



# **Holway Park CP School & Autism SEN Unit**

**Restrictive Interventions,  
including Use of Reasonable Force Policy**

**Review Spring 2027**

## Introduction

This policy sets out our school's approach to the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, in line with the updated [DfE statutory and non-statutory guidance effective 1 April 2026](#).

This policy aims to ensure that restrictive interventions are used only when necessary, lawful, proportionate, and time-limited and to promote a culture of prevention, de-escalation, transparency, and safeguarding.

Holway Park School acknowledges their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN). *Reasonable adjustments (Equality Act 2010)*

Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.

Holway Park School adopts a preventative, child-centred approach:

- Staff must prioritise early intervention, positive behaviour support, and de-escalation strategies to minimise the need for restrictive practices.
- Restrictive interventions are always a last resort when all other strategies have failed or are inappropriate due to immediate risk.
- Restrictive interventions must never be used punitively, as discipline, or to secure compliance with instructions.
- All practice must be transparent, fair, accountable, and grounded in safeguarding.

## What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

## Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

### **Preventing unsafe exits (safety-critical situations)**

- In circumstances where a pupil attempts to leave a space and doing so would present a risk of harm to the pupil or to others (for example into traffic), staff may use reasonable force to prevent the pupil from leaving, only when necessary and proportionate, and for the shortest possible time. Any intervention must prioritise the pupil's safety and dignity and be followed by de-escalation and support.

Staff/Schools Cannot

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

### **Whole-school measures**

To reduce the likelihood of situations escalating to restrictive interventions, the school commits to maintaining:

- Whole school behaviour approach in line with our Behaviour & Relationships Policy
- Communication for de-escalation: training all staff in using a trauma informed approach- calm tone, minimal language, validation/empathy, co-regulation, and non-verbal strategies- body language and personal space
- Classroom management- Teaching and support staff are responsible for setting the tone and context for positive behaviour within the school. They will:
  - Create and maintain a stimulating environment that encourages pupils to be engaged
  - Co creates the Classroom Code and display it in a prominent position in the classroom.
  - Develop a positive relationship with pupils, which will include:
    - Greeting pupils in the morning

- Establishing clear routines
  - Communicating expectations of behaviour in ways other than verbally
  - Highlighting and promoting good behaviour
  - Ending the day positively and starting the next day afresh
  - Using positive reinforcement
  - Adapting classroom layouts and travel around school and transitions;
  - Providing visual supports,
  - Structuring playground duty rotas with predictable routines and clear adult presence at hotspots like cloakrooms, toilets and secluded outdoor spaces.
- Explicit teaching of expectations in all communal spaces.
  - Communication for de-escalation: training all staff in using a calm tone, minimal language, validation/empathy, co-regulation, and non-verbal strategies (stance, positioning, proximity) with scenario practice.
  - Data for improvement: undertaking termly analysis of CPOMS restrictive-intervention data at SLT and Governors with action plans to address patterns by location, time, need, or staff team.

### **Principles governing the use of restrictive interventions**

Restrictive interventions are **always a last resort** and may only be used when:

- there is an immediate risk of harm
- de-escalation strategies have been attempted or are inappropriate due to the immediacy of the risk,
- the intervention is necessary, lawful, proportionate and time-limited, and
- the pupil's welfare, dignity and rights remain central to decision-making.

### **Positive Handling and Restrictive Intervention**

This policy acknowledges that all Holway Park School & ASC SEN Unit staff are responsible for the education of pupils, some of whom may require support in managing behaviours which could be described as challenging. There is a clear need for staff to be advised and supported, by school and the Local Authority (LA), and given complete reassurance that any actions in accordance with this policy will receive unequivocal support. Staff must acknowledge that the starting point for physical intervention should be that all other strategies have failed, and **the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention is an absolute last resort to support a pupil in need. Restrictive Physical Intervention is the term used by the DfE to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used.** All Restrictive Physical interventions will be in the best interest of the child and every effort will be made in seeking to avoid injury. However, injury is possible and this can be a regrettable and infrequent side effect.

### **What about other physical contact with pupils?**

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- To give first aid.

### **Prohibited techniques**

To protect pupils from foreseeable risk of harm, staff must not use any technique that:

- Compromises breathing or circulation, including pressure across the chest or neck.
- Applies pressure to the neck, nose, mouth, or abdomen.
- Intentionally holds a pupil on the ground (prone or supine).
- Is otherwise disproportionate to the risk presented or likely to cause injury.

