



The Children's House

Behaviour Management Policy: Restrictive Interventions, including use of Reasonable Force

This policy should be reviewed annually and as required by legislation.		
Action	Reviewer	Date
Review	EG	Sept 2026
Approved by Chair of COM	BB	Sept 2026
Date for next internal review		Jan 2027

References

- Behaviour in Schools – DfE January 2022. This guidance encourages a whole school approach and outlines expectations across different settings.
- Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools: Guidance for schools in England, April 2026
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 sections 93 & 93a. This essential legal basis authorises school staff to use reasonable force to prevent harm or maintain discipline.
- 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

Introduction

This Policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with children in the school, to explain the school's arrangements and their responsibilities for care and control of pupils.

All teachers, staff and the Headteacher are authorised to have control or charge of children and they have the statutory power to use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force within the context of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the subsequent guidance as listed above. Supply staff must ensure that they are familiar with this school policy. Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students on placement, visitors or parents.

The school's Behaviour Policy explains the means by which the school seeks to maintain a safe, calm environment for all members of the school community.

The Behaviour Management Policy is a statement on the use of restrictive interventions to restrain pupils. The use of force as a punishment is corporal punishment and is illegal and must never be



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used. However, any school staff members and any other person whom the Head has authorised to have control or charge of children, has a legal power to use reasonable force in order to prevent pupils from injuring themselves, others or damaging property; causing disorder among pupils at school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise, committing a criminal offence, and to maintain good order and discipline. Such incidents might include:

- A child causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A child running in a way that might cause injury to themselves or others.
- A child absconding from class or trying to leave school.
- A child persistently refusing to comply with a request to leave a classroom.
- A child behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.
- A child at risk of harming themselves or others in any other way.

Aims

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of children in our school respond positively to discipline and control practised by staff where required. This ensures the well-being and safety of all children and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. The school acknowledges that physical techniques are only a small part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- (i) clearly understand this Policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where use of force is necessary.
- (ii) are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

Definitions

This advice defines the following key terminology as follows.

Restrictive Interventions

This refers to the range of ways in which staff might restrict or restrain a pupil. Restrictive interventions include physical and non physical actions aimed at restraining pupils' movement. Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

Reasonable Force



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Reasonable force is the amount of force that staff members can (in certain circumstances) legally use to temporarily restrict a pupil's movement. It means using no more force than is necessary, for the least amount of time for the desired outcome.

This covers a broad range of actions, often used in schools and involving a degree of physical contact with pupils. This physical contact will be used by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions and/or movements.

Force is considered reasonable when:

- It is in proportion to the consequences it's intended to prevent
- The level and duration are the minimum necessary to achieve the desired result

Using force to control pupils includes:

- Passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path
- Active physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom

Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.

Restraint

This is a form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as when 2 pupils are fighting and refuse to separate. This might include:

- Holding a pupil back physically
- Bringing a pupil under control

Staff should try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases this may not always be possible.

Time out/Seclusion

This is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others.

Minimising the Need to Use Force

We strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force. In addition to this, children who present with challenging behaviour have an individual Behaviour Management Plan.

Children who have sensory processing or social emotional needs that may result in anxiety and therefore an increase in the likelihood of challenging behaviour, will have individualised support or programmes to help them to manage this. Staff should be well trained and prepared to recognise hidden stressors for vulnerable pupils, with de-escalation strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.



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Through regular mindfulness sessions, PSHE, assembly, circle time and spontaneous opportunities that arise on a daily basis, children learn about feelings and managing conflict within an ethos of independence, choice and inclusion. We use the *Zones of Regulation* programme throughout the School to empower all pupils with the tools and language of self regulation.

Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort, when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.

Implications of this Policy

As teaching and non-teaching staff work 'in loco parentis' and have a 'Duty of Care' towards their pupils, they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this Policy.

The application of any form of physical control inevitably carries an attached risk of unintended physical and psychological harm and this places staff and the school at risk of potential litigation. Staff therefore have a responsibility to follow this Policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention, assessing whether it is necessary and proportionate, and considering the child's welfare. Staff need to be aware that they are responsible for:

- Assessing risks related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties.
- Making judgements about when the use of force is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as necessary to manage a situation.

Staff need to be aware that they are required to justify their decisions in writing through the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in this document.

Use of Positive Handling

- Positive Handling uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a child harming himself, herself, others or property.
- The scale and nature of any intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the child and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Staff would be expected to follow the child's Behaviour Management Plan and/or Risk Assessment in the first instance to manage an incident or challenging behaviour.
- If the situation continues to escalate staff would then be expected to seek help from other members of staff.
- Only if all of the above have been tried and are unsuccessful should staff even consider any other form of restraint. The overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used.

All the techniques used should take account of a child's age, gender, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

Types of Physical Restraint



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This is defined as the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance, completely directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement. It can include:

- An adult physically interposing themselves between children.
- Blocking a child's path.
- Holding.
- Pulling.
- Leading a child by the hand or arm and guiding them away or shepherding a child away by placing a hand in the centre of their back (*both strongly recommended*).

