

HURLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY



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Summary and Purpose

To set out Hurley Primary School's approach to preventing, minimising and, where necessary, using restrictive interventions (including reasonable force and seclusion) in a way that is lawful, safe, proportionate and respectful of pupils' rights and dignity.

Objectives:

- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early support and de-escalation.
- Provide authoritative guidance to staff about when and how restrictive interventions may be used lawfully.
- Ensure robust recording, reporting, monitoring and review of all significant incidents.
- Protect the safety, wellbeing and legal rights of pupils, staff and the wider school community.
- Ensure compliance with equality duties and consider needs of pupils with SEND, trauma, or other vulnerabilities.

Key Principles:

- Restrictive interventions are only used where absolutely necessary to protect the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or property and when less restrictive options have failed or are not feasible.
- Any use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and based on a dynamic risk assessment of the circumstances.
- Prevention, de-escalation and personalised support are the primary strategies. Restrictive interventions are a last resort.
- All use of force, seclusion or restraint that meets the statutory threshold must be recorded and reported as required by law and DfE statutory guidance.
- Equality and safeguarding: ensure reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, disabilities, or protected characteristics and follow child protection and safeguarding procedures where applicable.
- Transparency and communication with parents/carers, governors and appropriate external agencies.

Scope:

- Applies to all staff employed by Hurley Primary School and to any adult authorised by the headteacher to be in charge of pupils (including volunteers, supply staff and visitors in supervised roles).
- Covers all instances of restrictive interventions, including:
 - Physical restraint (holding a pupil to prevent movement)
 - Use of reasonable force to control or restrain
 - Seclusion (where a pupil is left alone in a room they cannot freely exit)
 - Any other action that restricts a pupil's liberty for behavioural or safety reasons

Planning for Incidents

It is sensible to plan how to respond should the occasion arise. This statement addresses:

- managing the pupil
- involvement of parents, recording the incident
- regular staff briefings and training
- engaging additional support

Authorised Persons

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

To prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Staff who are most likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions will receive adequate training in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations where reasonable force might be appropriate or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil. They will fall into three broad categories:

- a. where action is in self-defence;
- b. where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- c. where a pupil is behaving in a way that compromising good order and discipline.

Examples of **categories a and b** are:

- a pupil attacks someone else;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in or on the verge of committing , deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure himself/herself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class, tries to leave school, (this would only apply where there was a great risk if they leave the classroom/school.)

Examples that fall in to **category c** are:

- a pupil consistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom;
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Behaviour Support, Prevention and De-escalation Strategies

Restrictive interventions are only used where absolutely necessary when less restrictive options have failed or are not feasible. Hurley Primary School promotes a wide swathe of approaches and adaptations to reduce the chance that threshold for physical intervention is required.

Whole-school approach

- Promote a calm, predictable environment to support pupil well-being
- Clear school behaviour expectations, consistently taught and applied across school.
- Whole-school restorative approaches, positive reinforcement, clear routines and well-planned transitions (playground, corridors, assemblies).
- Staff training in communication, trauma-informed practice and restorative language.

Environmental adjustments

- Use classroom layout, visual supports and the wider school (e.g. the Lodge) to provide regulated spaces and opportunities for movement and calming.
- Make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, autism or sensory needs.

Individual approaches

- Early identification of pupils at risk of behaviour leading to restrictive interventions.
- Behaviour support plans, positive handling plans and individual risk assessments for pupils with repeated or foreseeable behaviours. Plans should:
 - describe triggers, early warning signs and tailored de-escalation strategies
 - list preventative measures and reasonable adjustments
 - set out what to do in foreseeable crisis situations, who is responsible and how parents will be involved
 - include steps to restore relationships post-incident
- Multi-agency working (SENCo, educational psychologists, CAMHS, social care) where required.

Reasonable Force

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. It will always depend upon the circumstances at the time.

Two relevant considerations are:

- The use of force can only be reasonable if the circumstances of the situation warrant it. No force should be used unless it is deemed to be essential & without alternative to meet the acceptable end.

- The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the circumstances it is intended to prevent. The minimum force should always be used. No use of force should ever be used as a form of punishment.

Practical considerations: Before intervening the teacher/adult should always, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop, and what will happen if they do not. The teacher/adult should continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical restraint/force will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to the situation is essential.

Application of Force

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

- physically interposing between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding/restraining;
- pushing;
- pulling;
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- herding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back

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

In other circumstances staff should **not** act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, e.g. by:

- holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe;
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil;
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- tripping up a pupil;
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear;
- holding a pupil face down on the ground.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Where the risk is not so urgent, the teacher should consider carefully whether, and if so when, physical intervention is right. Teachers should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using force. All teachers need developed strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations which they should use to defuse and calm a situation.

The age and level of understanding of the pupil is also very relevant. Physical intervention to enforce compliance with staff instructions is likely to be increasingly appropriate with our older pupils but should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management. At no point should the use of force be for the purpose of punishment.

Recording Incidents and Reporting to Parents

It is important that there is a detailed, contemporaneous, 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. This will be completed on CPOMs.

We must keep an up-to-date record of all such incidents in an incident book. Immediately following any such incident the member of staff concerned should tell the Head 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/staff member)
- 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 staff member & of any damage to property.

Incidents involving the use of force can cause the parents of the pupil involved great concern. We will inform parents of any incident involving their child, and give them an opportunity to discuss it.

Seclusion

Seclusion (locking a pupil alone in a room they cannot leave) is a restrictive intervention and must only be used:

as an emergency, when it is necessary to prevent harm and no less restrictive option exists
for the minimum time necessary

under strict oversight, with welfare checks recorded and immediate steps taken to end seclusion

The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave. A report will be written and recorded on CPOMS. Seclusion may never be used as punishment.

If a child needs to be placed in seclusion, the child's parents must be informed.

Complaints

Parents **must** be involved when an incident has occurred. It will not prevent all complaints however and a dispute about the amount of force used may be investigated. Initially parents should approach the Governing Body who will investigate the incident on their behalf. If the matter is not resolved then a formal complaint may be made to the Local Education Authority. Should the complaint result in disciplinary hearing the panel, or court would have regard to the provisions of the 1996 education act (Section 550A) which has informed the guidelines set out above.

Physical Contact with Pupils in Other Circumstances

There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary other than those covered by Section 550A of the 1996 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 judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of a SEND need, their cultural background or because they have been abused. It is important that all staff receive information on these children. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence, and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Review Framework

The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation, guidance or).

REVIEWED BY:

Headteacher	Matt Hardman	October 2026
Chair of Governors	Karen Orman	October 2026
	Dianne Brooks	October 2026

REVIEW DATE: **OCTOBER 2027**

If you have any queries or require further information please do not hesitate to contact us on **01827 872207** or email head2032@welearn365.com

Hurley Primary School, Heanley Lane, Hurley, Nr Atherstone, North Warwickshire, CV9 2HY

