



**Restrictive interventions,
including the use of reasonable force policy**

Policy owner or lead	Assistant Headteacher
Version	2.1
Statutory	Statutory
Associated documents	Positive Behaviour policy Safeguarding Policy Staff code of conduct
Approved by	Chair of Governors
Implementation date	8 th June 2026
Review by	1 st June 2027
Review cycle	Annual

POLICY OVERVIEW

At Haymerle School, the safety, dignity and welfare of every pupil and member of staff is paramount. In rare and exceptional cases, staff may need to use reasonable force or restrictive interventions to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

As a School, we apply strategies related to research on trauma informed and person centred practices and consider the well-being of the individual at all times. We seek to understand the underlying triggers of the behaviours of concern so that we can provide proactive support and create an inclusive environment. This policy outlines our approach to using reasonable force in accordance with:

- the DfE's guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (2026)
- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Equality Act 2010
- relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance

Our approach is always to proactively minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions by seeing behaviour as a form of communication and implementing early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies. Any restrictive intervention is a last resort and must be necessary, proportionate, and in the best interest of the child.

Aims of the Policy

- To help schools proactively minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions through the use of appropriate early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- To ensure that all staff understand when and how it may be appropriate to use reasonable force and restrictive interventions and how to use this safely and appropriately.
- To promote a school culture where relationships, regulation, and positive behaviour are at the heart of practice.
- To ensure any restrictive intervention is lawful, proportionate, non-discriminatory, and used only to prevent harm.

- To provide transparency and accountability through clear documentation, reporting, and monitoring in line with statutory requirements
- To safeguard children’s rights and uphold their dignity at all times.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all school staff and those who have ‘lawful control’ of pupils e.g. agency staff, volunteers on a school visit etc.

It applies in school, during off-site school activities, and when supervising pupils on school-organised transport or residential.

This policy links to our wider safeguarding duties and supports our Behaviour, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), and Staff Code of Conduct policies.

Definitions

Restrictive interventions: Any planned or reactive action which prevents, restricts, or subdues movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This includes both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways, including mechanical, chemical, environmental or psychological actions.

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

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.

Prevention and De-escalation

At Haymerle School we are committed to creating inclusive, supportive environments and we identify the importance of prevention and de-escalation as a means of minimising the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions.

Whole school measures may include:

- consideration of the school and classroom environment,
- emotionally safe learning environments, prioritising the development of trust based relationships between staff and pupils
- effective whole class behaviour management,
- staff training around communication and relational approaches and responses to support de-escalation
- analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

We recognise that some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions.

Staff will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND.

Tailored approaches for individuals may be appropriate and these will include working in close partnership with parents/carers and other professionals to co-produce tailored support based on individual identified needs, and supporting pupils with proactive and responsive strategies to manage their emotions in a way that promotes dignity, agency and self-regulation.

Trauma informed responses to incidents where pupils are dysregulated include emotional and physical safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

When May Reasonable Force Be Used?

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

To prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Individual circumstances of each situation are assessed as to whether the use of

reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are likely to successfully reduce the relevant risk / would escalate the situation / would cause more harm than the consequences of the behaviour it intends to address.

Is it necessary? Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation and whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself. Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate? Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention to reduce the relevant risks. Personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, SEN or other vulnerabilities and characteristics such as age and size and relevant equality implications under the Equality Act of 2010.

Pupil welfare: Considerations of the impact on pupil welfare balanced against actions taken should be considered e.g. considering where and when intervention is used, sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties.

Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity, considering where possible, the location and environment where any intervention is used. Where possible, 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 speech, language and 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.

Unacceptable uses of force

Use of force must NEVER be used:

- as punishment
- in a way that restricts breathing, communication, or circulation
- as a replacement for therapeutic or relational support

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Head teachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only. Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

Seclusion

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. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour and is different to time out or isolation. See the school's behaviour policy for further information on disciplinary responses.

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 in this policy.

Staff Training

Staff who are likely to use reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions are trained in both its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. Only trained staff may use planned restrictive physical interventions, except in emergencies.

Training supports staff in assessing when the need to use force and/or other restrictive interventions is reasonable. Haymerle School uses the Team Teach approach.

Training includes distraction and de-escalation, relational practice, trauma-informed approaches and legal duties. Training must meet the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN) Training Standards (Version 1.3 July 2021).

Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Therefore, schools should 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.

Recording the use of force, seclusion and non-force related restraint by members of staff

A 'significant incident' refers to any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond the appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff, including when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. Under Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all significant incidents involving force must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event.

Under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025 each seclusion or restraint incident must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. This includes incidents that occur without direct physical contact, for example, the removal of a walking aid

This should be done in writing by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. The incident should still be recorded even if the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions are agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

A report must include:

- 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 length of time the intervention was used
- 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,
- type of reasonable force that was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- staff/pupil and/or witness accounts
- brief account of why the use of force or the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- when and how parents have been notified
- what follow up has taken place (debrief with pupil and/or/staff, facilitated conversations to repair and rebuild relationships, additional support)

Reporting the use of force the use of force, seclusion and non-force related restraint to parent/carers

Parents/carers must be informed as soon as practicable after an incident involving the use of force or restrictive intervention (schools should endeavour to do this no later than the same day) unless there is a safeguarding concern that would likely result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in serious harm or, if there are none, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will contact the Local Authority's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for the area in which the pupil ordinarily resides.

The report to parents must be sent in writing via email or online messaging system. This may be followed up with a discussion about the incident where appropriate.

