
Restrictive Intervention Policy

Category of Policy: Central Education Policy Adapted by School

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Statement of Intent

Ash Meadow School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, restrictive practice, including physical intervention, safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary.

The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupils is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use restrictive practice, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that restrictive intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

This policy has been constructed to conform to the 1996 Education Act as it has been amended through the inclusion of Section 550A on 1st September 1998.

This policy is written with the understanding that staff have always been able to use reasonable force when they defend themselves against an attack or when intervening in any emergency. DfEs circular 10/99 attempts to clarify when a member of staff may use force in order to restrain or control pupils.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2026) 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools'
- DfE (updated June 2025) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- HM Government (2019) 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'



This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

Situations in which staff may use physical intervention to control or restrain

In all circumstances involving the use of force, it is only appropriate “for reasonable force” to be used. There exists no legal definition of “reasonable force”. The DfE (2026) define reasonable force as ‘a term used in legislation which include physical restrictive interventions’ and states ‘reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time’. All staff should be aware that physical intervention should only be used in specific circumstances and that the degree to which it is used will always depend on the age of the pupils, the understanding of pupils and that the degree of restraint used must always be in proportion to the circumstances of the incidents.

In summary, physical restraint may be used ONLY where:

- There is a certain type of incident as defined in this policy
- The use of force is reasonable, and necessary in the circumstances
- The degree of force is reasonable; that is, the force is proportionate

In the following situations it may be appropriate for a member of staff to use reasonable restraint when:

- A pupils attacks a member of staff or another pupils (self-defence).
- A pupils attacks fellow pupils / pupils are fighting.
- A pupils is engaged in or about to commit deliberate damage or vandalism to property, which could potentially result in injury to the pupils,
- A pupils is causing or is at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A pupils is running on a corridor or stairway in a way that might cause an accident or injury to themselves or to others – particularly likely to be the case in crowded areas with smaller children.
- A pupils absconds from a class or tries to leave Ash Meadow School at an unauthorised time (NB. This will only apply if the pupils’s leaving might itself lead to a risk of injury, property damage or serious disruption).
- A pupils is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson, Ash Meadow school event or educational visit.

In all situations staff should take a calm and measured approach. Initial intervention should always be without force. Any physical intervention must follow other appropriate actions.

Who may use physical interventions

Staff may only use techniques that are approved by the organisation; such techniques should comply with the following principles:

- Not impede the process of breathing, airway or circulation.
- Not be used in a way which may be interpreted as sexual.
- Not intentionally inflict pain or injury or threaten to do so.
- Avoid vulnerable parts of the body, e.g. the neck, chest and sexual areas.
- Avoid hyperextension, hyper flexion and pressure on or across the joints.
- Not employ potentially dangerous positions.

The use of physical intervention is reasonable

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use physical intervention. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case.

The use of physical intervention can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the incident warrant it. If the circumstances do not warrant the use of physical restraint, any use of force will be unlawful.

The school believes that the use of restraint must be the last resort. Where de-escalation techniques have not worked, this is the only situation where restraint is reasonable.

Though decisions will often need to be made quickly, a number of considerations must be taken into account when deciding whether it is reasonable in a particular situation:

- the potential for harm (ie. injury, property damage, criminal offences or disruption)
- the likelihood that the situation can be resolved by means other than the use of intervention,
- the risk involved in the intervention.

Physical force must not be used to prevent a pupils from committing a trivial misdemeanour or as a punitive measure. Physical restraint must only be used when it is necessary, proportionate and reasonable.

Where there is a risk of serious injury, physical intervention should be used when necessary to prevent immediate serious injury. In the most extreme circumstances, there may be no choice but to risk some injury to a pupils in order to avoid a greater harm. Where appropriate pupils must receive a medical assessment and treatment for injuries as soon as possible.



The use of physical intervention is proportionate

Where a use of intervention is necessary, in all circumstances, the degree of restraint must be reasonable.

The degree of intervention employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent.

The member of staff must bear in mind what it is that the intervention is being used to try to prevent and use no more force than is necessary.

Application of physical intervention

Physical intervention should only be used according to the above considerations. The intervention can take several forms. It might involve:

- Physically interposing between pupils or blocking a pupils path
- Deflecting or blocking hits, kicks and other forms of physical aggression using team teach breakaway techniques
- Holding using team teach intermediate or advanced restrictive physical interventions

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupils in a way that might be considered sexually inappropriate.

