

Whipman Woods Flying High Academy



Restrictive Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

2026-2027

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

1. Purpose and principles

Whipman Woods Flying High academy is committed to providing a safe, calm, inclusive and supportive environment in which all pupils and adults are treated with dignity and respect.

The school recognises that the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant physical and emotional impact on pupils, staff and others. Our overriding aim is therefore to minimise the need for restrictive interventions through positive relationships, appropriate support, reasonable adjustments, prevention and de-escalation.

There may, however, be exceptional circumstances in which a restrictive intervention is necessary to keep a pupil or others safe, prevent a criminal offence, prevent damage to property or prevent serious disorder.

Any restrictive intervention used by school staff must be:

- necessary in the circumstances;
- reasonable and proportionate to the risk presented;
- the least restrictive intervention reasonably available;
- used for the shortest possible period of time;
- carried out with regard to the pupil's dignity, welfare and individual needs; and
- stopped or reduced as soon as the risk has reduced.

Restrictive intervention will never be used as a punishment or sanction.

This policy has been developed with regard to the Department for Education's Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools guidance, effective from April 2026.

2. Legal framework and guidance

This policy has regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, particularly sections 93 and 93A;
- Education Act 1996;
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools;
- DfE Behaviour in Schools;
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation;
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education; and
- DfE guidance relating to SEND, mental health and behaviour.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Complaints Policy; and
- individual pupil risk assessments and behaviour/support plans where applicable.

3. Definitions

Restrictive intervention

A restrictive intervention is an action intended to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body.

The term includes both physical and non-physical interventions used to restrict a pupil.

Reasonable force

Reasonable force is a legal term which includes physical restrictive interventions.

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances.

'Reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time required, taking account of the particular circumstances.

Restraint

Restraint is a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or restricts their movement.

It may involve direct physical contact, such as holding a pupil, but may also involve actions which do not require direct physical contact.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention in which a pupil is kept apart from others and prevented from leaving a place, whether by:

physically obstructing their exit;

securing the place so that they cannot leave; or

causing the pupil to believe that they will be punished if they leave.

Seclusion is distinct from an ordinary disciplinary removal from a classroom or a pupil choosing to use a quiet or regulation space.

Significant incident

For the purposes of recording and reporting the use of force, a significant incident is an incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate everyday physical contact between staff and pupils.

4. Appropriate physical contact

This policy does not prevent appropriate, caring and professional physical contact between staff and pupils.

The school does not operate a 'no contact' policy.

- appropriate physical contact may include, for example:
- administering first aid;
- comforting a distressed child where appropriate;
- holding the hand of a young child when moving around school;
- guiding or escorting a pupil appropriately;
- helping a pupil access a space they have chosen to use to regulate;
- congratulating or praising a pupil, for example through a handshake or appropriate pat on the back;
- demonstrating techniques in PE, sport, music or other curriculum activities; and
- providing physical assistance where this is required because of a pupil's age, SEND, medical or personal care needs.

Staff must exercise professional judgement and consider the child's age, needs, wishes, SEND, vulnerabilities and the circumstances in deciding whether physical contact is appropriate.

5. Who may use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in the circumstances permitted by law.

This power applies to staff while pupils are:

- on the school premises;
- taking part in school activities elsewhere;
- on educational visits and residential visits; or
- otherwise under the lawful charge of school staff.

The school will identify staff who, because of their role or the needs of particular pupils, are more likely to encounter situations in which restrictive intervention may be required.

Where the use of restrictive interventions is reasonably foreseeable, the school will ensure appropriate planning, risk assessment and training are in place.

The fact that a member of staff has not undertaken specialist physical intervention training does not remove their legal power to use reasonable force in an unforeseen emergency where this is necessary and reasonable to prevent harm or meet one of the lawful purposes set out below.

6. When reasonable force may be used

Staff may use reasonable force to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves;
- causing injury to another person;

- committing a criminal offence;
- damaging property; or
- causing disorder among pupils at school, during a teaching session or otherwise.

Examples could include circumstances where it is necessary to:

- prevent a pupil from attacking another pupil or member of staff;
- prevent a pupil from deliberately harming themselves;
- separate pupils who are fighting where verbal intervention has been unsuccessful;
- prevent a pupil from causing significant damage to property where this presents a risk;
- prevent a pupil from running into a road or other area presenting an immediate danger;
- prevent serious disorder that creates a significant safety risk; or
- intervene during an emergency where immediate action is required to protect a pupil or another person.

These examples do not automatically justify the use of force. Every situation must be assessed according to its individual circumstances.

6. Deciding whether intervention is reasonable

Where circumstances allow, staff should consider three key questions.

