

Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force policy Portsdown Primary School & Early Years



PORTSDOWN
Primary School & Early Years

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1. Introduction

The vast majority of children will never experience any form of restrictive intervention whilst they are at Portsdown Primary School and Early Years. However, on occasion, it will be necessary to use restrictive interventions to keep children safe, prevent injury, prevent damage to property, or prevent disorder.

This policy is based on the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education in **December 2025**, *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools*, which comes into force on **1 April 2026**.

At Portsdown Primary School and Early Years, we are committed to:

- Creating a positive, inclusive environment where restrictive interventions are rarely needed
- Using restrictive interventions only as a last resort
- Ensuring any use of restrictive interventions is lawful, proportionate, and in the best interests of the child
- Supporting staff, pupils, and families before, during, and after any incident

2. Legal Framework and Definitions

Restrictive Interventions

Restrictive interventions are any planned or reactive actions that limit a pupil's movement, liberty, or freedom to act independently. This includes:

- **Reasonable force** - using physical contact to control or restrain a pupil
- **Mechanical restraint** - using devices or equipment to restrict movement (These are not used at this school)

- **Chemical restraint** - using medication to control behaviour (These are not used at this school)
- **Seclusion** - forcing a pupil to spend time alone against their will, where they are prevented from leaving

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force is a type of restrictive intervention involving physical contact. It means using no more force than is necessary and proportionate to:

- Prevent a pupil from harming themselves or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Maintain order and discipline

The law (Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) gives school staff the power to use reasonable force when necessary.

Restraint

Restraint is the physical part of restrictive interventions. It may or may not involve force, depending on whether the pupil resists.

Seclusion

Seclusion means forcing a pupil to spend time alone against their will, where they are prevented from leaving a room or area. This must not be used as a punishment or routine behaviour management strategy, but may only be used in immediate emergencies to prevent serious harm, and only when all other options have been exhausted.

Key Principles

- Restrictive interventions should only be used where **absolutely necessary**
- They must be **proportionate** to the risk or harm being prevented
- They must be used for the **shortest time possible**
- They must never be used as a **punishment**
- **Seclusion must only be used in extreme emergencies** and with strict safeguards

3. Who Can Use Restrictive Interventions?

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. This includes:

- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Learning support assistants
- Lunchtime supervisors
- Administrative staff when supervising pupils

The power also applies to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on a school-organised visit.

4. When Can Restrictive Interventions Be Used?

Restrictive interventions may only be used when there is an immediate risk of:

- A pupil harming themselves or others
- Serious damage to property
- Serious disruption that compromises good order and discipline

The decision on whether to use restrictive interventions is down to the professional judgement of the staff member and must always depend on the individual circumstances.

Examples of When Reasonable Force May Be Used

The following list is not exhaustive:

- Removing disruptive pupils from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Preventing a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip, or visit
- Preventing a pupil from leaving the classroom or another room (such as a welfare support area) where allowing them to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts others
- Preventing a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil
- Stopping a fight
- Restraining a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

When Restrictive Interventions **Must NOT Be Used**

Restrictive interventions must **never** be used:

- As a punishment
- To force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk of harm, injury, or serious damage to property
- As a substitute for good behaviour management

5. Prohibited Practices and when Seclusion may be used

Seclusion

Seclusion means forcing a pupil to spend time alone against their will, where they are prevented from leaving a room or area.

*When Seclusion **Must NOT Be Used (prohibited practices)***

Seclusion must not be used:

- As a punishment
- As a routine behaviour management strategy
- As a planned intervention in a behaviour support plan
- To enforce compliance with instructions when there is no immediate risk of serious harm
- As a substitute for appropriate support and reasonable adjustments

When Seclusion May Be Used

Seclusion may only be used in **immediate emergency situations** where:

- There is an imminent risk of serious harm to the pupil or others, serious damage to property, or serious disorder
- All other de-escalation strategies have been attempted or are not feasible in the circumstances
- It is necessary and proportionate to prevent that harm
- It is used for the shortest time possible
- The pupil is continuously monitored and supervised at all times
- Staff actively seek to de-escalate the situation and release the pupil as soon as it is safe to do so

Safeguards When Seclusion Is Used

If seclusion is used in an emergency, staff must ensure:

- The pupil is continuously observed and supervised

- The pupil's wellbeing is monitored throughout
- The door is not locked (staff may hold the door or stand in the doorway to prevent the pupil leaving, but the pupil must not be locked in)
- The pupil has access to toilet facilities
- The duration is kept to an absolute minimum
- Senior leadership is informed immediately
- The pupil is released as soon as it is safe to do so

