques and regulation support would be more appropriate in this circumstance, unless there is a risk of physical harm).

The decision to use restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force should take account of these key questions from Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026)

- Is it necessary?

  Are there more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation?

  Is a restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force likely to successfully reduce the presenting risks?

  Would the use of a restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the presenting behaviour itself?

  Communication between staff should seek to understand any broader risks in the environment.

- Is it proportionate?

  The principle of the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention for the least amount of time required to reduce the risks should be applied.

If the restrictive physical intervention and / or use of reasonable force is escalating the situation, the approach should be re-considered and an alternative strategy should be attempted.

Due consideration should be given the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age, size and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010

- Has the pupil's welfare been considered?

  Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. Some pupils may find the use of restrictive interventions including reasonable force 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.

  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 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.

Restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force should always be considered as a "last resort".

Who can use restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force

All staff can use restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force to maintain safety in an emergency consistent with the principles of common law as detailed on page one and two.

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 all the conditions listed above.

Headteachers and Educational Setting Leaders may also 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. Headteachers and Educational Setting Leaders should explain to those authorised staff what the authority entails; they should explain to staff who are not authorised, what action they should take in the event of a serious incident. They should also clearly set out the duration of such authorisation.

Children's Services advocate that it is good practice for all staff to receive appropriate training. This should include training related to understanding behaviour, co-regulation, de-escalation and planning for behaviour change as offered by the Primary Behaviour Service. Training should also include national and Hampshire guidance on the use of restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force and risk assessment as offered through the Hampshire County Council Team Teach Model.

What types of restrictive physical intervention can and cannot be used

Any use of restrictive physical intervention should be consistent with the principle of reasonable force. Intervention may take the form of a physical prompt, a guide, an escort or a more restrictive intervention.

Where a risk assessment indicates that an individual pupil's behaviour is likely to require physical management, schools should ensure that identified staff have received appropriate training. This may include training to reduce the likelihood of the need for restrictive physical intervention including understanding behaviour, co-regulation, de-escalation and planning for behaviour change. This training can be

accessed via the Primary Behaviour Service teams at no cost to Primary school settings.

Children's Services has a pool of Primary Behaviour Service staff who have completed training through the Team Teach Model and are able to provide restrictive physical intervention training through Team Teach Level 2 courses and associated annual refreshers. For further details settings should contact pbs.teamteach@hants.gov.uk Whilst this training ensures attendees are safely able to use restrictive physical intervention and have a clear understanding of the law, and their duty of care, it is primarily focused on reducing risks and developing de-escalation skills within the context of a trauma-informed, relational approach.

Team Teach is an accredited training provider holding the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM) Foundation Award. Where restrictive physical intervention training is deemed necessary, schools are strongly advised to seek training within the PBS Team Teach Model. Where schools choose not to, it would be best practice to ensure that any alternative training provider is accredited by BILD, ICM or similarly accredited body and are strongly advised to discuss this with the lead person within Children's Services.

Schools should not plan for, and we do not advise, except in emergency situations, staff to use seclusion. Extreme caution should be used when considering the use of seclusion as there is the potential for this to be viewed as a deprivation of liberty and at odds with the relational and trauma informed approaches being embedded within the local authority. This guidance uses the definition of seclusion from the Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026).

Seclusion 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. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported

in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026) As per this guidance, seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom. Schools should refer to the Behaviour in schools - GOV.UK (2024) guidance for further information on these and other disciplinary measures.

Examples of seclusion could include:

> Where a child has been escorted to a room in order to remove them from a dangerous situation and staff members observe them from outside of the room whilst holding the door shut or preventing the pupil from leaving the room in some way. A member of staff within the room supporting the pupil to regulate would be considered a risk reduction strategy rather than seclusion.
>
> Where a staff member has removed all the class members from a room and in order to prevent the pupil displaying the challenging behaviour from following, the door is shut so they are prevented from leaving.
>
> Where a child is in a room and the environment prevents them from leaving e.g. double handles at low heigh and high height.
>
> Where a child believes that they cannot leave a room e.g. "Don't you dare leave this room."