These prohibitions reflect safeguarding expectations in the DfE 2026 guidance and sector legal commentary and are consistent with the requirement that any use of force must be lawful, necessary, proportionate and time-limited.

### **Seclusion: safeguards and limits**

Where a pupil is acutely dysregulated and poses a risk of harm seclusion may be used only as a non-disciplinary safety measure; it must never be used to punish or to secure compliance. Seclusion must be supervised, time-limited, recorded, and reported to parents as soon as practicable, in line with the DfE guidance and the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025 (April 2026).

### **Immediate post-incident actions**

Following any restrictive intervention (including use of force, restraint or seclusion), staff must:

1. Remove or reduce the restriction as soon as it is safe to do so.
2. Check for injury and arrange medical assessment where appropriate.
3. Record the incident on the same day wherever possible, including rationale, de-escalation attempted, type/degree of force (if any), duration, injuries, and follow-up support.
4. Inform parents as soon as practicable; where same-day notification would likely cause significant harm to the pupil, delay may be justified following consultation with the DSL, with the rationale recorded.

### **Safeguarding and SEND Responsibilities**

Pupils with SEND and/or additional vulnerabilities may be disproportionately affected; therefore, the school provides Red Scales- individualised support personalised regulation strategies. Risk assessments for de-escalating and managing challenging behaviour identifying steps and strategies for staff., and staff must consider communication needs, sensory profiles, health considerations, and known triggers before intervention.

Misuse or inappropriate use of force or seclusion may constitute a safeguarding concern, potential discrimination, or a breach of rights under the Human Rights Act

### **Individual approaches and reasonable adjustments**

- **Red Scales:** specify early warning signs, possible triggers, preferred adult responses in line with Trauma Informed practice, preferred/calming activities, environmental adjustments, communication needs, health considerations, and any physical intervention protocols if necessary.
- **Time, space, and strategies to calm:** Staff will offer pupils choices of co- or self-regulation, this could be a movement break, a move to quiet space, sensory tools/activities, time-out with trusted adult, before behaviour escalates. Where a pupil requires seclusion as a safety measure, this will be time-limited, supervised, recorded and never used as punishment

### **Recording and Reporting Procedures**

*Governing bodies of maintained schools and the proprietors of other schools must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, as part of the school's duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. (Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026)*

#### **Recording Incidents:**

Staff must record on CPOMS all significant incidents involving:

- Use of reasonable force
- Any form of restraint (including non-force-related restraint)
- Any use of seclusion

Records must be completed:

- As soon as practicable, and within the same day of the incident wherever possible on the Restrictive Intervention Incident Report (see appendix 1).

#### **Required details:**

Each record must include:

- Names of pupils and staff involved
- Relevant SEND needs or vulnerabilities
- When, where, and how long the incident occurred
- A detailed account of what happened and the rationale for intervention
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type and degree of force used
- Any injuries and subsequent support provided

## Parental notification

Schools must notify parents as soon as practicable after any use of force, restraint, or seclusion.

Where there is no parent or carer who can safely be notified of the use of force, restraint or seclusion, for example where parental notification would place the pupil at risk of significant harm, or where the parent is not contactable and the pupil is in the care of the Local Authority, the school will follow safeguarding procedures.

In these circumstances, the incident will be reported to the Local Authority via the appropriate safeguarding route (for example the child's social worker, MASH, or the duty team). The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will make and record this decision, including the rationale and who the incident was reported to.

## Post-incident support

After any restrictive intervention:

- Pupils and staff must be supported and offered the opportunity to reflect and restore relationships.
- Any medical or emotional needs must be assessed and addressed.
- Behaviour plans and risk assessments must be reviewed and updated

## Monitoring

- The Governing Body must regularly review incident data to identify trends, monitor safeguarding implications, and evaluate practice.
- Senior leaders must ensure compliance with statutory duties and address any concerns related to practice or training.
- Monthly SLT review of incident records to identify patterns (time/location/need/staffing) and agree actions.
- Termly Governor Safeguarding report including trend data, training compliance, and impact of adjustments.