Recording and Follow-Up for Seclusion

If seclusion is used:

- It must be recorded in detail on CPOMS, including:
 - The specific circumstances and imminent risk that justified its use
 - Why other strategies were not feasible
 - The duration of the seclusion
 - How the pupil was monitored
 - How and when the situation was de-escalated
- Parents must be informed on the same day (unless this would put the child at risk of harm)
- The incident must be reviewed by the Headteacher, or next senior leader in the Headteacher's absence, immediately
- Parents must be invited to meet with the school to discuss what happened
- The pupil's behaviour support plan must be urgently reviewed and updated
- Multi-agency involvement should be considered if the pupil's needs are not being adequately met

Important Note on Seclusion

Seclusion should be an **extremely rare occurrence**. If a pupil requires seclusion more than once, this indicates that:

- Current support strategies are inadequate
- A comprehensive behaviour support plan is urgently needed
- Multi-agency involvement may be required
- Reasonable adjustments for SEND may need reviewing
- Additional staff training may be necessary

The school will take immediate action to address these needs.

Distinction: Seclusion vs. Other Interventions

The following are NOT seclusion:

- A pupil choosing to spend time in a quiet space, sensory room, or reflection area
- A pupil being asked to work in a different room with supervision, where they are free to leave
- A pupil being given "time out" in a supervised area where they are not prevented from leaving
- Removing a disruptive pupil from class to work elsewhere with supervision, where they can leave if they wish
- A pupil being sent to work with a member of the senior leadership team

The following ARE seclusion:

- Locking a pupil in a room
- Physically preventing a pupil from leaving a space against their will
- Holding a door shut to prevent a pupil from exiting

- Blocking a pupil's exit from a room or area

Prohibited Restrictive Intervention Techniques

Staff must not use techniques that:

- Hold a pupil face down on the ground (prone restraint)
- Hold a pupil face up on the ground (supine restraint) for more than a brief period to allow transition to a safer position
- Restrict the pupil's ability to breathe, including covering the mouth or nose, or applying pressure to the neck, chest, or abdomen
- Use pressure or force on, or directed at, the neck, chest, abdomen, genitals, or any other vulnerable area
- Use locks, holds, or pressure applied to joints, including bent-double holds
- Use hyperflexion or hyperextension (forcing limbs or the spine beyond their normal range of movement)
- Use the 'seated double embrace' (two staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward)
- Use the 'double basket-hold' (holding a person's arms across their chest)
- Use the 'nose distraction technique' (a sharp upward jab under the nose)

Additional Safeguards

- Pupils should not be deliberately restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing, or circulation
- If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff must release their holds or reposition into a safer standing position as quickly as possible
- Where needed, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible
- All forms of restraint carry a risk of physical and psychological harm and should be avoided where possible
- Wherever possible, staff who are trained in positive handling techniques will lead a restraint. Wherever possible, two members of staff (again who are trained in positive handling) will complete the restraint

6. The School's Approach

This policy should be read alongside our **Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy**, which sets out our whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour.

Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils with SEND

When considering the use of restrictive interventions with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN), staff must make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Examples include:

- Allowing additional time for a child to process instructions or change their behaviour
- Adapting communication approaches (e.g., visual supports, simplified language)
- Using sensory regulation strategies
- Being alert to triggers such as sensory overload or anxiety
- Recording equality and dignity considerations after every incident

Behaviour support plans must be co-produced with parents, carers, pupils (where appropriate), and relevant professionals, and reviewed regularly, especially after incidents involving restrictive interventions.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the school to ensure pupils with SEND are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Staff must always consider this duty when deciding how to act.

No 'No Contact' Policy

Schools must not have a 'no contact' policy. Such a policy could place staff in breach of their duty of care towards pupils or prevent them from taking necessary action to prevent harm.

Parental Consent Not Required

Schools do not require parental consent to use reasonable force on a pupil. However, we are committed to working in partnership with parents and will communicate openly about our approach and any incidents that occur.

Risk Assessment

At Portsdown Primary School and Early Years, we proactively foster positive relationships and only use restrictive interventions when there is no realistic alternative. Staff are expected to conduct a dynamic risk assessment before using any restrictive intervention, considering:

- The risks to the pupil and others
- Whether there are safer alternatives
- The pupil's individual needs, including any SEND
- The proportionality of the intervention

Note: This risk assessment is not written down in the moment. Rather, it is the staff member considering the risks and alternatives before acting.

7. Prevention and De-escalation

Our priority is to **prevent** situations from escalating to the point where restrictive interventions are necessary.

