



# Restrictive Interventions - including the use of Reasonable Force Policy

<b>Document Control</b>	
Title	Reasonable Force and Physical Intervention Policy
Policy Number	MHS052
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Purpose of the policy	<p>The purpose of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safeguard and protect all members of the school's community online</li><li>• Identify approaches to educate and raise awareness of online safety throughout the community</li><li>• Enable all staff to work safely and responsibly, to model positive behaviour online and to manage professional standards and practice when using technology</li><li>• Identify clear procedures to use when responding to online safety concerns.</li></ul>
Related policies and guidance	<p>Behaviour and Relationships Policy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools DFE</p>
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Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Manchester Hospital School has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. Manchester Hospital School will take into account equality considerations when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented.

Manchester Hospital School serves the needs of a very large and diverse range of children, young people and their families at times when they are extremely vulnerable. Our core purpose as a school is to uphold the child's right to Education and our policies and procedures are necessary to keep staff and children safe . We acknowledge that our students are often living with a range of very complex medical conditions including mental ill health and therefore we keep the needs of the student at the heart of all decisions. We will , therefore, work within the parameters of all statutory policies whilst seeking to understand and support the child's long term education and health needs.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Every child and young person has a right to be treated with respect and dignity, and deserves to have their needs recognised and be given the right support. Some children and young people with learning disabilities, neurodivergence or mental health struggles may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others and are at heightened risk of restrictive intervention to minimise the impact of their behaviour,

on them and on other people. At Manchester Hospital School, our preferred approach is not to use restrictive interventions. Instead, we use positive behaviour support and other alternatives which can de-escalate challenging behaviour, and tackle the reasons for it at source.

However, on rare occasions there may be a situation that requires some form of restrictive intervention by staff.

Our Restrictive Interventions - including Reasonable Force Policy is based upon the following principles:

- Some pupils will require restrictive intervention to prevent them from causing harm or danger to others and/ or themselves
- Restrictive Intervention and Reasonable Force should be used as a **last resort** to support children and young people in times of crisis. Reasonable Force should be avoided wherever possible
- Staff will continuously seek opportunities to communicate, **assess the situation, look and listen and divert /de-escalate**
- Any restrictive intervention will be **reasonable, proportionate and necessary** - in the pupil's and staff's best interest
- Parents/carers will be contacted by the school when their child has been involved in restrictive intervention, at the latest by the end of the school day.
- The incident will be recorded on CPOMS in a timely manner, as well as holding a staff debrief to identify trigger points and any potential learning.
- Schools will work closely with parents and outside agencies in ensuring that pupils' needs are addressed and advice is considered and implemented.

**Restrictive intervention must:**

- Only be used to de-escalate a potentially dangerous situation
- Never be entered into lightly, reasonable adjustments will have been considered if appropriate
- Not be a substitute for a positive intervention/behaviour management
- Not be used offensively as a threat or a punishment
- Support the child/young person to maintain self-control
- Be administered calmly and rationally, not in response to anger or frustration
- Be the result of a professional judgment about the young person's safety, taking account of the age and ability of the young person
- Involve the minimum force necessary
- Be in the child/young person's best interests
- Be planned; an emergency response is only justified on the first occasion
- Always be the last resort (i.e. means other than force were attempted and found to be insufficient)
- Be applied only until the immediate threat has passed

## 2. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Headteacher who have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- causing injury to his/herself or others
- committing an offence
- damaging property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline.

This policy has been written with DFE 'Restrictive interventions - including use of Reasonable Force in schools 2026'. [Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools - GOV.UK](#)

## 3. DEFINITION OF REASONABLE FORCE

The DFE guidance (2026) on the 'Restrictive interventions - including use of Reasonable Force in schools' defines the following terms:

**Restrictive intervention:** a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this document. 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.

**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.

All members of staff who can use reasonable force have a legal power to use it. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply 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.

When possible, restrictive intervention will not be used.

When it is necessary, it will be carried out by appropriately trained staff.

**The DFE Guidance 2026 on 'Restrictive interventions - including use of Reasonable Force in schools 2026'** states that 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.**

**Schools cannot:**

» use force as a punishment - it is always unlawful to use force as a 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.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Headteachers and authorised staff can use such force, as is reasonable given the circumstances, to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items': knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property. Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules. Staff will always conduct a search with another member of staff present. This is to safeguard the child and staff member against complaint or accusation.

#### **4. OUR APPROACH:**

We aim to avoid the need for restrictive intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour and Relationships Policy. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which restrictive intervention would be necessary or appropriate. Staff will ensure that restrictive intervention has been determined reasonable, proportionate or necessary.

Staff exercise their own professional judgement in situations which arise requiring restrictive intervention or reasonable force. Staff act within our school's policy on Behaviour and Relationships, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Once again it is stressed that restrictive intervention is only used when all other strategies have failed to have the desired effect on a pupil's behaviour.

