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# Queen Elizabeth's School

## RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

### (INCLUDING THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE)

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#### 1. Policy Statement

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions would be lawful and may be necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

This policy sets out how the School will comply with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026)'. The guidance provides statutory duties under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 relating to recording and reporting significant incidents involving the use of force.

The School is committed to safeguarding pupils and staff, minimising the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early intervention and de-escalation. Restrictive interventions may only be used when lawful, necessary, proportionate and for the shortest time possible.

The need to implement a restrictive intervention would be incredibly rare in the School's context.

#### 2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, effective 1 April 2026);
- Section 93 and 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025.

#### 3. Definitions

**Restrictive intervention:** a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

**Reasonable force:** a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

**Significant incident:** any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

**Seclusion:** a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

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Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. 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.

**Restraint:** a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

#### 4. Guiding principles

Other than in an emergency necessitating immediate physical intervention, staff should always seek to use verbal strategies to prevent and de-escalate situations at the earliest possible stage to avoid the need to use a restrictive intervention.

**Prevention:** Building and supporting a positive behaviour culture is part of the responsibilities of all members of staff. School behaviour procedures should be applied consistently, as should support strategies (e.g. EHCPs or monitor and support arrangements) for those pupils with additional needs or vulnerabilities. Staff should seek support from appropriate colleagues if a situation is escalating and there is time to do so.

Methods of prevention include, but are not limited to:

- consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to remained focused, achieve and thrive;
- sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management;
- staff training and professional development;
- using staff and prefects to effectively supervise and manage communal spaces such as lunch queues and playgrounds;
- clear whole-school behaviour policies, with an emphasis on praise and reward, but with sanctions applied fairly and consistently;
- building trust between staff and pupils, especially pastoral relationships with their form tutors and Head of Year;
- bespoke tutorials to reflect on pupil wellbeing, as well as progress and involvement;
- weekly digital wellbeing check in Years 7-10;
- peer and staff mentoring, plus on-site counselling services;
- building a culture in which all pupils feel they belong, celebrating diversity and the talents of all;
- focusing on wellbeing and pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural developing – including promoting modern British values - through Personal Development Time;
- monitor and support arrangements for pupils with additional needs or challenges;
- care plans, agreed with parents, for those with more severe conditions.

**Last resort:** Used only when other attempts to de-escalate a serious situation (including verbal warnings) have not been successful and where not intervening would result in harm, criminal offence, serious damage, or significant disruption.

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**Safety and welfare:** Any restrictive interventions must be necessary, proportionate, and time limited, with the pupil's dignity and wellbeing duly considered.

**Non-punitive:** Restrictive interventions must never be used as punishment or routine discipline.

The School's safeguarding duty is paramount. By remaining alert (recognising) and then recording and reporting concerns about a pupil, or pupils, pastoral staff can intervene to investigate and provide the support needed. This may prevent serious situations from arising.

### 5. Who can use reasonable force

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

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 lesson or otherwise.

The Headmaster and authorised staff have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only.

Alongside the information in this policy, guidance for staff on the use and recording of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, can be found in the Pupil Discipline Policy and the Code of Conduct for Staff and Governors.

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

### 6. Determining when the use of a restrictive intervention is appropriate

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

#### Is it necessary?

- Staff should evaluate if there is an immediate risk of harm if action is not taken.
- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

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### Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

### Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken and the danger they may be posing to others.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location where any intervention is used, such as whether it is in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention continues to be necessary and proportionate and whether it should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Staff should recognise that pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, or other vulnerabilities, may react differently in certain circumstances (for example in how they process stimuli, or being more prone to dysregulation), and should remain cognisant of their individual needs and support plans when seeking to prevent, de-escalate and assess a situation. Where possible, a member of staff who knows the pupil well should be engaged if the situation is escalating.

Care or behaviour plans should be reviewed in conjunction with appropriate staff, parents, the pupil and any relevant specialists.

### 7. Unacceptable uses of force

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 mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible.

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### **8. Other physical contact with pupils**

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid;
- to comfort a distressed pupil;
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake;
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:

- the School's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff and Governors;
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present;
- the pupil's age;
- any other material factors, including but not limited to whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities;
- whether there are other non-contact strategies available.

### **9. Recording and reporting the use of force**

The School must record 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 in writing 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. The requirement to record applies even if the use of force in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The following details must be recorded as a minimum:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved;
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- 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;
- a brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, 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;
- a brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

The pupil's and/or witness accounts may also be recorded to aid the evaluation of the incident. A record of communication with parents and any follow-up actions would also be advised.

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Parents must be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. Where appropriate, parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss the incident, its triggers and future management strategies.

As part of reporting the incident to parents, the following should be provided in writing as a minimum:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- a brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- a brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force;
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

Exceptions to the requirement to report to parents are where:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over (not applicable in the School's context); or
- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

### **10. Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint**

An incident of seclusion or restraint may occur with or without direct physical contact. For restraint incidents that occur without direct physical contact, for example the removal of a walking aid, these must be recorded under the procedures outlined in this section.

Incidents must be recorded in writing 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. The requirement to record applies even if the use of seclusion or restraint in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The following details must be recorded as a minimum:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved;
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- 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;
- a brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable;
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

Parents must be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. Where appropriate, parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss the incident, its triggers and future management strategies.

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- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

#### **11. Pupil and staff support**

Senior leaders should evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan for the pupil.

Where required, medical assessment of the pupil and staff member(s) would be provided as soon as possible following an incident. Any significant injuries should be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

The School would continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources.

#### **12. Governing body monitoring**

Data on the use of restrictive interventions will be reported to the Governing Body on a regular basis, allowing governors to monitor the frequency and effectiveness of such interventions, and to review policies and procedures.

#### **13. Complaints and allegations**

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with the School's normal complaints procedures. Allegations of inappropriate use of force, or other restrictive interventions, against members of staff would be handled with reference to the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

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LINKED  
POLICIES

- ❑ *Pupil Discipline Policy*
- ❑ *Code of Conduct for Staff and Governors*
- ❑ *Safeguarding Policy*
- ❑ *SEND Policy*
- ❑ *Complaints Policy*
- ❑ *Whistleblowing Policy*

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LINKED  
LEGISLATION  
AND  
REFERENCE  
MATERIALS

- ❑ Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93 and 93A)
- ❑ 'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools, DfE
- ❑ The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025.
- ❑ Equality Act 2010
- ❑ Human Rights Act 1998
- ❑ Searching, screening and confiscation in schools, DfE
- ❑ Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE

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Approved by the Governing Body on 26 February 2026

Signed .....

A.N. Gaskell, Chair of the Governing Body