Whole-School Preventative Measures

- Creating a positive school culture through values-led behaviour expectations
- Well-designed learning environments that minimise triggers
- Clear routines, visual aids, and structured transitions
- Regular staff training in de-escalation, communication, and emotional regulation strategies
- Sharing good practice across the staff team
- Analysing patterns in behaviour data to identify trends and inform practice

Individual Preventative Approaches

- Behaviour support plans that identify triggers and agreed de-escalation strategies, co-produced with parents and pupils
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND
- Early intervention strategies such as restorative practice, quiet spaces, and sensory breaks
- Regular communication with parents about their child's needs

Steps to Take Before Using Physical Controls

Staff should use the following de-escalation strategies before considering restrictive interventions:

1. Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reasoning
2. Give clear, calm directions for the pupil to stop
3. Remind the pupil about rules and likely outcomes
4. Remove an audience or take the vulnerable pupil to a safe place

5. Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
6. Use positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
7. Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help if needed

8. Using Restrictive Interventions

Principles of Safe Practice

When restrictive interventions are necessary, staff must:

- Use the **minimum force necessary** for the shortest time possible
- Avoid techniques that restrict breathing or cause pain
- Continuously assess the pupil's wellbeing and adjust or stop the intervention if the pupil is in distress
- Prioritise the pupil's dignity and emotional wellbeing
- Seek to de-escalate and release holds as soon as it is safe to do so
- Never use restrictive interventions as a punishment

Calling for Help

Staff should call for help from colleagues whenever possible before using restrictive interventions. This provides:

- Additional support to de-escalate the situation
- Witnesses to the incident
- Someone to ensure the safety of other pupils
- Someone to contact senior leaders and parents

Medical Attention

If a pupil or staff member is injured during an incident, first aid must be administered immediately, and further medical attention sought if necessary.

Power to Search Pupils Without Consent

Searching can play a critical role in ensuring that schools are safe environments for all pupils and staff. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and pupil welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour through which pupils can learn and thrive.

Portsmouth Primary School and Early Years' Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy provides further information and guidance on searching pupils and whether to do so without consent (where force may be necessary). This force will be reasonable and bound within the approaches of this Restrictive Interventions Policy.

It is important to state that staff may use reasonable force only to search for legally prohibited items, not items merely banned by school rules.

9. Staff Training

The Headteacher will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities under this policy. This includes:

- Understanding the legal framework and this policy
- De-escalation and positive behaviour management strategies
- Recognising and responding to the needs of pupils with SEND
- Safe use of restrictive interventions where necessary
- Post-incident support and recording requirements

Training will be provided by recognised providers and refreshed regularly. The Headteacher will consider the needs of pupils when determining what level of training is required.

Staff who have received specialist training in restrictive interventions will be identified and deployed appropriately, particularly for pupils with behaviour support plans.

10. Parental Communication

When Parents Will Be Informed

The school will inform parents **on the same day** (or as soon as reasonably practicable) whenever restrictive interventions have been used on their child, **unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm** (in which case safeguarding procedures will be followed).

Parents will be informed:

- By telephone or in person where possible
- In writing if contact cannot be made on the day
- With details of what happened, why the intervention was necessary, and what support is being provided

Ongoing Communication

We are committed to working in partnership with parents. Where a pupil has a behaviour support plan that includes the potential use of restrictive interventions, this will be discussed and agreed with parents in advance wherever possible.

Parents will be invited to contribute to post-incident reviews and any updates to their child's support plan.

11. Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The school is required by law to record each significant incident involving restrictive interventions. At Portsdown Primary School, our approach is to record all uses of restrictive interventions to ensure comprehensive monitoring and continuous improvement.

Under the guidance effective from 1 April 2026, a **significant incident** is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. At Portsdown Primary School, we record all significant incidents to ensure comprehensive monitoring and continuous improvement.