Schools should carefully consider wider issues around the long term segregation of pupils and be clear about how these relate to the Human Rights Act (1998). The reasons for any courses of action should be clearly explained to the pupil and their family.

Planning

In an emergency, staff should do their best within the principle of reasonable force (proportionate to risk, necessary, taking into account the pupil's welfare and a last resort). Once the risk becomes foreseeable, a risk assessment and intervention plan should be implemented.

Recording and reporting (statutory guidance)

It should be noted that pages 14 and 15 of Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026) provide statutory guidance with regards to recording and reporting.

All significant incidents including the use of restrictive physical intervention and the use of reasonable force should be recorded in writing as soon as possible (no later than the same day). Governing bodies and Proprietors of other settings must ensure that there is a recording procedure in place as part of the school's duty under Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Governing bodies of maintained schools and the proprietors of other schools must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, as part of the school's duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Recording must take place even if parents have agreed to the use of restrictive physical intervention as part of the pupil's individual support plan or risk assessment. In discharging their duty to have a procedure in place for recording use of force incidents, the governing body or proprietor must have regard to the DfE guidance, and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State for these purposes.

Children's Service provides a proforma for schools to use that includes the minimum recording requirements from Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (2026) The proforma can be found here Primary Behaviour Service - Team Teach.

All significant incidents of restrictive intervention and the use of reasonable force must be reported, **in writing**, to parents on the same day. Details should include:

- 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

Good practice would include meeting with the parents / carers to de-brief the incident and review individual plans and risk assessments at the soonest available opportunity.

Records regarding restrictive physical intervention and the use of reasonable force should be retained until the pupil reaches the age of 25. PBS Team Teach trainers recommend the use of a numbered book created from the afore mentioned proforma which should be treated as an important legal document. This is currently under review by HCC. Updates will be shared via School Communications, PBS Team Teach training and direct emails.

Supporting and Reviewing

It can be distressing to be involved in a restrictive physical intervention whether as a pupil being held, the person holding, someone observing or hearing about what has happened. It is considered good practice to ensure that all involved have the opportunity to be supported through a de-brief process which may include external support where appropriate. Any pupil plans and risk assessments should be reviewed following the significant incident.

Monitoring

A nominated member of staff should work with a member of the governing body or a proprietor of a setting to monitor analyse and take appropriate action in relation to the use of restrictive physical intervention and the use of reasonable force. Monitoring should include the evaluation of pupil plans that have not been effective to further inform learning and development for all staff. Records should be checked for patterns and triggers to evaluate the effectiveness of measures with key findings shared appropriately. Staff and governors / proprietors should be mindful to identify disproportionate use of restrictive physical intervention and reasonable force for pupils with protected characteristics, SEN and other types of vulnerability. Monitoring should take place as a minimum annually, monthly is good practice with more regular reviews if restrictive physical intervention is in more frequent use.

Additionally, Children's Services monitor data related to the use of restrictive physical intervention in school settings via the Section 157/175 Annual Safeguarding Audit. Further setting-based monitoring of the use of restrictive physical intervention and reasonable force is planned from September 2026.

Concerns and Complaints

All schools and educational settings should have a complaints policy that is readily available and follows the guidance outlined in Keeping children safe in education 2025.

Restrictive physical intervention and the use of reasonable force can be distressing to all involved and can lead to concerns, allegations or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use. The presence of a mark or bruise does not necessarily imply that excessive force has been used. Equally, the absence of a mark or bruise does not necessarily imply that excessive force has not been used.

Any enquiries about the use of restrictive physical intervention and the use of reasonable force will need to take into account of whether the correct procedures have been followed. This will include whether the use of force was in proportion to the circumstances and the way in which that force was applied.

School policies should make clear that any concern, complaint, allegation will be taken seriously. It should be made clear that records will be kept that include how any enquiries were conducted and the action taken in response.