



Positive/Safer Handling with pupils Policy

Date of last review:	September 2025
Date of next review:	September 2026
Type of policy:	Statutory/WGS
Frequency of review:	1 year
Governor committee:	Curriculum Committee

1. Rationale for Procedure

- All school staff members have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline.
- Members of staff should not put themselves at risk. An individual would not be seen to be failing in their duty of care by not using force to prevent injury if doing so threatens their own safety. This applies to all staff.
- Before using force, staff should use a range of strategies to prevent an issue endeavouring to engage the pupil in a calm and measured tone, making clear that their behaviour is unacceptable and setting out how the pupil could choose to change their behaviour.
- Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil, and should make it clear that they only intend to use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure that the situation is addressed as safely as possible.
- The use of restraint must always be proportionate to the level of risk and should always be reduced at the earliest possible time.
- Staff should complete the Use of Restraint form (Found in Google Drive - Behaviour/Restraint) (*appendix 1*) if they come into contact with a student, this could include:
 - Stopping an altercation between students.
 - A student putting themselves in harm's way.
 - A student pushing through a member of staff.

The procedure below is followed once an incident has occurred:

- Restraint form completed by staff in as much detail as possible.
- Form is emailed to Headteacher and Behaviour Lead, and will be uploaded to My Concern.
- The Behaviour Lead will contact the parents of the child to inform them of the incident.
- Staff involved in the restraint of a student should not be put in a position to make contact once the incident has happened.
- A member of the SLT will update you on the outcome of the incident once it has concluded.

As guidance, staff should complete a restraint form if they have used partial or total restraint, this is defined below. If staff would like to complete a restraint form if they have used minor restraint, they are welcome to do so.

Incidents of restraint are monitored and reviewed within the Safeguarding teams and audited by the Headteacher.

2. Aims

In schools, restraint is generally used for to control pupils, restrain them, and prevent harm.

Control can mean either passive physical contact (e.g., standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path) or active physical contact (e.g., leading a pupil by the hand or arm, or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back).

When members of staff use "restraint" they physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing after they have been told to stop. The use of restraint techniques is usually used in more extreme circumstances when it can be considered a reasonable measure. A reasonable use of restraint must be both necessary and proportionate.

3. The Use of Physical Restraint

Whenever possible, staff should make every effort to not use restraint. Pre-planning, clear communication and de-escalation techniques should be applied prior to physical intervention.

Restraint should only be used in circumstances where there are good grounds for believing that the pupil is placing him/herself or other people in immediate danger or where there is a likelihood of significant damage to property.

Restraint should be used rarely to secure compliance with staff instructions; other methods should always be considered first.

If physical restraint is likely to be necessary, it is included in the one-page profile together with information on:

- De-escalation strategies.
- The manner in which the pupil will be held.
- How support can be summoned if needed.
- Any medical factors to be considered.

Before any type of restraint is used, there should always be Low Level Intervention (prompting and guiding approaches), which can be in the form of:

1a – Prompting – use of communication skills to deescalate

1b – Escorting/Guiding without physical touch but using arm signals to direct the student

1c – Supporting or holding the student up if they are unstable upon helping

4. Types of Restraint

Restraint occurs whenever a member of staff, using intentional force, physically restricts a pupil's movement against the pupil's will. This may mean restraining a pupil or moving him/her by physical means. The procedures of restraints apply to pupils of either sex or of any age.

Restraint can be:

- Minor, when a student is guided away from an area.
- Partial, restricting and preventing particular movements.
- Total, as in the case of immobilisation.

Minor restraint covers those incidents where this minimal contact between staff and student, and may involve

- Moving students away from an area where a group is gathering
- Putting a hand or arm out to stop a student moving into an area they shouldn't

Partial Restraint covers a wide range of techniques which can be applied in degrees to meet particular circumstances. It may involve:

- Physically moving a pupil from a situation where there is an imminent risk of a violent incident and where the pupil has refused to respond to a reasonable verbal request.
- Holding pupils to restrict their movements.
- Retaining a pupil in a confined area in order to prevent individuals or property being damaged. (It is illegal to lock a pupil in a room or cupboard which they cannot leave of their own volition).

Total restraint is where pupils are held in such a way which prevents them from moving. It may involve:

- A pupil being held on the floor. This is an extreme form of restraint and would be used only when an assault was thought to be a serious risk to the child or to others.

5. Restraint Training

Although it is not a legal requirement to have staff trained in restraint techniques, some key staff have received additional training.

The training received works with the premise that de-escalation techniques and non-contact methods should be implemented before any physical restraint. If the need arises that a person needs to be restrained because the de-escalation techniques have not worked four different holds that ideally will be used with two people present have been identified for use. The four different holds are listed below and pictures of each one can be found in the Google Drive Behaviour/Restraint.

- 2a - Underarm with Double wrist hold
- 2b - Straight arm Immobilisation (seat belt position)
- 2c - Underarm with fist hold (used when student clenches fist e.g. angry)

3a - Walking underarm with fist hold, arm held back to encourage forward momentum.

- 4a - seated underarm with double wrist hold.
- 4b - seated underarm with double fist hold
- 4c - seated underarm with either wrist or fist hold, leg restraint.
- 4d - Disengaging from the seated Position.

- 5a - Going to the floor in hold if student's legs drop to the ground.
- 5b - Placing student in Recovery Position from hold e.g. faint

Part of the training offered to staff is always that if a staff member uses restraint, then it must be 'their honest held belief' that if they had not intervened then the situation would have been much worse.

6. The Legal Framework

- (i) Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 allows teachers, and other members of staff at a school who are authorised by the head teacher, to use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others, or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and offsite activities.
- (ii) There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g., physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement.
- (iii) The use of any degree of force or restraint is unlawful if the circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the potential consequences.
- (iv) The law requires that force should be used only when every other approach has been tried and all practical methods to de-escalate the situation have been employed. Where a member of staff has clearly over-reacted and the use of force was unreasonable or excessive, he/she may be liable to disciplinary, civil, or criminal proceedings.
- (v) In cases of physical restraint, a use of restraint form (below) will be kept on My Concern.

It is recommended that this report be written as soon as the incident has occurred, and that the pupil is checked by a member of staff independent of the incident to ascertain if injuries have been sustained. The school will inform parents of an incident involving their child as soon as possible, and give them the opportunity to discuss it.

7. Complaints

The possibility that a complaint may be lodged by a parent whose child has been physically restrained cannot be ruled out. This is less likely if the parents are party to the planning which has taken place and are informed about the necessary actions, in agreement and informed appropriately should an incident occur.

In circumstances where a complaint is lodged, it would be for a disciplinary panel or the court to decide whether the use and degree of force was reasonable in all the circumstances. To meet such circumstances, it is important that the school complaints procedure is used. It is expected that the member of staff involved would make time available to meet with the pupil and his/her parents/carers to discuss the incident. Such meetings should also be attended by the DSL or a senior member of staff. Assistance may also be sought from a governor, Welfare Officer, or member of a voluntary organisation to support pupils and parents/carers.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Code of Conduct
- Child protection and safeguarding
- SEND
- Health and Safety
- Behaviour policy

This policy will be reviewed every year by the curriculum committee.

Date Agreed:	
Signed:	
Review Date:	September 2026