Other physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force another/or other restrictive interventions may include:

- To give first aid.
- To guide or escort pupils when they not resisting, for example, holding hands when on a school trip or walking around school or helping a pupils to a place they have chosen to access to self-regulate.
- Contingent touch for example, comforting a distressed pupils.
- To congratulate or praise a pupil, for example, a high five or handshake

Avoiding the use of a restrictive intervention

Restrictive practice should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management in accordance with the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. All staff need to develop strategies and techniques for dealing with challenging behaviour and situations which they should use to diffuse and calm a situation without the need for restraint or other restive intervention.



In non-urgent situations, staff should always deal with a situation through other strategies before using restraint. Their actions should be aimed at reducing the likelihood of situations arising where restrictive interventions might be needed.

Any action which could exacerbate the situation needs to be avoided. The possible consequences of intervening physically, including the risk of increasing the disruption or actually, provoking an attack, need to be carefully evaluated.

Staff should always communicate with the pupils calmly, and in a non-threatening manner. Staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger and frustration, or to punish the pupils.

Staff must never raise their arms or voices in a threatening manner or become intimidating towards the pupils. Failure to adhere to this, may lead to disciplinary action.

Managing the use of restrictive intervention

Consideration should be given as to when and in what form, restrictive intervention should be used. Before implementing a restrictive intervention, staff must use all available de-escalation techniques, including strategies listed in behaviour support plans, have been attempted and clear communication is used.

A member of staff should tell the pupils who is struggling to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. There should be a clear verbal communication to the pupils that force may have to be used.

If a restrictive intervention is required, the member of staff should continue to communicate with the pupils throughout the incident and should make it clear that the intervention will stop as soon as the situation becomes safe.

Locking or Bolting of Doors

It is acceptable to use electronic mechanisms or other modifications which are necessary for security, for example on external exits or windows, so long as this does not restrict children's mobility.

Seclusion

Seclusion, defined by the DfE (2026) as 'a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving', is a form of restrictive intervention. Seclusion should only be used as a last resort to protect others from harm if a pupil is displaying high levels of behavioural dysregulation. As with other forms of restrictive practice, seclusion must be stopped as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.



Seclusion must not be used as a punitive measure or as discipline. Places where pupils are confined should be feel, non-threatening or not intimidating to the pupils. When secluded, pupils should be monitored at all times.

Seeking assistance

In certain situations, a member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help. The member of staff should remove other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues. The member of staff should inform the pupils that help has been sent for. Until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to de-escalate the situation verbally and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Considering the individual involved

The “circumstances” to be considered in deciding whether the use of force is reasonable and what degree of force is reasonable will depend upon the individual pupils involved. Considerations will include:

- age
- sex
- level of understanding
- character of the pupils.

Staff must be mindful of the needs of the pupils, their behaviours, medical conditions, disabilities and other vulnerabilities.

Risk assessments are undertaken for all individuals whose special needs are associated with:

- Being less responsive to verbal communication
- Physical disability
- Physical fragility caused by, for example, haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy
- Dependence on equipment, such as wheelchairs, breathing tubes or feeding tubes

These should be carried out by the DSL and therapy teams and communicated to staff.

After the event

After the event, the pupils involved may be upset and require further support with their recovery. It is important to remember that a pupils who has experienced a restrictive intervention will need regular observations and support to repair, reflect and reconnect. This will help with the restoration period, and no pupils should be left



alone at this point. Strategies should be developed to help avoid such incidents in future. Risk assessments, where necessary, should be updated to reflect behaviour presented.

Medical Assistance & Examination

Where Physical Intervention has been used, the pupils, staff and others involved must be able to call on medical assistance and pupils must always be given the opportunity to see a Registered Nurse or Medical Practitioner if they wish to, even if there are no apparent injuries. If a Registered Nurse or Medical Practitioner is seen, they must be informed that any injuries may have been caused from an incident involving Physical Intervention.

Where more than six advanced restrictive physical interventions are used for an individual child in any 24-hour period, the headteacher should delegate a responsible person to contact the Community Nurse, who will visit the school to examine the child concerned. The Community Nurse can be contacted on 01744 415645 during office hours, Monday to Friday.

Recording incidents

Use of restrictive intervention must be recorded. A written report must be made of any occasion where force or other restrictive intervention is used.

Written reports are used to prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident and kept for a minimum of 75 years should there be a complaint in the future.

Immediately following an incident, the member of staff will provide a written report as soon as possible. The report must include the following:

- The name of the pupils and staff directly involved in the incident.
- The name of any staff or pupils who witnessed the incident.
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- An account of why restrictive intervention was necessary, how the incident began and progressed, including:
 - Events leading up to the incident, including any identified or potential triggers
 - Any preventative measures and de-escalation strategies used to defuse or calm the situation
 - The type and degree of force used
- Any injuries sustained before or during the incident
- Any post-incident support such as medical attention, staff and where appropriate, pupils, de-briefs

Staff can seek support from the senior leadership team when compiling a report.