## Staff Development and CPD

All staff must receive training in:

- Positive behaviour approaches and de-escalation
- Safe and lawful restrictive intervention techniques
- Recording and reporting processes
- Effective communication for de-escalation: tone of voice; brief, clear language; safe stance/positioning; cultural and neurodiversity-sensitive practice.
- Communal spaces: active supervision of hotspot corridors/playgrounds/cloakrooms.
- Ongoing practice: annual refreshers; coaching/induction for new staff.

## Definitions

- **Restrictive Intervention:** any action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty, or independence. Interventions may be physical or non-physical.
- **Reasonable Force:** physical force applied only when strictly necessary to prevent injury, criminal behaviour, serious property damage, or serious disorder. It must always be proportionate and applied for the shortest possible time.

- **Restraint:** a form of restrictive intervention involving physical contact that intentionally restricts movement.
- **Seclusion:** a supervised, isolated space used strictly as a non-disciplinary safety measure when a pupil is acutely dysregulated and at risk of causing harm. Seclusion must never be used as punishment or to enforce compliance. All seclusion incidents require mandatory recording and parental notification.

### **ASC SEN Unit- Behaviour and Physical Support Policy TOUCHING**

For the purposes of this document touching is defined as everyday acts of communication by physical means to indicate approval, affection, security or sympathy. For example, a touch or pat on the shoulder, a held hand, linked arm, an arm around the shoulder, a stroked back or hug / hold; these are appropriate actions, particularly in a setting with significantly autistic pupils many of who are non-verbal where supporting communication and co-regulation are essential (E.g. Ardiel, E.L. & Rankin, C.H. (2010) *The Importance of Touch in Development. Paediatrics & Child Health, 15, 153-156*).

Touching can be a positive reinforcement to relationships and a comfort in times of stress or dysregulation. Staff should be mindful of the physical context of their actions. It is considered safest to be protected from unfounded accusations of inappropriate physical contact with pupils when witnesses are present. Touching of a hug or hold nature should be avoided in private personal care conditions other than an emergency when it would be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary. It is not the intention here to deter physical contact but to ensure that physical contact is not misinterpreted.

The pupils have Learning Support Plans in which planned physical contact will be identified. These will be part of a developmental plan towards self-regulation and teaching pupils with whom it is safe to co-regulate with through physical contact.

### **TEACHING**

In some cases a member of staff may need to physically support pupils as part of the teaching process, particularly those with challenging, chaotic or inconsistent behaviour. Staff will themselves identify activities in which it is helpful or even essential to touch pupils and give physical direction. They will include: -Physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Personal skills e.g. dressing and washing hands or face. Modelling activities e.g. using scissors, washing hands or learning to sit on seats. These types of contact are a legitimate part of every staff member's repertoire of learning / behaviour support and should not normally require recording. Physical contact / touch in these circumstances must

- Have a justifiable point
- Never become a power struggle and cease immediately if the child forcibly resists for more than a moment or appears distressed.
- Not last longer than necessary to fulfill it's objective.
- Never take place in private conditions.
- Take into account a child's sensitivity to touch.

### **TREATING Toileting and Incontinence –**

Toilet training and the cleaning up of incontinent pupils is considered a treatment. This may require intimate contact during cleaning up and necessarily centres on the genital area. Parents should agree to their children receiving intimate care by staff and staff should aim not to work alone during intimate care, although this is not always practical or possible. Staff should at least ensure that another adult is aware of this reason for withdrawing a child.

Emergency treatment e.g. administration of emergency epilepsy drugs - This may be required at any time and staff should never feel constrained from acting immediately to prevent harm.

Routine treatments e.g. medical procedures or physiotherapy - These can involve close and perhaps painful contact. They may have to be carried out when a child is withdrawn from class and other adults are not present. Such treatments should only take place with the recorded advice of an appropriate medical professional and the agreement of parents / carers. Any procedures used should: -

- Have a medical and / or hygienic point
- Involve the minimum contact necessary
- Where ever possible, be undertaken by persons of the same sex as the pupil.