Records will include:

- Names and roles of staff involved
- Name and SEN status of the pupil
- Date, time, and location of the incident
- Description of the incident, including what happened before, during, and after
- Triggers and de-escalation strategies attempted
- Type, degree, and duration of force or restrictive intervention used
- **If seclusion was used: specific justification for why it was necessary, how the pupil was monitored, and duration**
- Injuries or damage caused (if any)
- Rationale for why the intervention was necessary and proportionate
- Equality and dignity considerations
- Post-incident support provided to the pupil and staff

How We Will Record

- All incidents of unacceptable behaviour will be recorded electronically on CPOMS or in the behaviour log in the classroom (as per our Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy)

- **All uses of restrictive interventions must be logged on CPOMS.** Staff may choose to complete a **Restrictive Intervention Record Form (Appendix 1)** first if they prefer to record on paper before transferring to CPOMS, but this is optional. An **Aide Memoire (Appendix 3)** is available to support staff in knowing what information to include on CPOMS.
- **Any use of seclusion must be clearly flagged on CPOMS as "SECLUSION" and reported to the Headteacher, or next senior leader in the Headteacher's absence, immediately**
- All details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty-four hours
- The Headteacher must be informed of all incidents
- If violence was used against a staff member, a violent incident form must also be completed as soon as possible (available from the front office)
- NB: Appendix 3 is an Aide Memoire of what is required on CPOMS.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will:

- Review each incident and investigate further action as required
- Monitor patterns and trends in the use of restrictive interventions
- Identify whether additional support or training is needed for staff or pupils
- Ensure that behaviour support plans are reviewed following incidents
- Immediately review any use of seclusion and arrange a meeting with parents to discuss the incident
- Consider whether to convene a multi-agency review following any use of seclusion
- Report any use of seclusion to the governing board as per reporting arrangements

12. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints Procedure

All complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be thoroughly, speedily, and appropriately investigated in line with the school's complaints policy.

Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property, or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

Allegations of Excessive Force

Where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a staff member, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed and a referral made in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

The onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that their allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that they have acted reasonably.

Suspension

Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. The school will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant suspension until the allegation is resolved, or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.

If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school will ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

Disciplinary Action

The governing body will always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher or member of staff.

Duty of Care to Staff

As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that the school provides appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

School staff should expect the full backing of their senior leadership team when they have used force lawfully and appropriately.

13. Other Physical Contact with Pupils

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of Appropriate Physical Contact

- Holding the hand of a child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid
- Providing physical prompts or support for pupils with SEND as agreed in their support plans

Staff should use their professional judgement and consider:

- The pupil's age and level of understanding
- The pupil's individual needs and any known sensitivities
- The context and whether the contact is necessary and appropriate

14. Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plans

Risk Assessment

For pupils who may require restrictive interventions, we conduct a risk assessment. This is not a separate formal document, but rather a professional discussion and thinking process to identify risks and plan support.

The risk assessment involves staff considering:

- Can we anticipate a health and safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need (from parents, professionals, observations)?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?
- What reasonable adjustments do we need to make for this pupil's SEND?
- Do we need to create a Positive Handling Plan for this pupil?

Recording the risk assessment:

The risk assessment discussion and decisions must be recorded. This can be done through:

- CPOMS entry documenting the discussion, risks identified, and actions agreed
- SEND review meeting notes where behaviour risks are discussed
- Multi-agency meeting notes (e.g., with educational psychologist, SENCO, parents)
- Incident records where a pattern of behaviour indicates a risk assessment is needed and is incorporated into Appendix 2

The outcome of the risk assessment is typically a Positive Handling Plan (see below), which is the formal written document setting out how we'll support the pupil and what we'll do if restrictive interventions become necessary.

When to conduct a risk assessment:

- When a pupil's behaviour suggests they may require restrictive interventions
- Following an incident involving restrictive interventions (if no plan exists)
- When reviewing an existing Positive Handling Plan
- When a pupil with known behaviour needs joins the school
- When a pupil's needs change significantly

Positive Handling Plans (see Appendix 2)

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk, or who may potentially require restrictive interventions, should have a **Positive Handling Plan** (also known as a Behaviour Support Plan).

The plan will detail:

- Known triggers and early warning signs
- Preventative strategies and reasonable adjustments
- De-escalation techniques that work for this individual
- Any particular responses which are not recommended
- Any specific physical techniques which have been found to be effective (if applicable)
- Any techniques that have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past
- Communication strategies appropriate for the pupil
- Post-incident support approaches
- Arrangements for parental involvement and communication

Co-production and Review

Positive Handling Plans must be:

- **Co-produced** with parents, carers, pupils (where appropriate), and relevant professionals (e.g., educational psychologists, SENCO, external agencies)
- Reviewed regularly, at least termly
- Reviewed immediately following any incident involving restrictive interventions
- Considered alongside the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and any other relevant planning documents
- Tailored to take account of the pupil's age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs, and social context

15. Post-Incident Support

Following any incident involving restrictive interventions, it is the policy of our school to offer support to all involved.