In the event of any allegations against staff, the headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

Complaints

Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child should help to avoid complaints. It may not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff could lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and Social Services Department under Child Protection procedures.

The possibility that a complaint might result in a disciplinary hearing or criminal prosecution, or in a civil action brought by a pupils or parent, cannot be ruled out. In such circumstances, members of staff can expect appropriate support from the school's Senior Management team.

In those circumstances it would be for the disciplinary panel or the court to decide whether the use and degree of force was reasonable in all the circumstances. The panel or court would have regard to the provisions of section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 2006 Act), as detailed above. It would also be likely to take account of the school's Restrictive Intervention Policy, and whether the policy had been followed.

Where a safeguarding allegation is made against a member of staff that involves physical contact, e.g. restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO will take into account that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Training

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent escalations of behaviour. As such, all staff receive training in identifying problems before they escalate; this can be in the classroom, during breaks and lunchtime or when out in the community.

'Team Teach' is the approved training provider. 'Team Teach' are a market leading, award-winning training provider that promotes a whole setting holistic approach to behaviour management. Ash Meadow School have a designated Team Teach trainer within the school and access to other Team Teach trainers within the wider company.

The education staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction and refreshing opportunities during the appraisal process.



All staff members are provided with sufficient training in de-escalation strategies and dealing with challenging behaviour as part of their induction programme – this training is refreshed on an annual basis.

Training may also be refreshed in light of recent incidents and challenging behaviour, or where it is apparent that existing methods are not as effective as they could be.

Several staff members are trained in the approved methods of physical intervention in line with this policy.

All education staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances

There are occasions other than those covered by section 93 or the 2006 Act when physical contact with a pupils may be proper or necessary. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons, sports coaching or Technology lessons, or if a member of staff has to give first aid.

Some pupils may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupils, particularly a younger child, is in distress and needs comforting. Staff will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupils needs this kind of support but should bear in mind the terms of this policy.

There may be some pupils for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or because they have been abused. Staff will receive information about these children, usually from the headteacher.

Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence. Therefore, staff should bear in mind that innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Physical contact with parents or other visitors to the school

An adult visitor (whether the parent of a pupils or otherwise) may need to be removed from the school's premises in the event of sustained unreasonable behaviour, threats of physical violence or aggressive verbal abuse towards staff or pupils. Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 gives authority for the removal of any visitor "causing or permitting nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of [those lawfully using the school]".

In extreme and immediate circumstances, it is the role of the police to remove such individuals (the police have the power to do so, despite the school being private



property, Section 547). Where possible, the police should be called by a member of the senior leadership team in any circumstances where removal is deemed likely.

Section 547 also give this same power to staff for these circumstances, though only to those authorised by the school. Generally, only members of the school leadership team are so authorised. The actual physical removal by an employee of an adult visitor to the site should be the very last resort, when the employee is faced with an immediate threat to the safety of personnel or property. However, where that is the case, the points made in this policy about the circumstances in which force may be used, and its proportional use applies.

Ash Meadow School and the police are united in shared values of crime prevention, crime detection and crime reduction. Continued co-operation between the police and staff is vital in circumstances where an adult may need to be removed from the site.

Reporting to parents and carers

It is Ash Meadow school's policy to inform parents of an incident involving their pupils and give them the opportunity to discuss it.

Where restrictive intervention has been used, the pupils's parents will be informed as long as this would not place the pupils at greater risk. If the decision is made that the parents cannot be informed as this would place the pupils at greater risk, a safeguarding referral will be made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The headteacher will make the final decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupils's parents of the details of an incident.

Use of restrictive intervention will be reported to parents/carers as soon possible after an incident and no later than the same day. Staff will contact a parent verbally (in person or via phone call). Parent/carers will also receive a written report of the incident via email or letter.

Written reports must contain the following:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- An account of why restrictive intervention was necessary and what restrictive intervention was used, including:
 - The type and degree of force used.
 - Details of any injuries sustained, if appropriate.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and School business manager on an annual basis, who will make any necessary changes and communicate these to all members of staff.

Policy Revision Log

Policy Title: Physical Intervention Policy

Revision number	Date of Revision	Nature of Revision
1.	September 2025	Update of legislation.
2.	January 2026	Physical Intervention Policy changed to Restrictive Intervention Policy in line with DoFE policy changes
3.		
4.		
5.		