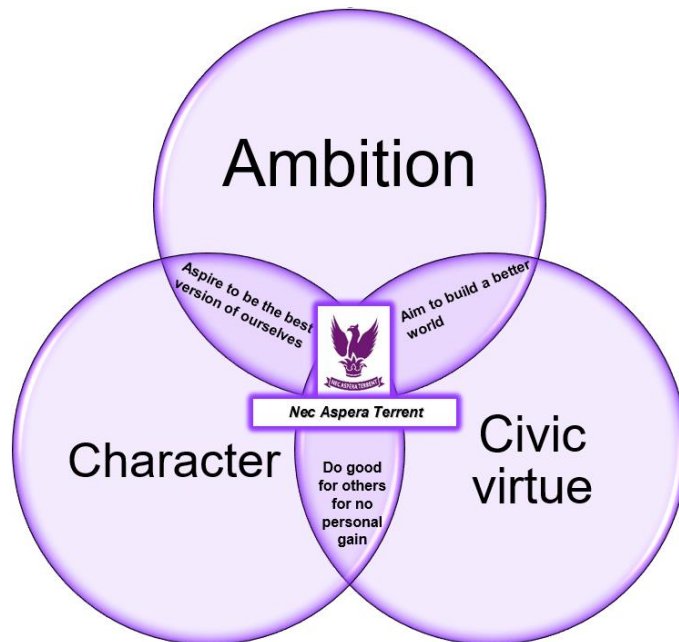




DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

USE OF RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY (INCLUDING THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE AND SECLUSION)



Reviewed by CSWP on 26 February 2026
Ratified by the Full Governing Body:
Date of Next Review: March 2027



DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN STUDENTS

Introduction

This policy sets out how our school prevents, manages, records and reviews the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, to keep pupils and others safe while protecting pupils' rights and wellbeing. It applies to all pupils on roll and to all staff and authorised adults acting on behalf of the school (including supply staff and volunteers working under the Headteacher's direction). It reflects statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) effective from 1 April 2026 and replaces previous guidance issued for September 2025.

The policy replaces our previous "Use of Reasonable Force" policy and aligns with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance '**Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools**', which becomes effective from 1 April 2026. Until 31 March 2026, schools must continue to have regard to the 2013 guidance '**Use of reasonable force in schools**'.

This policy also reflects the DfE's new statutory requirements regarding **recording and reporting each significant incident involving the use of force, and the legal duty to record and report the use of seclusion, commencing in 2025–2026.**

Legal Framework

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance: '**Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools**'. It complies with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Children Act 1989, the Equality Act 2010, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Key Definitions

Restrictive intervention: Any action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom; includes the use of reasonable force and non-force restraint (e.g., removing a mobility aid) where movement is restricted.

Reasonable force: Physical contact that is no more than necessary, used for the minimum time required to achieve a legitimate aim (e.g., preventing injury or serious disorder). It must be necessary, proportionate and lawful.

Significant incident (use of force): An incident involving reasonable force that meets DfE thresholds for statutory recording and reporting (e.g., serious risk of harm, notable duration, injury, or other seriousness indicators). Schools must record and report each significant incident to parents.

Seclusion: Placing a pupil alone in a room or area and preventing them from leaving. Seclusion is a restrictive intervention, permitted only as a safety measure and never as a disciplinary response. It carries specific recording and reporting duties.

Time-out / Withdrawal (not seclusion): A pupil works or calms in a designated space but is free to leave; commonly used behaviour strategies and not classed as seclusion.

Principles

We will:

1. Prevent and de-escalate — prioritise early support, positive relationships, positive behaviour strategies and de-escalation to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.
2. Act only where necessary to keep people safe or to prevent significant harm/serious disorder and use the least restrictive option for the shortest time.
3. Ensure practice follows trauma-informed principles, is respectful and protects students' dignity.
4. Make reasonable adjustments for students with SEND and other vulnerabilities, and plan proactively to reduce risk.
5. Record, report and review all significant incidents of force and all uses of seclusion.
6. The Governing body will review data to monitor its use.

