Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School

Physical Intervention and Restrictive Practice Policy (Use of Reasonable Force)

October 2026

1) Introduction

The use of Restrictive Practices Policy has been developed to ensure that staff, pupils, parents/carers, and governors have an understanding of school guidelines for supporting pupils who have reached crisis point and are displaying behaviours that may put themselves or others in physical danger. Following these guidelines will ensure pupils are able to learn, and staff are able to teach, in a safe and secure environment.

This Policy will be applied consistently to pupils regardless of their age, SEND, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, faith background or personal circumstances. Respect for these protected characteristics will be considered as an important part of the whole school Inclusive practice and ethos.

Physical Intervention or Restrictive Practice is traumatising for all people involved and their use often damages relationships.

> ***'Physical restraint can be humiliating, terrifying and even life-threatening. It should only be used as the last resort, when there is no other way of de-escalating a situation where someone may harm themselves or others' (Campbell, 2018).***

As a school, we are committed to reducing the need to use restrictive practices. We recognise that restrictive physical interventions are only entered into as a last resort when dealing with potentially dangerous situations, where there is a risk of harm to children or adults. Restrictive physical interventions must only be used in a person's best interest and comply with Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School's duty of care to students, staff, and visitors.

This policy is available online on the school's website and on request from the school office.

Please consider this policy in conjunction with our other school policies.

2) The Legal Framework

Restrictive Practices

Restrictive practices are all practices which limit the freedom and independence of children to learn. They include the mildest of practices, for example, requiring children to follow a prescribed timetable and curriculum, through to the most restrictive of practices, for example, the use of physical intervention and restraint.

The key principle which underpins our decisions about the use of restrictive practices is that their use should be as minimal as possible whilst ensuring the safety of the child, other children, and the adults working with them. There will be occasions when to ensure safety and to minimise the risk of harm, adults may need to physically intervene, restrain a child, or impose a restriction on their liberty.

Restraint and deprivation of liberty

Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— (a) injury to any person (including the child); (b) serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). (2) *Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate.*

Seclusion

Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - 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. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. (Use of Reasonable Force and other restrictive interventions guidance, DFe, April 2026).

Seclusion may only be used when:

A pupil is posing a risk of injury to themselves or others due to behaviours such as biting, head butting, kicking and they need time in a ***safe environment*** with a trusted adult to help them calm. No child should be left in isolation within a contained environment with locked doors or barriers in place which places the child's well-being and/or safeguarding at risk.

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. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting duties'.

Staff Authorised to Use Reasonable Force

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006) and subsequent guidance published by the DfE in January 2016 entitled 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – Guidance for Headteachers and Staff' the Headteacher at our school is empowered to authorise those members of his/her staff to use reasonable force.

Here at Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School the Headteacher has empowered the following members of staff to use reasonable force:

- Teachers and any member of staff who have direct responsibility and a duty of care of pupils in school
- Other members of staff such as site management and administrative teams also have the power to use reasonable force if a circumstance should arise in which immediate action should be taken to reduce the risk of harm

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their Deputies in our school are identified on posters displayed in school. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, however all staff, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

The nominated Governor with responsibility for Behaviour is The Safeguarding Governor.

Deciding Whether to Use Reasonable Force

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and they should know this option may be available to them. 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:

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how, and why to use reasonable force. To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

Is it necessary?

- Staff will consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff will 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.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff will 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 will reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff will 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 will consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff will seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff will 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, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies will be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff will seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about the Personal Safety Plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about SEND, personal circumstance, and any experiences of trauma.

3) School Expectations

All staff should adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour to reward effort and build self-esteem. We work in partnerships with those who know the child best to:

- **Establish the functions of behaviours being displayed**
- **Understand the factors that may influence a child's behaviour**
- **Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing**

This approach will help to ensure that the use of early and proactive strategies is common practice. It aims to reduce the incidence of extreme behaviours and supports the reduction of restrictive practices in school.

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstance where there was no viable alternative. Staff should try to avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

Reducing the need to Intervene Physically

Although preventative measures may not always work, there are several steps which can be taken to help reduce the likelihood of situations arising where the power to use force may need to be exercised:

- Creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind
- Developing effective relationships between pupils and staff
- Adopting a whole-school approach to Inclusive practice
- Taking a structured approach to staff development that supports staff to use positive behaviour management strategies; managing conflict and to support one another during and after an incident
- Effectively managing individual incidents using a low-arousal response. Communicate calmy with the pupil; use non-threatening verbal and body language and ensure the pupil can see a way out of a situation in a supported manner
- Teaching pupils' strategies to use in a crisis (such as sensory integration, clear communication and non-verbal signals to indicate the need for support)
- Whenever practical, warning a pupil that force may have to be used before using it

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the pupils' Personal Safety Passport or Plans and understand situations which may provoke difficult behaviour, triggers, preventative strategies, and de-escalation techniques

Key Principles surrounding the use of a restrictive physical intervention.

1. Consider if you really need to use a restrictive physical intervention. If so then use the least restrictive first and return to the least restrictive as soon as possible.
2. Staff should not enter into a restrictive physical intervention if on their own, help must always be sought.
3. Physical Interventions should be employed using the minimum reasonable force for the shortest duration of time as possible and should not cause pain.
4. Staff should be assessing signs of injury or psychological distress during and after the intervention.
5. Staff should always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

Use of restrictive physical interventions in unforeseen and emergency situations.

