

Hungerhill School: Restrictive Intervention Policy



Responsible Committee/Individual	Local Governing Board
Author	Lead Deputy Headteacher
Target Audience	All Stakeholders
Date Policy Agreed	Summer 2026
Review Date	Summer 2027
Headteacher Signature	
Local Governing Board Representative Signature	



Rationale

Students need to feel safe, supported and respected within school. Hungerhill School is committed to maintaining a safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors through positive relationships, consistent routines and effective behaviour support strategies.

There may be occasions where restrictive interventions, including reasonable force or supervised seclusion, are necessary to prevent harm. Restrictive interventions are only ever used as a last resort, after preventative and de-escalation strategies have been attempted or where there is an immediate risk of harm.

This policy supports staff in responding safely, lawfully and proportionately while protecting the dignity, wellbeing and rights of pupils.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through early identification, prevention and de-escalation
- Ensure staff understand the lawful use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions
- Protect pupils and staff from harm
- Promote a culture of respect, inclusion and positive behaviour
- Ensure all incidents are appropriately recorded, reported and reviewed
- Provide guidance to staff and parents/carers regarding appropriate physical contact and restrictive intervention
- Educate staff on strategies which defuse a situation (see Appendix 1)

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on Department for Education guidance and complies with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- The schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025

4. Definitions

1) **Restrictive interventions** are actions that prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body.

2) **Reasonable force** refers to actions involving physical contact to control or restrain a pupil using no more force than is necessary for the shortest possible time.

3) **Restraint** is a non-disciplinary intervention that restricts a pupil's movement to prevent harm.

4) **Seclusion** involves preventing a pupil from leaving a supervised safe space for safety reasons. Seclusion is never used as punishment and ends as soon as the risk of harm reduces.

Appropriate physical contact may include:

- First aid

- Comforting distressed pupils
- Supporting movement around school
- Practical demonstrations in lessons or PE

Staff should always apply professional judgement and consider safeguarding, SEND needs, age and understanding.

5. Duty of Care

All staff have a duty of care towards pupils and must take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm.

Staff should:

- Maintain appropriate supervision
- Use preventative and de-escalation strategies wherever possible
- Seek assistance where required
- Report all significant incidents to senior leaders promptly

The standard of care expected is that of a reasonably prudent parent acting in the circumstances.

6. Prevention and De-escalation

Restrictive interventions should always be avoided wherever possible. Staff should attempt preventative and de-escalation strategies first, including:

- Calm and clear communication
- Giving time and space
- Offering choices
- Reducing stimuli
- Removing audiences
- Using positive relationships and restorative approaches
- Seeking support from senior staff

Staff should remain calm and assess risk dynamically throughout an incident.

7. Acceptable Uses of Restrictive Interventions

Reasonable force or restrictive interventions may be used to:

- Prevent injury to a pupil or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Prevent a pupil leaving a safe area where they may be at risk
- Prevent serious disruption affecting the safety and wellbeing of others

Staff must:

- Use the least restrictive option

- Use reasonable and proportionate force
- Stop as soon as it is safe
- Preserve the dignity and wellbeing of the pupil

Where possible, two adults should be present during significant incidents.

8. Unacceptable Practice

The following practices are never permitted:

- Using force as punishment
- Deliberately inflicting pain
- Restricting breathing
- Covering a pupil's mouth or nose
- Applying pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen
- Degrading or humiliating treatment
- Prolonged restraint
- Leaving a secluded pupil unsupervised

Staff should never use techniques that compromise a pupil's safety or dignity.

9. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used where there is an immediate safety risk.

During seclusion:

- Pupils must be supervised at all times
- The environment must be safe and low stimulus
- Staff should communicate calmly and reassuringly
- The intervention must end as soon as risk reduces

Seclusion is not a disciplinary sanction and must never be used as punishment.

10. Pupils with SEND

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may require additional support and reasonable adjustments.