Reasonable Force

The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the circumstances do not warrant it. Any force should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Decisions on whether the precise circumstances of an incident justify the use of force must be reasonable. Typically, such decisions must be made quickly, with little time for reflection. However, the judgement on whether to use force and what force should always depend on the circumstances of each case and- in the case of students with SEN and/ or disabilities- information about the individual(s) concerned there may be the need to make reasonable adjustments. Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use the minimum force required to achieve the desired result). There is no assumption that any member of staff must take the decision to use reasonable force.

Using force

Before using force, staff should wherever practicably tell the student to stop and communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident. Any use of physical intervention must be **necessary, proportionate**, and used **only to prevent an immediate risk of harm**, serious disorder, or significant damage to property. Staff should use de-escalation and early intervention wherever safe and practicable. Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a student, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as the risk has passed. The priority at all times is to maintain the **safety, dignity and wellbeing** of the pupil, staff and others.

Preventive and de-escalation approaches

Staff will use the following to minimise the need for restrictive interventions:

- **Positive behaviour expectations**, relationships and routines; early help plans.

- **Calming, deflection and distraction** techniques; regulated tone and communication; offering choices; allowing space/time.
- **Environmental adjustments** (e.g., quiet space that is not seclusion), **curriculum and sensory supports** where appropriate.

However, it may not always be possible to avoid using restrictive interventions. Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of use of reasonable force include

- A student attack on a member of staff or another student
- Students are fighting, causing injury to themselves or others
- A student is committing, or on the verge of committing, deliberate damage to property
- A student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous material or object
- A student persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave the classroom or a space in the school and this presents risks to themselves or to the safety of others
- A student is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or visit and is presenting risks to themselves and or the safety of others

If a student absconds from a class or tries to leave school other than at an authorised time this is not enough on its own to justify use of force. However, it would be justifiable where allowing a student to leave would:

- Entail serious risks to the student's safety, to the safety of other students and staff, or of damage to property; or
- Lead to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline such as disrupting other classes or learning environments, where risks are presented to the safety of students, staff or visitors

In these examples use of force would be reasonable and lawful if it was clear that the behaviour was sufficiently dangerous or disruptive to warrant physical intervention of the degree applied and could not realistically be dealt with by any other means.

The following kinds of interventions are reasonable:

- interposing between students or blocking a student's path to prevent injury or exposure to safety risks or danger
- Guiding, holding, pulling or leading a student by the arm to move them away from danger or risk of harm to themselves or others
- shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
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- gently blocking a student's path to prevent them from accessing a hazardous situation.

Where a student attempts to leave a room or area and this does not present a safety risk, staff should avoid escalating the situation. Passive blocking is not effective. If the student will not respond to verbal instructions, it is usually safer to allow the

pupil to leave and follow up immediately with appropriate pastoral or behaviour support. Physical restraint should only be used when the pupil poses an immediate risk to themselves or others, and only for the minimum time necessary.

The following would be deemed unreasonable because they create a foreseeable risk of harm and/or violate safeguarding principles:

- holding a student by the neck or collar, or in any way that would restrict breathing
- slapping, punching, twisting limbs
- holding or pulling by the hair
- staff should always avoid touching or restraining a student in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct or compromising professional boundaries
- holding a pupil face down on the ground
- Using force that deliberately destabilises a pupil (e.g., tripping, pushing them off balance)

The staff to which this power applies are:

- A. Any teacher who works at the school
- B. Any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of students. They are:
 - Support staff whose job normally includes supervising students such as peripatetic music teachers, learning support assistants, learning mentors and school meals supervisors
 - Employees who are in school at set times of the year, for example exam invigilators
 - Staff whose job does not normally involve supervising students, for example administration staff, site staff, cleaners and technicians
 - Unpaid volunteers, for example parents accompanying students on school visits, outside speakers

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
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

- Reasonable force **may** be used when it is necessary to conduct a lawful search for these items, in line with DfE guidance.
- Staff must follow the DfE guidance for **safe searching**, recording, and informing parents where appropriate.
- Force **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

Prevention and De-escalation

Staff must use early support, de-escalation techniques, and positive behaviour strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions. Physical intervention should only be used as a last resort.

Considerations for SEND and Vulnerable Students

Staff must consider the individual needs of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and make reasonable adjustments. Interventions must be appropriate and tailored to the pupil's needs.

