



HEATHSIDE SCHOOL

HAMPSTEAD

Restrictive Intervention Policy

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Next Review Date: April 2027

(Prep School) Aligned with DfE Guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (April 2026)**

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out how the school uses restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, in line with the Department for Education's 2026 guidance. It ensures that staff act lawfully, safely and proportionately, and that pupils' rights, dignity and wellbeing are protected at all times.

The DfE states that restrictive interventions may sometimes be *"lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe"*.

2. Principles

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

- Restrictive interventions are exceptional, not routine.
- Prevention, early intervention and de-escalation are prioritised.
- Any intervention must be necessary, proportionate, and in the best interests of the pupil's welfare.
- Staff must use *"no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time"*.
- The dignity, rights and emotional wellbeing of pupils are central to all decisions.
- All incidents are recorded, reported and reviewed in line with statutory duties.

3. Definitions (DfE 2026)

The policy uses the DfE's definitions:

- **Restrictive intervention:** "a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body...of a pupil."
- **Reasonable force:** physical restrictive intervention using "no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time."
- **Seclusion:** keeping a pupil confined and preventing them from leaving.
- **Restraint:** immobilising or limiting movement, with or without physical contact.

4. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force only to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property
- causing serious disorder

The guidance states that force may be used to stop a pupil from *"causing injury... damaging property... or causing disorder"*.

Reasonable force must never be used as punishment.

5. Unacceptable Uses of Force

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Using force as a disciplinary measure
- Any restraint that affects breathing or circulation
- Pressure on the neck, chest, abdomen, mouth or nose
- Holding a pupil on the ground except in an emergency, and even then only briefly
- Any action likely to cause injury or humiliation

The DfE states: *"It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment"* and pupils must not be restrained in ways that affect *"airway, breathing or circulation"*.

6. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used:

- as a safety measure
- when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation
- when the pupil is not acting with intent
- to protect others from immediate harm

The DfE states that seclusion *"should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm"* and must never be used as a threat or punishment.

Seclusion must be:

- supervised at all times
- in a safe, non-threatening space
- ended as soon as the risk reduces
- recorded and reported in line with statutory duties

7. Prevention and De-escalation

The school prioritises:

- positive relationships
- early identification of distress
- calm, consistent communication
- environmental adjustments
- giving pupils time and space to regulate
- staff training in de-escalation

The DfE emphasises *"early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies"*.

8. Pupils with SEND

We recognise that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions. Staff must:

- understand individual triggers
- use personalised strategies
- work closely with parents and professionals
- ensure reasonable adjustments

- review behaviour support plans regularly

The guidance notes that pupils with SEND may react to distress through behaviour and that schools should *“provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies”*.

9. Staff Training

Staff who may need to use restrictive interventions will receive appropriate training in:

- safe and lawful use of reasonable force
- de-escalation and communication
- risk assessment
- safeguarding and pupil welfare

Training reflects the DfE’s requirement that staff *“should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies”*.

10. Recording and Reporting

The school follows the statutory duties under Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

10.1 Recording

All significant incidents involving force must be recorded in writing on CPOMS *“as soon as practicable... no later than the same day”*.

Records include:

- names of staff and pupils involved
- relevant pupil needs (including SEND)
- time, date, location and duration
- what led to the incident
- de-escalation strategies attempted
- type and degree of force used
- injuries or medical treatment
- post-incident support

10.2 Reporting to Parents

Parents must be informed *“as soon as practicable... no later than the same day”* unless doing so would cause serious harm.

11. Post-Incident Support

After any restrictive intervention:

- pupils and staff receive appropriate care
- a debrief conversation is held
- relationships are repaired
- IEPs are reviewed
- patterns are monitored

The DfE states that schools should “*facilitate reflection, learning and support pupil and staff wellbeing*”.

12. Monitoring and Review

Senior leaders will:

- analyse incident data
- identify patterns and training needs
- report to governors
- ensure compliance with statutory duties
- review this policy annually or sooner if guidance changes