Staff carrying out any of these treatments according to these guidelines will be supported in their provision of this important service

## **WITHDRAWAL TEMPORARY RESTRICTION OF LIBERTY PROTOCOL**

Safe space refers to any space with the door closed that provides safety for the pupil, staff and other pupils. The pupil is secluded and there is a temporary restriction of liberty. In the unlikely event that all de-escalation based approaches have not made safe a pupil / others from significant harm the following must be adhered to;

- The intervention being the absolute last resort (all other strategies have failed).
- The intervention being in the best interest of the pupil by reducing risk of harm to themselves and others
- Used for the minimum period of time to restore safety.
- Only used in the event of there being significant risk of harm to the individual pupil and / or others.
- Staff must be able to see the pupil and be able to report on their wellbeing.
- Staff member/s making this decision must report this to the class teacher and a member of SLT as soon as feasibly possible.
- Recorded on Incident Reporting Form as soon as possible identifying the necessity of the seclusion (identifying all prior de-escalation attempts).
- Reported to parents / carers as soon as possible (must always be the same day)
- A debrief and review will take place for all parties together with a member of SLT as soon as possible

There may be exceptional situations in which it is necessary to physically prevent a pupil from leaving a room in order to protect the safety of pupils and staff from immediate risk, but this would be a safety measure and not a disciplinary sanction.

## **Legal Framework**

This policy reflects and complies with:

- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which outlines requirements for recording and reporting significant incidents involving the use of force.
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, which introduce statutory duties for documenting any use of force, restraint, or seclusion.
- DfE Guidance: Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (effective from 1 April 2026), replacing earlier 2013 guidance.
- Equality Act 2010, including the public sector equality duty and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- Human Rights Act 1998, including consideration of Articles 3, 5 and 8 where relevant to dignity, liberty and private life.

## Reporting Form to be uploaded onto CPOMS

<b>Name of child:</b>			
<b>Name of staff using measure:</b>			
<b>Names of any other people present:</b>			
<b>Name of person completing this record:</b>			
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Location:</b>		<b>Approximate duration of intervention:</b>	
<b>Details of 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:</b>			
<b>Type of measure used</b>		<b>Use of force</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Restraint (including non-force restraint)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Seclusion</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	

### Section 1: Reason for Measure

<p><b>Account of the incident</b> (including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained and include what the child or young person was doing or saying)</p>
<p><b>Details:</b></p>          
<p><b>Details of any other methods used to avoid the need to use that measure</b> (what you did – what you said – what you tried)</p> <p>Humour <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal advice and support <input type="checkbox"/> Firm clear directions <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Limited Choices <input type="checkbox"/> Distraction <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion <input type="checkbox"/> Reassurance <input type="checkbox"/> Planned Ignoring <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Contingent Touch <input type="checkbox"/> Calm talking <input type="checkbox"/> Calm Stance <input type="checkbox"/> Patience <input type="checkbox"/> Reassurance <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Withdrawal Offered <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal Directed <input type="checkbox"/> Swap Adult <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reminders about consequences <input type="checkbox"/> Success Reminders <input type="checkbox"/></p>

**Further details:**

**Why was the measure necessary?** (describe your dynamic risk assessment and why you honestly believed that the measure you chose was in the best interests of the child)

- Risk to self  Risk to others  Risk to safe physical environment   
Risk to safe psychological environment  Prevention of psychological distress   
Prevention of physical harm  Prevention of criminal offence   
Temporary loss of competence or capacity

## Section 2: Description of Measure

**A description of the measure used** (what you did and what you said)

**Detail the effectiveness of the measure:**

**Detail the duration of any measure of physical restraint or restriction, and any time intervals between provision of active support:**

**Detail any consequences of the use of the measure:**

**Provide a description of any injury to the child concerned or any other person:**

**A description of any medical treatment (offered or administered):**

**A description of all post incident support including staff voice, and any additional support required.**

**View of pupil involved:**

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**Section 3:**

<b>Reporting to Parents / Carers</b> <i>Schools should communicate this information to parents in writing. For example, via email or online messaging system. Best practice would include inviting parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate.</i>	
<b>Who was the incident reported to:</b>	
<b>Has this been shared in writing:</b>	Yes / No
<b>Have the pupil's parents been invited into a meeting?</b>	Yes / No

**Section 4: External agencies informed and supporting records:**

EEC <input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker (date and / or log number) <input type="checkbox"/> LADO <input type="checkbox"/> Placing Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation that the person authorised to make the official record has spoken to the child concerned, and the person using the measure, about the use of the measure, and the feelings of both <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Views of the young person and any additional comments</b>

**Name and signature of the person authorised to make this record:**

**Name, signature and designation of person monitoring the records:**

**Date checked:**