Communication with the parent/carer should include:

- time, date, location and approximate length of time the force was used / seclusion took place
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable and where reasonable force was used:
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- what type of reasonable force was applied, and the degree of force

Even where the use of reasonable force, seclusion or non-force related restraint is agreed with parents/carers as part of a pupil's positive behaviour support plan, parents/carers must still be informed after every incident, unless there is a safeguarding concern that would likely result in serious harm to the pupil.

Safeguarding, support and emotional recovery

At Haymerle School, any use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions are considered a safeguarding event.

All incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention will be evaluated as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan.

If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible

All pupils and staff involved must be offered emotional support and reflection opportunities, as well as any pupil who witnessed an incident where a peer may have been injured or become distressed.

A follow-up conversation(s) should be held to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation should be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue. This process should ideally be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident. For pupils who are non-verbal, communication should be supported using their preferred method of communication with careful consideration given to which adult(s) can best support this.

Other physical contact with pupils

In all situations, staff will assess whether physical contact is appropriate depending on

the applicable circumstances, the individual pupil's age, and any other material factors, including but not limited to, whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities, or whether any alternative strategies which do not include physical contact can be used.

Our school does **not** have a 'no contact' policy, as there may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils. Examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils with their consent e.g. holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to the playground, 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 self-regulate
- assisting with intimate care
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, e.g. a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

We will not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene, where reasonable given the circumstances, to fully protect pupils.

Individual Support Plans and Risk Assessments

Some pupils may require an individual positive behaviour support plan (see diagram 1 below). These are co-produced with pupils (where appropriate), parents and other relevant people from health professional and pastoral teams, and are part of the wider support for the pupil's behaviour and emotional needs.

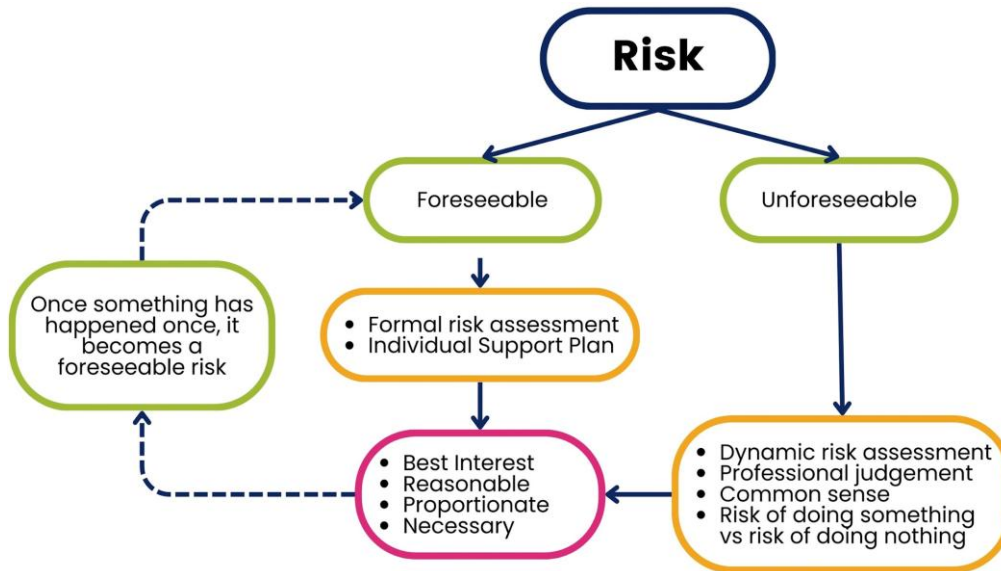
Behaviour support plans include:

- Pupil voice
- Triggers and de-escalation strategies
- Any adjustments for example aspects of the school environment the pupil finds challenging, ways to communicate their needs effectively.
- Detail of any circumstances where it may be appropriate to have increased physical contact with a pupil.

Positive behaviour support plans will be regularly reviewed with the pupil (where appropriate) and parent. They will always be reviewed following any significant incident and relevant changes made based on the evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice.

For any pupils where there is an identified risk of an increased need to use reasonable

force and/or other restrictive interventions the school will have a risk assessment in place and will, where possible, mitigate risks through training and prevention.



Monitoring and Accountability

The Governing body ensures procedures are in place to record and report each significant incident in line with the DfE guidance (2026), Section 93a of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025 and any other relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Local Governing Bodies review data on restrictive interventions including reasonable force and seclusion as part of the Local Governing Body cycle to ensure leaders:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- monitoring the use of force and restrictive interventions in their school
- reviewing the use of force and restrictive practices and procedures regularly
- reporting data regarding the use of force and restrictive interventions to the school's Local Governing Body
- report any concerns regarding the use of force and restrictive interventions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any concerns about misuse of force will be investigated under the School's safeguarding or disciplinary procedures as appropriate.

Complaints and Allegations

Concerns from parents or staff should be raised with the Headteacher in the first instance and follow the School's normal complaints procedure.

If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education should be followed. This includes the provisions regarding suspension of staff.

Allegations of misuse of force and restrictive interventions will be investigated under the Safeguarding Policy and Managing Allegations procedures.

Linked Policies and Guidance

- DfE (2024) Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions
- Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Restraint Reduction Network (RRN) Training Standards. (Version 1.3 July 2021)
- SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Contacts for Further Advice

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Serena Calvani

Headteacher: Nathan Taylor

Chair of Governors: Linda Coplestone

Review and Consultation

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with staff, pupils (where appropriate) and parents/carers. This policy and relevant training be updated following any changes in guidance or legislation.

APPENDICES

Resources

[Restrictive interventions audit](#)

Further information

[Behaviour in schools](#)

[Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive interventions](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Searching, screening and confiscation guidance](#)

[Suspension and permanent exclusions](#)

[Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mobile phones in schools](#)