Staff should use the below flow-chart for ensuring that the incident is managed safely and due care has been taken to ensure effective follow-up:

## Preventative Whole School Approach



Please note: 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. Staff should abide by the guidance in the Staff Code of Conduct with regard to physical contact with a pupil.

Staff are aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They therefore take reasonable action to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. This being said, staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

## **5. USE OF RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION**

Restrictive intervention is applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self control. It never takes a form which could be seen as punishment.

In all circumstances, alternative methods are used as appropriate with physical intervention as a last resort. All staff will be trained in Level 1 Team Teach in April 2026 during our staff INSET day. Level 1 training is sufficient for our staff as this training is intended for "individuals supporting children, young people and vulnerable adults in low-risk Education and Health and Social Care settings."

**In the exceptional circumstances when restrictive intervention becomes necessary, staff DO:**

- Summon help / involve another member of staff if possible
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Use simple and clear language
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for them to remove the hold (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax the hold in response to the pupil's compliance

**DON'T:**

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Act in temper
- Allow a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the hold
- Use restrictive intervention as a punishment
- Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

## 6. ACTIONS AFTER AN INCIDENT

Restrictive intervention often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Headteacher is informed of any incident as soon as possible and takes responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff debriefs the pupil concerned: the debrief includes consideration of the circumstances that precipitated the incident and exploring ways in which future incidents can be avoided. Any other individuals involved in the incident are offered support. If the behaviour is part of an on-going pattern, the DSL and SENDCO will work together to create a PI plan and risk assessment. This will be developed using involvement of external agencies and shared on Edukey.

As per the legal requirement, all incidents of restrictive intervention - including the use of reasonable force - will be recorded and documented on CPOMS and parents will be informed immediately.

## 7. RECORDING

**Restrictive intervention incidents are logged on CPOMS.**

Included in the log will be detail of what happened previously that meant restrictive intervention was necessary to keep people safe:

- What did the child do which warranted a restrictive intervention?
- Were any other interventions required?

When recording restrictive intervention, staff must explain how the intervention was in the child's 'best interests', was 'reasonable', 'proportionate' and 'necessary' to the situation and level of risk.

Recordings should detail who was present, and what happened leading up to the incident;

- What happened prior to the incident, can any triggers be identified
- Who was present?
- Any attempts of de-escalation
- How did the child respond? Were there any injuries? How these occurred? How they were treated? Where these were reported
- What happened afterwards?
- What will change for the child? (e.g. review of their including risk assessment)
- Is it explained on who held and where and/or body maps to illustrate/detail what the restrictive intervention looked like?

**All incidents should be recorded in a timely manner.**

Each recording should be categorised with the “use of physical intervention/reasonable force” in order for data to be analysed and examine any possible patterns of behaviour by staff or by children.

In the event of any future complaint or allegation, this record provides essential and accurate information.

Parents/carers will be contacted by the school when their child has been involved in restrictive intervention, at the latest by the end of the school day, this may be verbal and in writing on the schools communication system.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENTS**

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. A physical intervention plan (PI plan) addresses:

- › Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- › Ways of avoiding ‘triggers’ if these are known
- › Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- › Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- › Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- › The school’s duty of care to all pupils and staff

## **9. POST-INCIDENT SUPPORT**

When pupils/students are dysregulated and unable to control their emotions, physical intervention may be unavoidable. In these circumstances, it is the behaviour of the child or young person, which determines the degree of force required to bring them under control, which may lead to injury rather than the intention of the member of staff to cause harm.

Incidents that require use of restrictive interventions can be upsetting for children and young people, school staff involved and parents.

After incidents have subsided, it is important that the following is considered for staff and children:

- Thoughts, feelings and emotions
- Emotional ‘first aid’
- Physical check

It is recommended that staff have a post-incident review, which will focus on actions and behaviours which will review the incident for the individual child and the needs of the wider staff and school community:

- Who did what, when, why and how?
- What was the outcome?
- What does it tell us about what we already know about the young person?
- What have we learnt and what or how does this inform our practice?
- When will the plan be reviewed or developed to aim to reduce the risk of restrictive intervention being required in any future incidents?
- How long after the incident should a further review take place? (i.e. if restrictive intervention has reduced, why? If it has increased, why?)

## 10. COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Staff are expected to follow this policy.

Where staff fall short of the expectations of this policy, the Headteacher will allocate staff to conduct a preliminary investigation.

If following preliminary investigations, it is deemed necessary, the Headteacher will contact the LADO in line with our Child Protection Policy and Procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

We will review this policy annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- › Behaviour and relationships Policy
- › Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## 11. USEFUL LINKS:

### References

[Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

[Restrictive intervention and use of reasonable force DFE](#)

[Reasonable force, restraint & restrictive practices in alternative provision and special schools, 2024](#)

[Inclusion Toolkit | One Education](#)

[Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024](#)