



# Use of Restrictive Intervention Policy

## 1. Purpose

Howley Grange Primary School is committed to creating a calm, safe and supportive environment in which pupils can learn, play and develop positively. On rare occasions, staff may need to use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force or seclusion, to ensure safety. This policy sets out our approach to preventing, minimising, and—when necessary—using and recording restrictive interventions lawfully, safely, and transparently.

We emphasise early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies to reduce the likelihood that restrictive interventions are needed, and we recognise the potential impact such measures can have on pupils, staff and families.

## 2. Legal and policy framework

Our approach is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s. 93 and s. 93A, power to use reasonable force; recording and reporting duties per statutory guidance).
- DfE guidance: “Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools” (effective 1 April 2026), replacing “Use of reasonable force in schools” (2013).
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025

## 3. Main Principles

### 1. Prevent and de-escalate first

Staff use proactive classroom management, relationships-based approaches, restorative conversations, and de-escalation techniques (e.g., distraction, offering choices, time-limited break from stimulus) to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.

### 2. Lawful, necessary, and proportionate

Any use of force or other restrictive intervention must be necessary to prevent injury, crime, damage to property or serious disorder, and be proportionate to the risk, for the least time possible.

### 3. No punishment

The use of force or seclusion must **never** be punitive and cannot be used to inflict pain, humiliation or threaten punishment.

### 4. Preserve dignity and welfare

Staff must consider the pupil’s welfare, dignity, and emotional state at every stage, including after the incident. Techniques that risk airway, breathing or circulation are unacceptable.

### 5. SEND-aware practice

For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), we consider individual triggers (sensory overload, communication differences), reasonable adjustments, and personalised plans to avoid escalation.

#### 4. Who may use reasonable force?

Reasonable force is using **no more force than necessary, for the least amount of time**, proportionate to the risk, and solely to prevent injury, criminal behaviour, property damage or serious disorder.

All members of staff at Howley Grange Primary School have the legal power to use reasonable force in the defined circumstances. Staff who are more likely to need to use reasonable force must receive adequate training in safe and lawful use.

#### 5. Appropriate vs. unacceptable physical contact

**Appropriate**, non-restrictive contact includes guiding pupils by the elbow, offering a supportive hand, administering first aid, demonstrating physical education techniques, comforting distressed pupils, and greeting. These do not constitute “significant incidents” unless escalated into force.

**Unacceptable** uses include techniques that compromise breathing, airway or circulation; pain-inducing methods; and any force used as punishment or threat.

#### 6. Seclusion (exceptional safety measure)

Seclusion (keeping a pupil **confined to a place away from others** and **preventing them from leaving**) may be considered only when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and poses an immediate risk of harm to self or others, and when alternative measures are not practicable. It must not be used as a disciplinary tool or via threat of punishment. Any area used must feel safe, not be intimidating, and must be permanently supervised with the ability to exit when the risk has passed.

We will:

- Use seclusion solely as a short-term safety measure.
- Keep the area free of hazards, ensure visibility and monitoring.
- Record and report every seclusion incident to parents (no later than the same day unless an exception applies) in line with the 2025 regulations and DfE guidance.
- Review each case to reduce future need.

#### 7. Planning and prevention - Individual risk assessments and support plans

For pupils with repeated periods of high levels of dysregulation and/or known triggers, we will work with families, the pupil (where appropriate), and relevant professionals to create a risk assessment which will also support and inform the child’s Behaviour Support Plan. Plans highlight proactive strategies, early warning signs, de-escalation techniques and reasonable adjustments.

#### 8. Recording and reporting the use of force

Transparency and working in partnership with our families are central to our ethos at Howley Grange.

The staff member/s involved will record on CPOMS (as soon as practicable, no later than the same day) each incident involving the use of force and alert all members of SLT.

The record must include the following information:

- name 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

Unless the exemption below applies, a written report of the incident will also be made to parents and will 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

If it appears to SLT that informing parents would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil a written report may not be shared. In this instance, school 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.

## **9. Recording and reporting the use of seclusion or non-force related restraint**

The staff member/s involved will record on CPOMS (as soon as practicable, no later than the same day) each incident involving the use of seclusion or non-force related restraint, even if the use of seclusion or restraint in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The record must include the following information:

- name of pupil and staff directly involved
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- 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
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Unless the exemption below applies, parents must also be informed, in writing, as soon as practicable after the incident, we will endeavour to do so, no later than the same day.

If it appears to SLT that informing parents would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, school 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.

## **10. Data, evaluation and improvement**

We will maintain a secure log of all restrictive interventions and senior leaders will analyse trends (who, where, when, triggers, staff involved etc) to inform training, environmental adjustments and practice improvements. Following an incident, we will hold follow-up conversations with both staff and pupils.