Is it necessary?

Staff should consider:

- whether intervention is genuinely required;
- whether a less restrictive response could manage the situation safely;
- what alternatives have been attempted or could reasonably be attempted;
- whether intervention is likely to reduce the risk; and
- whether intervention could instead escalate the situation or cause greater harm.

Is it proportionate?

Any intervention must represent a proportionate response to the behaviour and level of risk. Staff should:

- use the least restrictive intervention reasonably available;
- use the minimum amount of force necessary;
- use it for the shortest possible time;
- continually reassess the situation;
- reduce the level of restriction as soon as possible; and
- stop the intervention when it is no longer necessary.

Has the pupil's welfare been considered?

Staff should consider, where known:

- the pupil's age and physical size;
- SEND;
- communication needs;

- medical conditions;
- sensory needs;
- emotional and mental health needs;
- previous trauma or adverse experiences;
- vulnerabilities;
- the pupil's understanding of the situation;
- relevant reasonable adjustments; and
- any known risks associated with physical intervention.
- Where possible, staff should calmly explain to the pupil what is happening, why intervention is necessary and what needs to happen for the intervention to stop.
- The pupil's dignity should be maintained throughout.

8. Prevention and de-escalation

Restrictive intervention should not be viewed as the school's primary strategy for managing behaviour.

Our approach prioritises prevention, early intervention and de-escalation.

Staff will seek to reduce the likelihood of incidents through:

- positive and trusting relationships with pupils – a relational approach;
- clear and predictable routines;
- consistent implementation of the school's Behaviour Policy;
- understanding individual pupils' needs and vulnerabilities;
- reasonable adjustments;
- appropriate classroom and environmental adaptations;
- recognising triggers and early signs of distress or dysregulation;
- giving pupils appropriate time and space to regulate;
- reducing demands or stimuli where appropriate;
- calm communication, including appropriate tone of voice and body language;
- distraction or redirection;
- offering appropriate choices;
- access to identified regulation strategies or spaces;
- seeking support from colleagues; and
- individual behaviour/support planning where appropriate.

Staff recognise that behaviour may communicate distress, anxiety, sensory overload, pain, fear, frustration or an unmet need.

9. Pupils with SEND and/or additional vulnerabilities

The school recognises that pupils with SEND can be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions.

Particular care will therefore be taken to understand the needs, communication styles, triggers and vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND.

Where a pupil is known to be at increased risk of requiring restrictive intervention, the school will consider whether an individual behaviour/support plan and risk assessment are required.

Where appropriate, these will be developed with:

- the pupil;
- parents/carers;
- class teachers and support staff;
- the SENDCo;
- senior leaders; and
- relevant external professionals.

Plans should identify, as appropriate:

- known triggers;
- early warning signs;
- communication needs;
- sensory needs;
- preventative strategies;
- successful regulation and de-escalation strategies;
- reasonable adjustments;
- strategies known to increase distress and which should therefore be avoided;
- circumstances in which increased physical contact or restrictive intervention may become necessary;
- known medical or physical risks; and
- post-incident support.

Risk assessments must be in place where there is an identified foreseeable risk that reasonable force or another restrictive intervention may be required.

Plans and risk assessments will be reviewed regularly and following any significant incident.

The existence of an individual plan does not mean that restrictive intervention should automatically be used. Staff must still assess the circumstances at the time and determine whether intervention is necessary and proportionate.

10. Seclusion

Seclusion will only be considered as a safety measure to protect others from harm where a pupil is experiencing a high level of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

Seclusion will not be used:

- as a punishment;
- as a disciplinary sanction;

- because a pupil is deliberately refusing to follow an instruction;
- as a threat to secure compliance; or
- for the convenience of staff.

Where seclusion is necessary:

- the environment must be safe and must not be threatening or intimidating;
- the pupil must be appropriately supervised throughout;
- staff should continue to monitor the pupil's welfare;
- the intervention should last for the shortest possible time; and
- the pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

A pupil choosing to spend time in a quiet or regulation space, where they are free to leave, is not seclusion.

11. Unacceptable uses of force

Force must never be used as a punishment.

Staff must not deliberately use methods of restraint which affect a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation.

This includes:

- covering a pupil's mouth or nose;
- applying pressure to the neck;
- applying pressure to the abdomen; or
- any other action which compromises breathing or circulation.

Physical restraint on the ground presents particular risks and should be avoided.

If a pupil unintentionally ends up being held on the ground, staff should release the hold or reposition the pupil into a safer position as quickly as possible.

All forms of restraint carry a risk of physical and psychological harm and must therefore be avoided wherever possible.

