



Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy (Including Reasonable Force)

Reviewed on	2025/26, Term 4	Review frequency	Annual
Next review due	2027/28, Term 4	Template Yes / No	Yes
Owner	Strategic Lead, Behaviour & SEND	Approved by	Executive



1. History of Policy Changes

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
April 26		Creation of policy	

2. Contents

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3. Aims and Scope

Gatcombe Park Primary School is committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and visitors. This policy sets out our whole-school approach to preventing and, where necessary, using restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, in order to keep individuals and the wider community safe. Restrictive interventions are always a last resort, time-limited, lawful, proportionate and subject to robust recording, reporting and oversight.

Gatcombe Park Primary School does not adopt a 'no contact' policy between staff and pupils. However, staff will work with pupils, parents and careers to ensure preventative strategies and plans are created and shared to reduce the need or risk of restrictive interventions.

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear definitions and shared understanding of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion.
- Promote a proactive, preventative approach that reduces the likelihood of restrictive interventions through effective de-escalation and planning.
- Ensure all staff understand their roles and responsibilities and feel confident to act safely, appropriately and lawfully when intervention is necessary.
- Establish clear, consistent procedures for the safe use of restrictive interventions, in line with legislation and best practice.
- Ensure all incidents are appropriately recorded, reported and reviewed to support accountability, learning and improvement.
- Safeguard the dignity, wellbeing and rights of all pupils and staff.
- Clarify expectations around appropriate physical contact to support safe and positive interactions.

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, visitors and contractors on site.

4. Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools](#).

It also meets the requirements of:

- [Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, inserted by the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#)
- [Section 550ZA](#) and [section 550ZB](#) of the Education Act 1996
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) and associated regulations
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [The Schools \(Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint\) \(No. 2\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#)
- Department for Education guidance on [searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- Paragraph 16A of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (inserted by [The Schools \(Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint\) \(No. 2\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#))

5. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions have been taken from the DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools, guidance April 26:

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This policy 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

Supervised withdrawal: where a pupil chooses or is directed to work in a different space and is *not prevented from leaving*, this is not seclusion. This is part of behaviour management and support



The following definitions have been agreed by The Hamwic Education Trust:

Physical intervention: the act of restricting the physical movements of a pupil following the principles of a restrictive intervention and including the use of reasonable force.

6. Principles of Restrictive Interventions

Gatcombe Park Primary School is dedicated to ensuring that any use of restrictive intervention is the last resort, therefore we will always follow the following principles:

- Prevention first: staff use de-escalation and supportive strategies as the primary response to distress and risk.
- Lawful, necessary, proportionate and time limited.
- Respect for dignity, safety and welfare; minimal intrusion and trauma-aware practice.
- No punitive or convenience use; never to enforce compliance or as a sanction.
- Use is continuously risk-assessed; interventions cease as soon as risk reduces.
- Every significant incident is recorded and reported to parents/carers as soon as practicable.
- Practice is monitored, analysed and reviewed to reduce use over time, with particular attention to disproportionality (e.g., SEND, protected characteristics).
- Medical checks: where possible, the school will conduct a medical check on pupils who have been involved in the use of restrictive intervention.

7. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force as a last resort, in limited circumstances 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.

Any decision to use a restrictive intervention must consider necessity, proportionality and the pupil's welfare.

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions will be adequately trained in their safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

SecuriCare is the training provider used by Hamwic Education Trust is and courses are delivered by accredited trainers. The Headteacher will maintain a list of authorised and trained staff who may use restrictive interventions. All other staff may use reasonable force only in emergency situations.

Training

Our school will make sure that all staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in their safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. Identified staff undertake accredited physical intervention training (e.g., SecuriCare) with annual refreshers and competency checks. Leaders ensure training content and practice reflect the principles in the DfE guidance and health and safety duties. Training needs are reviewed using incident data and staff feedback.



We also have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff. Therefore, we carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

About Securicare

SecuriCare is a specialist training company supporting organisations in preventing and managing school related violence, challenging, disruptive, and other hazardous behaviours.

SecuriCare is certified by BILD-ACT (RRN Standards) to provide Preventing and Managing Challenging and Hazardous Behaviour courses, is accredited by the Institute of Conflict Management (ICM) and are ISO 9001:2015 (UKAS) certified.

More information about Securicare can be found on their website: <https://www.securicare.com/>

8. Unacceptable Use of Force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. We never use force as a sanction, threat or deterrent.

Our staff understand that any form of force or restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, so we always avoid using these measures where possible.

This policy sets out the prohibited practices for staff when involved in a restrictive intervention:

- Using force as punishment or to enforce compliance.
- Restraints that affect breathing or circulation (e.g., covering mouth/nose; pressure on neck region or abdomen).
- Intentionally taking and holding a pupil to the ground in a prone position; if a pupil is unintentionally taken to the ground and results in a prone position, staff must release/ as quickly and as safely as possible.

Any concerns over the use of prohibited practices will be dealt with in line with the complaints, concerns and allegations procedures outlined in this document and within the school's complaint procedure.

9. Other Physical Contact with Pupils

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

1. to give first aid
2. to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to regulate
3. to comfort a distressed pupil
4. to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
5. to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
6. to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching



In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in each situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:

- the school's child protection (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:

- the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities
- any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used
- Staff use professional judgement, taking account of context, policy, pupil age/needs and availability of alternative strategies.

10. Using Reasonable Force to Search Pupils

The headteacher and any member of staff authorised by the headteacher have a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item (as listed in the DfE's [searching, screening and confiscation guidance](#)) or an item banned under our school rules.