## **11. Working with pupils with SEND**

We will:

- Use reasonable adjustments to reduce distress, e.g., sensory supports, alternative instructions, visual timetables, quiet break spaces.
- Consider how communication differences may be misinterpreted as defiance; interpret behaviour through a needs-based lens and adjust approaches accordingly.
- Ensure that any restrictive interventions are individualised, documented in the pupil's plan, and reviewed with parents and relevant specialists.

## **12. Training and competence**

- Mandatory induction: All staff receive training on prevention, de-escalation, lawful use of reasonable force, seclusion procedures, and recording/reporting.
- Advanced training: Staff most likely to need to use reasonable force must be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use; leaders decide the appropriate training provision.

## **13. Medical checks, first aid and well being**

Any injuries or concerns must be documented in the incident record and treated per First Aid policy; If an injury is to a child, parents will be informed. We will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources.

## **14. Equality, human rights and safeguarding**

We will ensure all decisions uphold the Equality Act 2010, human rights principles, and our safeguarding duties; misuse of restrictive interventions can have serious safeguarding implications and must be guarded against through training, supervision and leadership oversight.

## **15. Linked policies and documents**

To ensure coherence, this policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety and First Aid policies
- SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan

## **16. Policy review and updates**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Body, or sooner if the DFE updates guidance or legislation. The review will consider incident data, staff/parent feedback, and external developments.

Date: April 2026

Date of next review: April 2027

K Trueman-Brown

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Staff quick-reference (do's and don'ts)

#### Do:

- Prevent, emotion coach, de-escalate, and use least-restrictive options for the shortest time.
- Consider age/size/need.
- Preserve dignity; stop when risk reduces.
- Record and report significant incidents promptly.

#### Don't:

- Use force or seclusion as punishment or threat.
- Use techniques that jeopardise airway/breathing/circulation.

### Appendix B: Key definitions

- **Restrictive intervention:** Any action intended to prevent, restrict or subdue a pupil's movement—this includes **reasonable force**, certain forms of **restraint**, and **seclusion**. It covers both physical and **non-physical** measures that limit movement or keep a pupil in a space from which they cannot freely exit.
- **Reasonable force:** Using **no more force than necessary, for the least amount of time**, proportionate to the risk, and solely to prevent injury, criminal behaviour, property damage or serious disorder. It **must never be used as a punishment**.
- **Restraint:** A **restrictive intervention** that **immobilises** or **limits movement** (may include direct physical contact or non-force methods such as removing walking aids, where applicable). Restraint is **not a disciplinary measure**; it is used only where necessary for safety.
- **Seclusion:** Keeping a pupil **confined to a place away from others** and **preventing them from leaving** (e.g., by physical obstruction or creating a belief they will be punished if they try to leave). In schools, seclusion is a **safety measure only**, never a disciplinary response or a threat; it must be carefully controlled, supervised and recorded.
- **Significant incident:** Any incident involving the use of force that goes beyond **appropriate physical contact** (e.g., guiding, first aid, comforting). **Significant incidents** must be recorded and reported to parents as set out in statutory guidance.

### Appendix C: Decision-making during an incident (staff flow)

1. Assess the risk quickly: Is there immediate risk of injury, criminal behaviour, property damage or serious disorder? If yes, consider reasonable force; if no, continue de-escalation.
2. Choose the least restrictive option that is likely to work for the shortest time (verbal prompt, move stimulus, guide pupil away, block access, then—if necessary—restrictive intervention).
3. Consider age, size and needs of the pupil; avoid techniques that risk airway/breathing/circulation; stop as soon as the risk is reduced.
4. Call for help per our on-call system.
5. Aftercare: Offer immediate emotional support, first aid and a calm space. Plan for reintegration to class as soon as appropriate.

### Appendix D: Practical procedures

#### Immediate incident procedure (staff checklist)

1. Assess risk: Decide if injury, crime, damage or serious disorder is imminent. If yes, proceed; if no, continue de-escalation.
2. Alert colleagues via designated signal/radio; request senior support.
3. Use least restrictive intervention for the shortest time; avoid any technique risking airway/breathing/circulation.
4. End intervention once the risk is reduced.
5. Check wellbeing: First aid, emotional support.
6. Discuss the incident with a member of SLT and record the incident promptly on CPOMS, (alerting all members of SLT).

7. Report to parents as soon as practicable
8. Debrief with senior staff and adjust plans.

#### Seclusion procedure

- Use only as short-term safety measure; ensure constant supervision.
- Keep the environment safe, not intimidating; provide reassurance and a clear path to de-escalation and exit.
- Record and report every seclusion incident to parents.

#### Post-incident Pupil support

- Immediate check for injuries or distress; first aid if needed.
- Restorative conversation tailored to age and understanding, emphasis on learning and future strategies.
- Plan adjustment: Update the pupil's support plan with new triggers or successful de-escalation strategies.

#### Post-incident Staff support

- Debrief promptly; provide supervision and emotional support.
- Reflection and coaching with senior staff; identify training or environmental changes needed.