RESTRAINT POLICY

COLLEGE TOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Approved Date	Sept 2026
Approved At FGB (updated Aug 26)	Sept 2026
Date of Next Review	Sept 2027
Statutory	YES
Adopted from Bracknell Forest	NO

Policy on the Use of Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force.

This policy sets out when and how staff at College Town Primary School may use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

This policy emphasises that any restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, and should be avoided where possible.

This policy is based on the DfE's guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools', which comes into effect on 1 April 2026.

This policy also acknowledges our legal duties under:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Our duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND

This policy should be read alongside the schools Behaviour Policy and SEND Policy.

The Education and Inspection Act 2006 (Section 93 and 93A) clarified the position about the use of physical force by teachers, and others authorised by the headteacher of a school, to control or restrain pupils.

There is a common misconception that, since the Children Act 1989, any physical contact with a child is in some way unlawful. That is not true. Where necessary, reasonable force can be used to control or restrain pupils. Physical contact with pupils may also be appropriate or necessary in other circumstances.

The law forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or which is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation.

Section 93 and 93A allows teachers, and other persons who are authorised by the headteacher to have control or charge of pupils, to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following: -

- committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- injuring themselves or others (including the adult concerned);
- causing damage to property (including the pupil’s own property);
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

The provision applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on the school premises, and when he or she has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere e.g. on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

At College Town Primary School, the headteacher authorises the following people to exercise use of reasonable force when appropriate:

- teachers employed by the school;
- members of support staff employed by the school

Staff may use restrictive interventions to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to leave
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or visit
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing them to leave would risk their safety or lead to disruptive behaviour
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or stop a fight
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- Conduct a search for prohibited items (by the headteacher or authorised staff)

Prohibited Uses
It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.
Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation. For example, by covering the nose or mouth or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.
If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release them, or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'. So, it is not possible to set out comprehensively where it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstance of the case.

There are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.

- The degree of force 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. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

NOTE: - *in the following text, where the word 'teacher' is used, this applies also to any other adult authorised by the headteacher to exercise force when appropriate*.

At College Town Primary School, we are committed to minimising the need for restrictive interventions through:

Whole-School Strategies
- Identifying 'hotspots' for behaviour issues (corridors, playground areas) and deploying staff to support in these areas
- Identifying key times when behaviour issues are more frequent and ensuring adequate staff presence
- Implementing a behaviour policy that includes verbal warnings and opportunities for pupils to correct their behaviour (see Behaviour Policy)

- Using consistent language for de-escalation across the school

Individual De-escalation Techniques
Staff should use the following strategies before considering restrictive interventions:
- Use a calm facial expression and warm, open body language
- Use a warm, calm tone of voice
- Calmly remind the pupil of the consequences of not following an instruction
- Avoid having too many staff present when trying to de-escalate
- Offer the pupil choices and opportunities to comply
- Allow time for the pupil to process instructions

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 must be a risk assessment in place. (see Appendix B). We will also work to manage and reduce the risk – for example, by understanding the pupil's triggers and providing staff training.

Where appropriate, we will work with the pupil, their parents/carers, and other professionals 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

Before intervening physically, a teacher should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. The teacher should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the pupil.

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff: -

- physically interposing between pupils;
- blocking a pupil’s path;
- holding;
- pushing;
- pulling;
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
- (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

In circumstances when a child is behaving unsafely e.g. assaulting a pupil or member of staff, children will be placed in seclusion to minimise risk of harm. This means that they will be guided into the safe space by the teacher. They will remain in the Safe Space until they are calm and ready to communicate. Where a child in seclusion, the adults must continue to ensure their well-being at all times. Any dangerous behaviour must be addressed e.g. climbing on the side etc. A member of staff will remain on the other side of the room ready to assist the pupil when they are calm. If children are taken to the Safe Space and/or reasonable force is used, a report will be completed by all staff involved and parents will be informed.

Children who are at risk of having continued physical intervention will have a risk assessment completed to determine any risk factors and how these can be eliminated. There will also be a behaviour management plan that is specific to each child and will detail the restrictive intervention that will take place in order to support each child.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk or injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' for example to prevent a young pupil running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.

Staff **must not** use physical interventions that involve unnecessary, excessive or unsafe force. In particular, staff must not:

- hold a pupil around the neck, by the collar, or in any other manner that restricts or is likely to restrict the pupil's breathing or blood circulation;
- slap, punch, kick or otherwise deliberately strike a pupil;
- deliberately trip or cause a pupil to fall;
- hold or pull a pupil by the hair or ears;
- apply pressure to a pupil's neck, chest or abdomen;
- deliberately hold or restrain a pupil in a face-down (prone) position on the floor or any other surface; or
- use any other technique or position that places the pupil at an avoidable risk of injury, breathing difficulty or positional asphyxia.

Any physical intervention must be lawful, necessary, proportionate and used for no longer than is necessary in the circumstances. Staff should use the least restrictive option reasonably available and should bring the intervention to an end as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

It is important that there is a detailed, written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where force is used. It may help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and it will be helpful should there be a complaint.

See Appendix A

Immediately following any such incident, the member of staff concerned should tell the head or a senior member of staff and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. That should include: -

- the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved, and when and where the incident took place;
- the names of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- the reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the pupil, another pupil or member of staff);
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long;
- the pupil's response, and the outcome of the incident;
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, or a member of staff and of any damage to property.

There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary other than those covered by Section 93 of the Act. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons, sports coaching, or CDT, or if a member of staff has to give first aid. Young children and children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate

where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Teachers will use their own professional judgment when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.

APPENDIX A

REPORT ON THE USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN

Report compiled by: _____

Name of pupil: _____ Year: _____

Date of incident _____

Where incident occurred: _____

Time of incident: _____

Witness – staff	**Witness – pupils**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Why was the use of force necessary?

a) to prevent injury to myself or other staff;
b) to prevent injury to pupil or other pupils;
c) to prevent damage to property;
d) other

_____

Give a detailed account of how the incident began and progressed, including what was said by each party, what steps were taken to defuse or calm the situation, how the pupil was held or restrained and for how long.

What was the outcome of the incident including the need for any medical treatment?

Signed: Date:

TO BE COMPLETED BY HEADTEACHER OR ANOTHER SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF

Follow up action:

Have parents been notified about this incident? YES/NO

If **YES** – by what means and when?

Signed: Date:
Headteacher/Senior Member of Staff

Appendix B

College Town Primary School Risk Assessment

Pupil Name:
Year Group:
Assessor:
Date:

What health and safety hazards arise or could arise from the behaviour of this pupil?	
What risks do they pose and to whom?	Level of risk: High/Medium/Low
What has been done so far to remove or reduce the risks?	Remaining Risk: High/Medium/Low
What further action is required to reduce the risk further?	Level of risk once all control measures are in place: High/Medium/Low
List any activities which cannot be safely managed, as far as it is possible to foresee.	
Any further comments:	
Review date:	

APPENDIX C- Terminology

Restrictive Interventions
Restrictive interventions are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. They include physical and non-physical actions aimed at restraining pupils' movement. For example, putting a pupil in a room and not allowing them to leave is a restrictive intervention.

Reasonable Force
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.

Significant Incident
A significant incident is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. Appropriate contact might include a handshake to congratulate a pupil, giving first aid, or demonstrating how to use a musical instrument.

Seclusion
Seclusion 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. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave.

Staff should only put a pupil in seclusion to protect others from harm, when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. The pupil must be supervised during the whole period of seclusion. When the immediate risk of harm is reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.