12. Searching pupils

The Headteacher and staff authorised by the Headteacher have statutory powers relating to searching pupils.

Reasonable force may be used where legally permitted when searching for certain prohibited items specified in legislation.

Reasonable force must not be used to search for items which are banned solely under school rules.

Staff must follow the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures and current DfE guidance.

13. Staff training

All staff will be made aware of:

- this policy;
- their legal power to use reasonable force;
- the limitations on that power;
- the importance of prevention and de-escalation;
- the school's procedures for seeking assistance;
- recording and reporting requirements; and
- post-incident procedures.

The Headteacher will determine, through risk assessment and the needs of the school, which staff require additional specialist training in restrictive physical intervention.

Staff who regularly work with pupils where restrictive intervention is reasonably foreseeable should receive appropriate training in:

- prevention;
- de-escalation;
- risk assessment;
- safe and lawful physical intervention; and
- post-incident support and reflection.

Training does not replace professional judgement. Staff must consider the circumstances of each individual incident.

14. Following an incident

Following any restrictive intervention, the immediate priority will be the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved.

The school will:

- ensure that the pupil and staff involved are safe;
- provide first aid and/or seek medical assessment where appropriate;

- record any injuries in accordance with school procedures;
- notify the Headteacher or appropriate senior leader as soon as possible;
- complete the required written record;
- inform parents/carers in accordance with the requirements below;
- provide appropriate support to the pupil and staff involved;
- consider the wellbeing of pupils who witnessed the incident;
- undertake appropriate reflection and debriefing; and
- review any relevant risk assessment, behaviour/support plan or reasonable adjustments.

Where possible, post-incident reflection should take place once those involved are sufficiently calm and regulated.

The purpose of debriefing is not to apportion blame, but to understand:

- what happened;
- what led to the incident;
- what the pupil may have been communicating;
- which preventative or de-escalation strategies were attempted;
- what worked and what did not;
- whether the intervention remained necessary and proportionate;
- how the pupil and staff member experienced the incident;
- whether additional support is required; and
- what could reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
- Where appropriate, restorative work should support the repair and rebuilding of relationships.

15. Recording significant incidents involving the use of force

The school will maintain a procedure for recording every significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil.

The member(s) of staff involved must make a written record as soon as practicable following the incident and should endeavour to do so on the same day.

The record should include, as a minimum:

- the name of the pupil;
- the names of staff directly involved;
- relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil;
- whether the pupil has an identified SEND and their SEN status where applicable;
- date, time and location;
- approximate duration of the intervention;
- an objective account of events leading to the intervention;
- known or potential triggers;

- preventative and de-escalation strategies attempted;
- the type of reasonable force used;
- the degree of force used;
- why force was considered necessary;
- any injuries sustained;
- any medical assessment or treatment provided;
- post-incident support provided; and
- relevant follow-up action.

Records should be factual, objective and avoid emotive or judgemental language.

The school may additionally record the pupil's account, witness accounts, details of parental communication and outcomes of subsequent reviews.

16. Recording seclusion and non-force restraint

Every incident involving seclusion or restraint must be recorded in accordance with the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

This includes restraint which does not involve direct physical contact.

The record (see Appendix A below) must be completed as soon as practicable following the incident and staff should endeavour to complete it on the same day.

The record should include, as a minimum:

- names of the pupil and staff directly involved;
- date, time and location;
- approximate duration;
- relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil;
- SEND status where applicable;
- why the intervention was considered necessary;
- details of any injuries; and
- post-incident support or medical treatment provided.

Where an incident is both restraint and a significant use of force, it does not need to be reported twice. The school will follow the relevant significant use of force reporting procedure.

17. Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers must be informed of significant incidents involving the use of force, seclusion or restraint as soon as practicable after the incident. The school will endeavour to do this on the same day.

For significant incidents involving force, information provided to parents should include, as a minimum:

- the date, time and location;
- approximate duration of the intervention;
- why the intervention was considered necessary;
- the type and degree of force used; and
- details of any physical injuries sustained.

The school will communicate the required information in person, as well as in writing, wherever possible. Where this is not possible, communication will take place in writing, for example through email or the school's agreed electronic communication system.

Where appropriate, parents will also be invited to discuss:

- known or emerging triggers;
- warning signs;
- whether agreed support plans were followed;
- de-escalation strategies used;
- the effectiveness of those strategies; and
- what could be changed to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

The requirement to record and report an incident applies even where parents have previously agreed that restrictive intervention may be necessary as part of an individual behaviour/support plan.

The statutory exceptions to parental reporting will be followed where informing a parent is considered likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In such circumstances, the Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that the appropriate alternative reporting requirements are followed.