Procedures for Physical Restraint

Extreme circumstances where there is an immediate risk of injury may require use of more restrictive holds or action that is consistent with 'reasonable force'.

- If there is time, tell the child what physical restraint will be used.
- Use minimum force necessary for the shortest time in order to maintain safety.
- Wherever possible, ensure another member of staff is present.
- After applying restraint, ask another member of staff to take over and deal with the incident.
- Permissible holds only to be used. Children should only ever be held on the long bones in their arms and never on a joint as this can lead to dislocation. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation. This includes, covering the nose or mouth or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.
- The adult should ideally stand beside the child rather than face to face, which can be confrontational and can put the adult at risk
- If a child is holding on tightly to another child or an object, push down firmly but carefully on their hands in order to release the grip. Never attempt to pull the child.
- If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release them or reposition into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Staff are not expected to attempt to restrain a child if they are likely to put themselves at risk. Staff should avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. In the most extreme of circumstances, where a child sustains injury as a result of unavoidable use of force by a member of staff, the member of staff will be called upon to justify his or her actions and to demonstrate that steps were taken to reduce the need for physical intervention at every stage or why it was not practicable to take such steps.

Using Reasonable Force to Search Pupils

Headteachers and other members of staff authorised by the headteacher have the statutory power to search pupils and/or their possessions if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil has a prohibited item.

Force can be used to search a pupil for a prohibited item, but not to search for an item banned only under the school rules. For example, force could be used to search for an illegal item, but not for a mobile phone.

Safe Spaces

Time Out/Seclusion: this involves restricting the child to a room in order to spend time away from the class/group. This is reserved for pupils experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. They should be supervised by an adult during the whole period of Time Out and allowed to leave when the immediate risk of harm is reduced.



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Withdrawal: this involves removing the child from a situation that causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group, allowing them time to calm down or to prevent a situation escalating. The 'quiet time' could be time in the playground, a quiet room, a safe space or sitting in an office supervised by the Headteacher, Deputy Head/Assistant Head or SENCo/Wellbeing Lead.

Recovery:

Children who may be distressed by events can be offered the following support:

- A mindful moment - taking part in a calming activity or use of another one of their calming strategies from their *Zones of Regulation* toolbox.
- Quiet time away from the incident/trigger.
- A run around in the playground
- Time with a member of staff to debrief the incident.

Resuming their usual routine/previous activity should be attempted as soon as possible, especially for children with SEN.

Pupils with SEND

Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, can be used on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Where a pupil's behaviour means that it's more likely that staff will need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions, there will be a risk assessment in place. Staff will also work to manage and reduce the risk – for example, by understanding the pupil's triggers and providing staff training.

The School, the pupil, their parents/carers, and other professionals will collaborate to develop:

- Prevention and de-escalation strategies
- A behaviour plan that sets out prevention strategies and the types of physical interventions that will be used

Behaviour Management Plan

The Behaviour Management Plan is a plan for the positive management of a child's challenging behaviour. It will be drawn up between the Head or Deputy Head (Early Years), SENCO and parents/guardian of the child. It is based on a Risk Assessment and identifies planned interventions for potential scenarios, agreed positive handling techniques, and how a child may need to be supported in a crisis.

For a child with SEN or disability for whom the need for a Behaviour Management Plan has been identified, the plan should be compatible with the child's EHCP and all members of staff involved with the child should be made aware of his or her profile, including:



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- Situations that may provoke challenging behaviour, preventive strategies and what de-escalation techniques may work.
- What is most likely to trigger a disruptive or violent reaction.
- Specific agreed strategies and techniques.
- Agreed ways to support the child and member of staff following an incident.
- Taught communication strategies eg non-verbal signals.

Pre-Intervention Strategies:

- Acknowledge the child's feelings: "I can see that you're angry/frustrated...."
- Active listening and clarifying questions, paraphrasing and summarising eg "You're angry because John hit you?"
- Be aware of the build-up of tension between you and the child.

Try to diffuse the situation by:

- Using a calm, passive voice to ask questions and warm, open body language.
- Not making demands.
- Isolating the area.
- Involving a second member of staff well known to the child (where possible) although the second member of staff should not be restraining (if this becomes necessary).
- Moving to a quiet room to listen to the child's concerns.
- Negotiation, care and concern.
- Using conciliatory language.
- Offering alternatives/choices to the behaviour so that the child can see a way out.

When a child is told there is a consequence to negative behaviour, that consequence must be carried out. This approach must be consistently followed by all staff.

What should happen after a restrictive intervention?

Pupils and staff should be medically assessed and injuries treated and recorded as per the School's policies.

The incident will be recorded – as outlined below.

A member of SLT (not involved in the incident) will meet with the staff member(s) and pupil(s) involved, to understand what happened and why, repair and rebuild relationships.

The incident will be evaluated to understand why the restrictive intervention was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns or trends, and how you could avoid using restrictive interventions in future – for example, by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan for the pupil.

Pupils and staff involved in the incident will be monitored for the remainder of the day, and additional support will be offered where required. Pupils who witnessed the incident may also receive support if required.

