Restrictive Interventions Policy

Crawley Down Village C of E School

Crawley Down Village C of E School aspires to be a learning community where love and respect are at the heart of all we do. We aim to be a school that lives life in all its fullness; encouraging and supporting each other to be the best we can be.

Learning together, flourishing together: “With God, all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

Approved by:	LGB	**Date:**	1st July 2026
Next review due by:	July 2027		

Crawley Down Village C of E School

Restrictive Interventions Policy

'Restrictive interventions' are a range of ways that staff might restrain or restrict a pupil.

'Reasonable force' describes the amount of force that those staff members can (in certain circumstances) use on a pupil. For fuller definitions of terms, see the 'Definitions' section at the end of this policy.

Who can use restrictive interventions, and when?

All members of school staff can use a restrictive intervention – including reasonable force – to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- 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

Staff should only put a pupil in seclusion (see 'Definitions' section below) to protect others from harm, when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. The pupil should be supervised during the whole period of seclusion. When the immediate risk of harm is reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

The DfE guidance from 1 April 2026 emphasises that any restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, and should be avoided where possible. Before staff use any restrictive intervention, they should assess whether it's necessary and proportionate, and consider the pupil's welfare.

The DfE recommends that staff who are likely to need to use restrictive interventions (including reasonable force) should be adequately trained to do so safely and lawfully and trained in strategies to prevent the need to use reasonable force (see below for de-escalation techniques). At Crawley Down this is done through behaviour training and Positive Handling training. *See also Behaviour Policy.*

Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.

Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation. For example, by covering the nose or mouth or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.

If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release them, or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Using reasonable force to search pupils

Headteachers and other members of staff authorised by the headteacher have the statutory power to search pupils and/or their possessions if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil has a prohibited item.

You can use force to search a pupil for a prohibited item, but not to search for an item banned only under the school rules. For example, force could be used to search for illegal drugs or a weapon, but not for a mobile phone.

How should staff decide whether to use a restrictive intervention?

Before using a restrictive intervention with a pupil, staff should consider:

- **If it's necessary:** there might be alternative ways to manage the situation and achieve the desired outcome, and staff should consider whether the intervention is likely to reduce risks or might escalate the situation further
- **If it's proportionate:** staff should use the least restrictive intervention for the least amount of time, and consider the individual circumstances of the pupil such as their age, size and any medical conditions
- **The pupil's welfare:** staff should consider the impact that the use of force or restrictive interventions can have on a pupil, for example for pupils who have experienced adverse life events. They should also seek to maintain respect for their dignity.

What should happen after a restrictive intervention?

If appropriate, the pupil(s) and staff member(s) should be medically assessed and any injuries treated. Record the injury/injuries in the first aid room in the usual way and inform parents.

You must also record and report the intervention on CPOMs and inform a school DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). *See also Child Protection Policy*

DSLs/SLT (Senior Leadership Team) should have a follow-up conversation with the staff member(s) and pupil(s) involved, so they can understand what happened during the incident and why, repair and rebuild relationships, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Using this information, DSLs should evaluate the incident as soon as possible after the event to understand why the restrictive intervention was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns or trends, and how you could avoid using restrictive interventions in future – for example, by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan/pastoral support plan for the pupil.

DSLs/SLT should continue to monitor the wellbeing of the pupil(s) and staff member(s) and provide additional support where needed. Pupils who witnessed the incident may also need support.

Pupils with SEND and/or disabilities

Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, can be used on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Where a pupil's behaviour means that it's more likely that staff will need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions, a risk assessment must be put in place by a DSL/LT member and/or the class teacher.

We work to manage and reduce the risk – for example, by understanding the pupil's triggers and providing staff training.

Where appropriate, we work with the pupil, their parents/carers, and other professionals to develop:

- Prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- A behaviour plan/risk assessment that sets out prevention strategies and the types of physical interventions that will be used.

Statutory recording requirements

We have a legal duty to record and report all significant incidents (see 'Definitions' section, below) in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil or incidents where a member of staff uses seclusion or restraint on a pupil.

We record the incident using CPOMs as soon as possible after the event. Ideally, this should be on the same day.

As a minimum, members of staff should record the following details:

- The names of the pupil(s) and staff involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including if the pupil has SEND and their SEN code and / or information
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- Details of any physical injuries
- Any support provided after the incident, including any medical treatment for injuries

If the staff member(s) didn't use reasonable force, include:

- A brief account of why the staff member(s) assessed that it was necessary to use the intervention

If they did use reasonable force, include:

- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to it, any known triggers that were or may have been involved, and any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
- The type of reasonable force and the degree of force that was used
- A brief account of why the staff member(s) assessed that it was necessary to use force

Statutory reporting requirements

We must give a report of the incident to each of the pupil's parents/carers as soon as possible, even if the use of force or restrictive intervention has been agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

You don't have to report an incident to the parents/carers if:

- Telling the parents/carers would likely cause significant harm to the pupil (including any form of abuse or neglect). In these cases, you **must** report it instead to the local authority (LA) where the pupil lives

The report should be in writing, and given to the parents/carers on the same day. You should include at least:

- Time, date location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- A brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries and any post-incident support

Do not include identifying details of any other pupil, as this is likely to be a breach of data protection law.

Following an incident, it's best practice to meet with the parents/carers to discuss it. This could include a discussion about any behavioural triggers for the pupil, what de-escalation techniques were used, and what could be done differently in the future.

Analysing data on restrictive interventions and reasonable force

DSLs regularly review and analyse data on restrictive interventions to make sure that we:

- Identify areas for improvement to policies and practices, particularly where strategies and interventions have not been effective
- Identify areas for training and development for staff, for example on how to use de-escalation techniques effectively
- Understand regular patterns or triggers of behaviour for key pupils, to better support them through behaviour support plans/risk assessments
- Identify when the use of restraint was used disproportionately with vulnerable pupils, including pupils with SEND

The governing body will regularly review and interrogate the data to make sure this is done.

De-escalation and prevention techniques

We use strategies to minimise the need for force and restrictive interventions.

Whole-school strategies include:

- Identifying particular 'hotspots' for behaviour issues, such as corridors or areas of the playground and deploying staff to support in these key areas
- Identifying key times of day when behaviour issues are more frequent, and making sure that enough staff are present and on duty at these times
- Having a behaviour policy that includes verbal warnings, offering pupils a chance to correct their behaviour first

- Agreeing a shared language for de-escalation with staff, so that pupils receive the same messaging consistently across the school

De-escalation strategies for individual pupils might include:

- Using a calm facial expression and warm, open body language
- Using a warm, calm tone of voice with the pupil
- Calmly reminding the pupil of the consequences of not following an instruction
- Avoiding having too many members of staff present when trying to de-escalate the situation
- Avoiding giving too many choices – two is usually best with a get out clause of time to think if the pupil cannot make a decision immediately.

Definitions of Key Terms

Restrictive interventions are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. Restrictive interventions include physical and non-physical actions aimed at restraining pupils in different ways. For example, putting a pupil in a room and not allowing them to leave is a restrictive intervention.

Reasonable force refers to the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain children, using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

A **significant incident** is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact (see definition below) between a member of staff and a pupil.

Appropriate contact might include a handshake to congratulate a pupil, giving first aid, or demonstrating how to use a musical instrument.

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.