18. Safeguarding

Restrictive intervention is a safeguarding matter because it concerns the physical and emotional welfare of children.

Where an incident raises a safeguarding concern, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

Any allegation that a member of staff has used inappropriate, excessive or unlawful force will be considered in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, including the procedures relating to allegations and concerns about adults working with children.

The use of force by a member of staff does not automatically constitute a safeguarding allegation. Each incident will be considered according to its circumstances.

Where a child makes a disclosure or expresses a concern about an intervention, this will be listened to, taken seriously and recorded appropriately.

19. Complaints

Any complaint about the use of reasonable force or another restrictive intervention will be considered through the school's Complaints Policy.

Where a complaint also raises safeguarding concerns or an allegation against a member of staff, the appropriate safeguarding procedures will take precedence.

Staff will be supported appropriately where they have acted lawfully, reasonably and in accordance with school policy.

20. Monitoring and oversight

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently and that the school's recording and reporting procedures are followed.

Senior leaders will monitor incidents to identify:

- frequency and type of restrictive intervention;
 - repeat incidents involving individual pupils;
 - common triggers;
 - locations and times where incidents occur;
 - effectiveness of preventative and de-escalation strategies;
 - injuries or adverse outcomes;
 - staff training needs;
 - whether individual plans require amendment; and
 - any disproportionate use involving pupils with SEND, other vulnerabilities or protected characteristics.
- Patterns or concerns will result in appropriate action, which may include:
- reviewing individual provision;
 - revising risk assessments or support plans;
 - seeking specialist advice;
 - making further reasonable adjustments;
 - reviewing staffing or environmental arrangements;
 - providing additional staff training; or
 - reviewing whole-school policy and practice.

The Governing Body will receive appropriate anonymised information about the use of restrictive interventions and will provide challenge and oversight regarding trends, proportionality, safeguarding and compliance with recording and reporting requirements.

21. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate procedures are in place;
- ensuring statutory recording and reporting requirements are met;
- monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy;
- reviewing relevant anonymised data;
- challenging disproportionate or repeated use; and
- ensuring the school takes reasonable steps to comply with its legal responsibilities.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementing this policy;
- promoting a culture which seeks to minimise restrictive intervention;
- ensuring appropriate staff training;
- ensuring foreseeable risks are assessed;
- ensuring incidents are appropriately recorded and reported;
- ensuring pupils and staff receive appropriate post-incident support;
- monitoring patterns and trends;
- ensuring learning from incidents informs future practice; and
- ensuring appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed where concerns arise.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- knowing and following this policy;
- using prevention and de-escalation wherever reasonably possible;
- considering pupils' individual needs and vulnerabilities;
- using restrictive intervention only where necessary and proportionate;
- using the least restrictive intervention for the shortest possible period;
- safeguarding the pupil's dignity and welfare;
- seeking assistance where possible;
- reporting incidents promptly;
- completing required records accurately and objectively; and
- engaging constructively in post-incident reflection and review.

22. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where:

- national legislation or DfE guidance changes;
- monitoring identifies concerns or trends;
- an incident indicates that procedures require review; or
- changes to school circumstances make an earlier review appropriate.

Appendix A



Restrictive Intervention or use of Reasonable Force Recording Form

This form complies with the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025 and the DfE Statutory Guidance "Restrictive Interventions, including the use of Reasonable Force, in Schools" (April 2026).

1. Incident and Child Details

Name of child	
Year group and class	
Date, time and location of incident	
Name(s) of staff involved and role(s)	
Witness or directly involved?	
Details of other children involved	

2. Type of Restrictive Intervention (tick all that apply)

Seclusion	☐
Physical restraint	☐
Non-force restraint (blocking, directing movement, preventing exit)	☐
Removal of mobility aids	☐
Guided physical intervention	☐
Significant use of force	☐

3. Incident Details

Incident description (factual, objective)	
De-escalation strategies attempted	
Rationale for restrictive intervention	

Nature and duration of intervention	
Impact on child (distress, emotional/physical response)	
Any injury to staff or children and first aid provided	

4. Child Voice

Record how the child felt, their views on what happened, and any follow up discussion.

5. Post-Incident Support and Review

Support provided to child	
Support provided to staff	
Adjustments required to the child's behaviour plan or risk assessment	
Was another adult present? (Yes/No and details)	
Information shared with other staff/agencies	

6. Parent/Carer Notification

How and when were those with parental responsibility informed?	
Outcome of discussion with parents/carers	
Any complaint logged as a result of this incident	

7. Completion and Review Sign-Off

Staff member completing form – Name & Signature	
Date of completion	
Senior Leader Reviewer – Name & Signature	
Review Date	
Actions required following review	