Where there is an increased likelihood of restrictive intervention being required, individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans may be developed. These plans may include:

- Triggers and early warning signs
- Preferred de-escalation strategies
- Communication approaches
- Agreed safe interventions
- Pupil and parent/carers views

Plans will be reviewed regularly and following significant incidents.

11. Pupil and Staff Welfare

The safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff is paramount.

Following any restrictive intervention:

- Pupils and staff should receive appropriate support
- Debrief opportunities should be provided
- Medical support should be sought where necessary
- Relationships should be repaired through restorative conversations where appropriate

The school recognises that restrictive interventions may be distressing, particularly for pupils with SEND or trauma experiences.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and reviewing patterns of restrictive intervention use.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training
- Monitoring incidents
- Ensuring recording and reporting procedures are followed

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for safeguarding oversight and ensuring records are stored securely.

All staff are responsible for:

- Using de-escalation strategies first
- Acting proportionately and lawfully
- Recording and reporting incidents accurately

The **SENCO** is responsible for supporting individual planning and risk assessment for pupils with SEND.

13. Recording and Reporting

All significant incidents involving restrictive interventions must be recorded as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the incident.

Records should include:

Date, time and location

- Staff and pupils involved
- Antecedents and triggers
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type and duration of intervention
- Outcome and any injuries
- Pupil voice
- Follow-up actions

Parents/carers will be informed on the same day.

The school will monitor incidents regularly to identify patterns, trends and opportunities to improve practice. (see Appendix 2)

14. Training

Staff will receive appropriate training in:

- Behaviour management
- De-escalation strategies
- Trauma-informed practice
- Safe and lawful restrictive interventions
- Safeguarding responsibilities

15. Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints regarding restrictive interventions will be managed in line with the school's complaints policy.

Any allegation regarding inappropriate use of force will be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with safeguarding procedures and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

16. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Appendix 1

- Educating staff on strategies which defuse a situation.



Appendix 2

- How to record a restrictive intervention incident.

Restrictive Interventions – Recording & Reporting Flow (From 1 April 2026)

Staff Guidance: *Use → Record → Report → Review*

1. INCIDENT OCCURS Reasonable Force / Restraint / Seclusion used	2. ENSURE IMMEDIATE SAFETY Check pupil & staff wellbeing Provide first aid if needed	3. RECORD INCIDENT (STAFF) Complete written report ASAP (ideally same day)	4. INCLUDE KEY DETAILS Names involved, SEN needs, time/date/location, duration, reason, injuries, support provided	5. IF FORCE USED ALSO RECORD Triggers, de-escalation attempts, type and level of force used
6. SUBMIT REPORT TO SLT Headteacher / DSL / Behaviour Lead as per policy	7. LOG ON SCHOOL SYSTEM CPOMS / MIS / secure storage	8. INFORM PARENTS Written communication ASAP (ideally same day)	9. FOLLOW-UP MEETING Discuss incident, triggers, support strategies	10. GOVERNOR OVERSIGHT Termly summary data shared with governors

Appendix 3 Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I'm worried that if I use force a pupil or parent could make a complaint against me. Am I protected?

A: Yes, if you have acted lawfully. If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations.

Q: How do I know whether using a physical intervention is 'reasonable'?

A: The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. School staff should expect the full backing of their senior leadership team when they have used force.

Q: What about school trips?

A: The power may be used where the member of staff is lawfully in charge of the pupils, and this includes while on school trips.

Q: Can force be used on pupils with SEN or disabilities?

A: Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil concerned.

Q: I'm a female teacher with a Year 10 class - there's no way I'd want to restrain or try to control my pupils. Am I expected to do so?

A: There is a power, not a duty, to use force so members of staff have discretion whether or not to use it. However, teachers and other school staff have a duty of care towards their pupils and it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty.

Q: Are there any circumstances in which a teacher can use physical force to punish a pupil?

A: No. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, which is illegal.