They can use reasonable force to search for prohibited items (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance), such as knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs. They cannot use reasonable force to search for items that are banned under our school rules only, such as mobile phones [add/delete examples of items banned under your school rules].

The decision to use reasonable force to carry out a search should be made carefully, on a case-by-case basis and taking into consideration the level of risk to pupils and staff.

11. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is highly dysregulated and not acting with intent. It must never be used as a disciplinary response or implemented through threat of punishment. The space must be safe, supervised at all times and the pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk reduces. All use of seclusion must be recorded and reported.

The school also has designated regulation areas and are outlined in behaviour response plans and pupils will be directed or encouraged to self-direct themselves to these areas to conduct safe coregulation or self-regulation strategies.

12. Physical Intervention

Physical interventions may include escorting or restraining a pupil in a temporary stabilising position using reasonable force. Identified and SecuriCare trained members of staff will be called to support pupils in periods of dysregulation and unsafe behaviour. The use of a physical intervention follows the principles of reasonable force and is always used as the last resort. A physical intervention will not be used as a disciplinary action nor to force compliance; however, it will be used to ensure the safety of pupils in the circumstances listed above.

13. Prevention, Planning and Risk Assessment

Staff at Gatcombe Park Primary School will always seek to provide proactive support and strategies to avoid the use of a restrictive intervention. These measures include:

- Whole school measures: environment, routines, relational practice, staff training in de-escalation strategies.
- Individual measures: Behaviour Response Plans (BRPs), Pupil specific Risk Assessments, reasonable adjustments, personalised regulation strategies, family and multi-agency involvement.
- Use recognised tools (e.g., Zones of Regulation, sensory profiles) where appropriate.

If a restrictive intervention is used staff will follow the following principles to ensure the intervention is in the best interest to maintain the safety, proportionate, necessary and in line with reasonable force principles.

During a Restrictive Intervention staff will:

- Use the least restrictive option for the shortest time.
- Continuously reassess risk and the impact on the pupil.
- Where possible, communicate calmly what is happening and what the pupil can do.
- Request assistance to ensure there are always where possible two members of staff present to safeguard pupils and staff.

Post-incident, staff will:

- Check health and safety: offer/arrange first aid or medical assessment for pupils and staff as appropriate.
- Provide timely, trauma-informed debrief for the pupil, capturing their voice and updating plans.
- Provide reflective supervision/learning for staff involved and witnesses.
- Update BRPs/Risk Assessments and share with parents/carers and relevant professionals.
- Ensure the incident is reported and recorded and inform a member of the SLT team.

14. Statutory Recording and Reporting Duties

We have a legal duty to record and report all:

- Significant incidents involving force (see section 3 of this policy for a definition of 'significant incident')
- Seclusion incidents
- Restraint incidents

Recording incidents

Our school has a clear process in place for recording the incidents listed above. All staff will record uses of any restrictive intervention using the online Hamwic notification system.

Staff must record incidents, as soon as possible after the event, and should endeavour to do this on the same day. Staff should do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.



For significant incidents involving force, seclusion or physical intervention we will record:

- 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

Completed reports will be kept securely and retained in line with our data protection procedures.

Reporting incidents to parents/carers

We will inform parents/carers about an incident as soon as we can after it happens and will endeavour to do this on the same day. We will do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

There is only one exception to this:

- If a member of staff thinks that telling the pupil's parents/carers would likely result in significant harm to that pupil. In these cases, we will report the incident to any parent(s)/carer(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily resides

When we report **significant incidents involving force, seclusion or physical intervention** to parents/carers, we will include the following details:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

When reporting to parents/carers, we will have regard to data protection requirements when deciding what information to share. For example, we will not include any identifying details of any other pupil.

Following up with parents/carers after an incident

Parents/carers will be invited to have a follow-up discussion about the incident and review the current BRP in place and amend where appropriate. Reviewing and amending the BRP will consist of:

- 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

15. Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Committee:

- Approve and annually review this policy and ensure compliance with statutory duties.
- Assure systems to record, report and analyse incidents, including for seclusion.
- Monitor patterns, trends and disproportionality; commission improvements accordingly.
- Ensure the policy is published on the school website.
- Receive summary information on restrictive interventions as part of safeguarding oversight
- Seek assurance that systems are robust and consistently applied
- Monitor patterns and themes (not individual incidents)
- Escalate concerns to the Trust where necessary



Headteacher and Senior Leaders:

- Ensure the policy is implemented consistently
- Ensure all significant incidents are recorded and reported in line with statutory requirements
- Analyse patterns, trends and any disproportionality within the school
- Ensure appropriate follow-up, staff support and review of risk assessments

All Staff:

- Follow this policy; prioritise prevention and de-escalation.
- Use restrictive interventions only, when necessary, proportionate and time-limited.
- Record and report in line with this policy.

16. Complaints, Concerns and Allegations

Any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled through our school's complaints policy, which you can find on our school website.

We take any allegation of inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff very seriously. We will deal with allegations in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

17. Data Protection and Retention

Incident records will be stored and retained in accordance with UK GDPR, the school's Data Protection Policy and the HET Records Retention Schedule.

Parents/carers have rights of access to personal data as set out in the school's privacy notices. Data Protection Policy.

18. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, this policy will be approved by the full governing board.

19. Link to other HET policies (in alphabetical order)

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and safety policy
- SEND policy

20. Conclusion

Gatcombe Park Primary School is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students. The use of restrictive interventions will always be a last resort, used only when necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