On occasion, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations when they have no option but to use reasonable force to manage a child in crisis. E.g. where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury to the child or others. Any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action to safeguard the child from harm.

Staff should:

- Before using force- staff attempt to use diversion or diffusion to manage the situation.
- Staff should always report and record any use of physical intervention that occurs in unforeseen and emergency situations using school procedures.
- Parents/carers will always be informed immediately if physical force is used on their child.
- In line with Health and Safety Guidance on approved methods of physical intervention at **NO** time is a young person to be placed in a **Prone Restraint** (face down) or **basket holds or wraps** (the child's arms held around their own abdomen as these methods of restraint are barred under Health and Safety Guidance.

Safety Passports/Personal Safety Plans

All children who have the potential to display behaviours of concern either linked to SEND or Trauma will have a Risk Assessment document which details appropriate adult responses when supporting the child through co-regulation.

Staff training

The headteacher and our Reception Teacher have received training through NCC's Inclusive Behaviour Co-ordinator around preventative supports and de-escalation strategies will be certified by the Local Authority in Understanding Behaviour.

The majority of school staff have been trained annually on the importance of de-escalation methods by Jon Glover through NCC.

Staff at Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School, who have been identified as needing training in this area, will access training from NCC's Inclusive Behaviour Team.

In addition, all staff will have access to ongoing bespoke advice and guidance tailored to the needs of our setting through the use of anonymised consultations with the NCC's Inclusive Behaviour team about the needs of individual children as and when required.

Recording and Reporting Incidents

Any incidents where reasonable force was used to restrain a child will be recorded and parents/carers will be informed. Logs will be kept in the headteachers office (red file).

The governing body will ensure that a procedure is in place, and is followed by staff, for recording and reporting significant incidents where a member of staff has used reasonable force on a pupil, in line with the most recent safeguarding requirements issued to Governors and the updated guidance for schools in England **Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (DfE April) .**

Any use of restrictive practice is seen as significant and **must** be reported clearly and concisely as soon as practical after the incident. The requirement to record applies even if the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The following details will be recorded as a minimum:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- 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
- time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- 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
- any adaptations to provision, approach or to individual pupil plans that are needed.

Staff should also bear in mind the age of the child; any special education need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant. Sometimes an incident might not be considered significant in itself, but forms part of a pattern of repeated behaviour.

The senior Leadership Team or a member of staff will report any incident where reasonable force has been used to parents as soon after the incident as possible except where:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over; or
- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

A report of the incident made to parents will include the following details as a minimum, in writing:

- time, date, location and approximate length of time the force was used
- brief account of what type of reasonable force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance

All incidents requiring the use of restrictive physical intervention will be thoroughly and systematically documented within school records using a red file in the Headteachers office.

The incident must be directly reported to the Headteacher, and staff involved will be debriefed to review and analyse the incident. A review and analysis of the incident will take place as soon as possible thereafter, and risk assessment will be updated or set up with the aim of ensuring any lessons are learned and any identified changes to the environment or support plans are acted upon/implemented.

4) Post-incident Support

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and can result in injuries to the child or staff. After an incident has subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional and psychological support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures.

Repair and Restore Relationships through Restorative Conversations

Restrictive practice damages relationships. It is vital that the child is given the opportunity to reflect on the incident with the support of the adults involved to ensure the child's voice is captured and any restoration can be implemented as a result to repair any harm and facilitate open, direct communication.

Key questions to support a restorative conversation with the child:

- What happened?
- How did you feel…….?
- Who was affected by this?
- What needs to happen now?
- What could we have done differently?

5) Complaints and allegations

Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School will also make clear to pupils/parents and carers that they have a right, and are able, to question/complain about the use of reasonable force. We will ensure that mechanisms are in place for pupils, parents, carers, and staff to voice their opinions, comments, or concerns.

Complaints and allegations will be taken seriously, and should follow the procedures outlined in the school complaints policy which is available on the schools website.

The role of the LADO:

Working together to Safeguard Children (2023) requires each Local Authority to have a LADO. In Nottinghamshire the role of the LADO is undertaken by the Managing Allegations Service.

The purpose of the LADO role is to address allegations/concerns made against adults working or volunteering with children in Nottinghamshire.

Working together to Safeguard Children (2025) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) outline the criteria to be applied to allegations and concerns about an individual when it is indicated the individual may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- Behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Concerns may relate to either a person's work/voluntary role or their behaviour outside the work setting.

LADO role in Restraints of under 18s

KCSiE 25 Paragraph 372.

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the police and/or local authority children's social care will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children. If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should take into account that teachers and other school and college staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

The LADO should be notified when:

- A child is injured or may have been injured as a result of appropriate/permitted restraint practice or actual/perceived use of excessive force,
- A child and/or parent/carer makes an allegation and/or complaint against a professional following a restraint of a child,
- A professional, other adult or child reports an observed or perceived inappropriate restraint of or practice with a child by another professional.

The responsibility of the employer/person receiving the complaint is to:

- Ensure the child is safe and refer to MASH/Police as appropriate
- Consider the actions required to safeguard this child and other children in the setting
- Refer to LADO using the LADO Online Contact Form (link below) providing clear details of the incident, the adult of concern (including personal details to safeguard the adult's own children- consider any additional voluntary roles the adult holds); details of the child and your own details.

Link to LADO online Contact Form - Submit a LADO Contact Form

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed by the governing body as required.

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the Safeguarding Governor is the Link Governor, who also has responsibility in this area.

Date approved by the Governing Body: Nov 2026
Date to be reviewed: as and when required.