Seclusion — conditions and safeguards

Where there is an immediate safety risk and no less restrictive option is suitable, a pupil may be placed alone in a room/area and prevented from leaving (seclusion).

Seclusion must be:

1. Used only as a safety measure, never as a disciplinary response.
2. Necessary and proportionate, for the minimum time required; kept under continuous review.
3. Supervised appropriately and in a space that is safe, respectful and suitable (e.g., ventilation, visibility, access to water/toilet if relevant).
4. Recorded and reported to parents/carers in line with the legal duty (see section 11).

Time-out or withdrawal spaces used as part of planned regulation are not seclusion when the pupil is free to leave. (Signage/locks/practices must not inadvertently convert these into seclusion.)

2. WHAT TO DO IF REASONABLE FORCE OR RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION HAS BEEN USED

Immediately after incidents:

- The incident must be reported to the Head or DSL as soon as possible. If the incident is reported to the DSL, the staff member must then in turn report the incident to the Head.
- Offer first aid/medical assessment if required.

As soon as possible the Head of year should:

- Contact parents/ carers
- Interview student(s) and obtain a written statement

As soon as possible staff should

- complete a Use of Reasonable Force Form (attached to the back of this guidance or available from the Administration Office) and pass it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head

- submit an additional written report to the Head indicating
 - name(s) of student(s) involved
 - place of incident
 - name(s) of witnesses to the incident
 - details of what took place, how the incident began and progressed, including details of the student's behaviour, any words said, the steps taken to defuse/calm the situation,
 - the degree of force used, how this was applied and for how long
 - the student's response and the outcome of the incident
 - details of any injury suffered by the student, another student, a member of staff or anyone else and any damage to property
 - any damage to property which occurred

Statutory recording and reporting

1. **Use of force (significant incident)** — the school **must record and report** each significant incident involving the use of force.** A written report to parents should include, as a minimum: time/date/location and approximate duration; why force was necessary; what type/degree of force was used; any injuries sustained. The school should inform parents **as soon as practicable after the incident**.
2. **Seclusion and non-force restraint** — the school **must record and (in writing) report** each incident of seclusion to parents/carers as required by the 2026 guidance. (Maintained schools must supply a copy of the written record; academies/independent/non-maintained special schools must provide written information.)
3. **Internal review** — SLT will review each incident within **5 school days** to confirm compliance and identify learning.

What we record

We will maintain a secure log that captures (as applicable): student(s), staff, antecedents, de-escalation attempted, legal purpose for intervention, type/degree/duration of force or seclusion, injuries/damage, support provided, parent notification, and review actions. (Aligned to DfE expectations for recording.)

Governance: data, assurance and complaints

- **Termly** safeguarding/behaviour reports to the governing body will include anonymised data on restrictive interventions, analysis of **patterns and disproportionality**, and resulting improvement actions (e.g., training/coaching, plan reviews, environmental changes).
- Complaints or allegations will be handled under the school's complaints and safeguarding procedures. (See DfE guidance for further advice.)

Training and competence

- All staff receive **regular training** on prevention, de-escalation, safeguarding and legal duties; identified staff receive **enhanced training** in safe restrictive practices appropriate to their role.
- Induction covers this policy and related behaviour/safeguarding policies. Refresher training is provided in response to data trends or incidents.

Linked policies and documents

- Behaviour Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; SEND Policy and Information Report; Searching, Screening & Confiscation Policy; Educational Visits Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Complaints Policy.

Implementation and review

- **Ratification:** This policy should be ratified by the Governing Body before 1 April 2026 and communicated to all staff.
- **Publication:** The policy will be published on the school website and staff hub.
- **Review:** Annually (or sooner in response to changes in law/guidance or analysis of incident data).

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- The D of E guidance on Use of Reasonable Force (www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442222/Use_of_Reasonable_Force_Guidance.pdf).



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Please return this completed form to the Administration Manager in the main Administration Office for recording in the incident book

Date	
Time reported	
Student(s) involved in incident	
Tutor Group	
Staff involved in incident	

Time and place of incident	
Reported to	
Staff written report completed and passed to DSL for action/ to place on/in student(s) file(s)	
Student(s) written report(s) completed and passed to HOY for action/ to place on/in student(s) file(s)	