Support for Pupils

Pupils involved in an incident will receive appropriate support, including:

- Time to calm down in a safe, supervised space
- Age-appropriate opportunities to express their feelings and give their account of what happened
- Restorative conversations to help pupils understand what happened, suggest alternative courses of action for the future, and appreciate other people's perspectives
- Immediate treatment for any injuries
- Communication with parents and involvement in follow-up discussions
- Support to re-integrate into normal school activities
- **Ongoing wellbeing support**, including counselling or follow-up support where appropriate

- Contribution to reviews of their support plans (where age-appropriate)

This is an opportunity for learning, and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future, and appreciate other people's perspectives.

Support for Staff

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the need of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident.

Generally, a member of the leadership team (ideally as an impartial facilitator not directly involved in the incident) would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence or restrictive interventions. This is to foster learning and relationship repair.

Staff involved in incidents will be offered:

- Time to rest or compose themselves if needed (the Headteacher will make arrangements for the class group to be supported/other arrangements put in place if the member of staff is not class based)
- Debriefing with a member of the senior leadership team to:
 - Ensure staff wellbeing
 - Foster learning and identify any improvements to practice
 - Review whether additional support or training is needed
- **Ongoing wellbeing support**, including access to occupational health or counselling services if needed
- Support throughout any complaints or allegations process
- The full backing of senior leadership when they have used force lawfully and appropriately

Support for Witnesses

Other pupils or staff who witnessed the incident may also be distressed. The school will:

- Check on the wellbeing of witnesses
- Provide age-appropriate explanations and reassurance to pupils who witnessed the incident
- Offer additional support where needed

Pupils involved in an incident will be offered an age-appropriate opportunity to give their account and contribute to the reviews of support plans.

Learning and Review

Following each incident, the school will:

- Review what happened and why restrictive interventions were necessary
- Identify whether anything could have been done differently
- Update the pupil's Positive Handling Plan if appropriate
- Consider whether additional staff training is needed
- Share learning across the staff team where appropriate (maintaining confidentiality)

16. Governance and Oversight

Governing Board Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is in place and complies with statutory guidance
- Monitoring the use of restrictive interventions through regular reports
- Challenging and supporting the Headteacher to minimise the use of restrictive interventions

- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training
- Ensuring the school's approach is effective in keeping pupils and staff safe
- Reviewing this policy at least every two years, or sooner if guidance changes

Reporting to Governors

The Headteacher will provide the governing board with **termly reports** including:

- Anonymised data on the number and nature of incidents
- Analysis of patterns and trends (e.g., time of day, location, pupils involved without identifying individuals)
- Details of any use of seclusion during the term, including circumstances and follow-up actions
- Actions taken to reduce future incidents
- Staff training completed or planned
- Any complaints or allegations and their outcomes

Annual report including:

- Comprehensive analysis of data over the year
- **Analysis of any use of seclusion and actions taken to prevent future occurrences**
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy
- Comparison with previous years
- Recommendations for improvements

The Full Governing Body will receive these anonymised termly reports on restrictive intervention incidents, to ensure accountability and compliance with this policy and the guidance it is based upon.

Headteacher Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy and ensuring all staff understand it
- Ensuring appropriate staff training is in place
- Monitoring and reviewing all incidents (the Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigate further action as required as part of the monitoring and evaluation process)
- Immediately reviewing any use of seclusion
- Arranging a meeting with parents to discuss the incident
- Considering whether multi-agency involvement is needed to prevent recurrence
- Ensuring accurate recording and reporting
- Supporting staff and pupils following incidents
- Reporting to governors as required
- Reviewing and updating this policy in line with statutory guidance

17. Frequently Asked Questions

These questions and answers are from the Department for Education guidance.

Q: I'm worried that if I use force a pupil or parent could make a complaint against me. Am I protected?

A: Yes, if you have acted lawfully. If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations.

Q: How do I know whether using a physical intervention is 'reasonable'?

A: The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the

consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. School staff should expect the full backing of their senior leadership team when they have used force.

Q: What about school trips?

A: The power may be used where the member of staff is lawfully in charge of the pupils, and this includes while on school trips.

Q: Can force be used on pupils with SEN or disabilities?

A: Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil concerned. Staff must make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Q: I'm a female teacher with a Year 10 class - there's no way I'd want to restrain or try to control my pupils. Am I expected to do so?

A: There is a power, not a duty, to use force so members of staff have discretion whether or not to use it. However, teachers and other school staff have a duty of care towards their pupils and it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty.

Q: Are there any circumstances in which a teacher can use physical force to punish a pupil?

A: No. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, which is illegal.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if:

- There are changes to statutory guidance
- Monitoring identifies concerns or areas for improvement
- Following any serious incident

Next review date: November 2026