Recording all use of Physical Control, Restraint or Restrictive Physical Intervention



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The School has a legal duty to record and report all significant incidents (see 'Definitions' section, above) in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil or incidents where a member of staff uses Time out/ seclusion or restraint on a pupil. If anyone is injured an Accident Form and a detailed report of the incident, including the use of force or restraint, should be completed and saved on ISAMs Wellbeing Manager. All records of incidents must be made in writing as soon as practicable after the incident. These incidents must be recorded even if the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan.

As a minimum, the following details should be included within the report:

- Names 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 the support offered by the School.
- 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, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained,
- If applicable, a brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- If reasonable force was not used, a brief account of what restrictive interventions were used and why
- Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- When and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

The Senior Leadership and DSL team will then evaluate the incident, discussing it with the staff involved, to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

The child will be counselled on why it was necessary to restrain him or her.

Records are retained on Wellbeing Manager in accordance with the School's Retention Schedule.

The statutory guidance for schools in England requires that parents or guardians are informed about significant incidents where force has been used on their child, as soon as is practicable after the incident (Restrictive Interventions, including reasonable force: requirements and guidance, April 2026)

At The Children's House, Parents/guardians will always be informed about the use of force in physically restraining a child, unless doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the child. In this instance, it must be reported to the Local Authority in which the child resides.

Following consultation with a member of the SLT, this communication will either come from a member of the SLT, the teacher involved or the SENCo/Wellbeing Lead. This will ideally be face to face but could also be by telephone, with a written follow up of Actions taken logged with the incident on ISAMS Wellbeing Manager

A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

- Time, date, location and approximate length of time the force was used



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- Brief account of what type of reasonable force was applied, and the degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Details of any physical injuries and any post incident support

Where a child has a Care Order, the relevant local authority must also be informed.

In accordance with Data Protection Law, the names of those involved in the Incident should not be disclosed in the letter to parents/guardians. The pupil may give this information to the parent/guardian or the parent/guardian can request the information from the school. The Headteacher is responsible for reporting significant incidents to the Council of Management.

The Headteacher and class teacher will involve the child, as appropriate, in: expectations contained in the Behaviour Management Plan; any sanctions being given; identified support or strategies to help the child manage his or her emotions and develop his or her self-esteem and sense of belonging. In some instances, an incident might lead to a decision to suspend or exclude a pupil. In these circumstances the Headteacher must have regard to the school's Exclusion Policy and the DfE statutory guidance on exclusions: [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions) (Aug 24) The school should keep any relevant multi-agency partners informed as appropriate eg CAMHS, Children's Social Care.

Dealing with Complaints and Allegations about the Use of Force

It is understood that parents/guardians have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff including any use of force. In the event that a complaint is made in these circumstances, the following procedure will apply:

1. If a specific allegation is made against a member of staff then the school will follow the procedure in KCSIE 2025, as set out in its Child Protection Policy under Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff. This may necessitate suspending that member of staff while investigations are underway.
2. Other complaints will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Procedure.

Health and Safety of Staff

Under the *Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)*, employees have a responsibility to report any circumstances which give rise to an increased risk to their Health and Safety.

Staff who have, or acquire, permanently or temporarily, any medical condition that may impact on their ability to carry out a child's Behaviour Management Plan have a duty to report this to the Headteacher immediately, as there may be an impact on their own safety and that of colleagues and pupils. This information will be shared with other members of staff. If staff are unable to support physically, they are expected to support with de-escalation.



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Following the above guidelines, the risk of harm towards staff is reduced but it is possible for some injury to be received. All such occurrences should be treated and subsequently recorded, on an employee Accident Form held in the office. Emotional support should be offered if required.

Analysing data on restrictive interventions and reasonable force

The School regularly reviews and analyses data on restrictive interventions in order to:

- Identify areas for improvement to policies and practices, particularly where strategies and interventions have not been effective
- Identify areas for training and development for staff, for example on how to use de-escalation techniques effectively
- Understand regular patterns or triggers of behaviour for key pupils, to better support them through behaviour support plans
- Identify when the use of restraint was used disproportionately with vulnerable pupils, including pupils with SEND

This information will be shared with the Council of Management at termly meetings.

Staff Training

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure all staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

Annex A: Incident Record Form for Use of Force to Restrain is attached to this Policy.

This Policy was reviewed, amended and agreed by the Council of Management in February 2026. It will be reviewed again in one year's time.

Signed

Chair of the Council of Management



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Appendix A: Incident Record Form – to be completed by staff and club leaders who do not have access to ISAMs Wellbeing Manager

Details of pupil on whom force was used – name, class, and any SEN, disability or other vulnerability.

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Date, time and location of incident.

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Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses).

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Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.

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Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used.

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Reason for using force and description of force used.

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Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention required.

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Appendix B: Individual Behaviour Management Support Plan

Name:		D.O.B
Class:		Date of plan:
Nominated member of staff to oversee plan:		Review date:
Key behavioural difficulty: 		
Our understanding of why this behaviour occurs: 		
Triggers:	Calming Strategies:	Key person:



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Provision:

Strategies:

Rewards / incentives:

Sanctions and consequences:

Observations: