BALLARD

BESPOKE EDUCATION

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS (INCLUDING USE OF REASONABLE FORCE) POLICY	
Reviewed by:	**Chris Jackson, Deputy Head Pastoral**
Review Date:	**April 2026**
Next Review due:	**April 2027**

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Restrictive Interventions (including use of Reasonable Force) Policy

1. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

This policy sets out the School's approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in order to:

- Safeguard pupils, staff and others from harm
- Ensure any use of force is lawful, proportionate and necessary
- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation
- Protect pupils' dignity, rights and welfare
- Protect staff from allegations through clear guidance and procedures

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health & Safety Policy

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, including teaching staff, support staff, volunteers, supply staff and contractors who may work directly with pupils.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- DfE Guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

Restrictive intervention
Any action taken to prevent, restrict or control a pupil's movement or behaviour, including physical and non-physical methods, used to reduce immediate risk of harm.

Reasonable force
Physical force used by staff to prevent injury, serious disruption or damage, using no more force than necessary and for the shortest possible time.

Restraint
A non-disciplinary intervention that limits a pupil's movement, with or without direct physical contact.

Seclusion
A non-disciplinary safety measure where a pupil is kept in a space away from others and prevented from leaving, only to manage immediate risk during high emotional dysregulation.

Significant incident
Any incident where the use of force goes beyond everyday appropriate physical contact and meets the statutory threshold for recording and reporting.

5. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING ANY USE OF RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION

Any use of restrictive intervention must be:

1. **Necessary** – no less restrictive option will prevent harm
2. **Proportionate** – the least restrictive and least forceful option used
3. **Time-limited** – used for the shortest possible duration
4. **Welfare-focused** – taking account of the pupil's age, needs, vulnerability and dignity
5. **Lawful** – compliant with legislation and guidance

6. WHEN REASONABLE FORCE MAY BE USED

Staff may use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Injuring themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing serious damage to property
- Seriously disrupting good order or discipline

Force must never be used as a punishment.

7. UNACCEPTABLE USES OF FORCE

The following are never permitted:

- Force used as a sanction or punishment
- Any restraint that restricts breathing, airway, circulation or applies pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen

- Holding a pupil face-down or on the ground except to immediately disengage into a safer position
- Force that is deliberately painful, humiliating, or degrading

8. OTHER ACCEPTABLE PHYSICAL CONTACT

This policy does not prohibit appropriate physical contact, including:

- First aid
- Guiding or escorting a pupil
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Demonstrating physical skills (e.g. PE, music)

A “no-contact” culture is neither appropriate nor safe.

9. SECLUSION

Seclusion may be used only:

- As a non-disciplinary safety measure
- Where there is an immediate risk of harm
- When the pupil is highly dysregulated and not acting with intent

Requirements:

- The space must be safe and non-threatening
- The pupil must be supervised at all times
- Seclusion must end as soon as the risk reduces
- Seclusion must never be enforced through threat or punishment

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported.

10. PUPILS WITH SEND OR ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY

The School recognises that pupils with SEND or medical needs may experience distress that escalates behaviour.

Staff must:

- Understand individual triggers where known
- Use agreed de-escalation strategies and reasonable adjustments
- Follow behaviour support plans and risk assessments
- Ensure any restrictive intervention considers sensory, communication or trauma-related needs

11. RECORDING AND REPORTING (STATUTORY REQUIREMENT)

All significant incidents involving force, restraint or seclusion must:

- Be recorded as soon as practicable (ideally the same day) using the school MyConcern system

- Include:
    - Names of pupil(s) and staff involved
    - Date, time, location and duration
    - Description of incident and triggers
    - De-escalation strategies used
    - Type and degree of intervention
    - Injuries and post-incident support
- Be reported to parents as soon as practicable (normally same day) unless doing so would cause serious harm

12. POST-INCIDENT SUPPORT

Following an incident:

- Medical assessment must be arranged where appropriate
- A debrief should take place with:
    - The pupil
    - The staff member(s) involved
- Emotional wellbeing and safeguarding needs must be considered
- Behaviour support plans must be reviewed if appropriate

13. COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Complaints regarding restrictive interventions will be managed under the School's Complaints Policy. Allegations of inappropriate use of force will be managed in line with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- KCSIE procedures

14. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Headmaster and Governors will:

- Monitor recorded incidents
- Review patterns and proportionality
- Ensure compliance with Equality Act duties
- Review this policy annually

Chris Jackson
Deputy Head Pastoral
April 2026

Policy Log:
April 2026 – New standalone policy created in line with updated DfE guidance

ANNEX A: STAFF QUICK-REFERENCE GUIDE – LAWFUL USE OF FORCE

This page is a reminder – not a substitute for the full policy

✅ YOU MAY USE REASONABLE FORCE IF IT IS:

✓ Necessary
✓ Proportionate
✓ To prevent harm, crime, serious damage, or dangerous disruption

🛑 YOU MUST NEVER:

✗ Use force as punishment
✗ Restrict breathing, airway or circulation
✗ Apply pressure to neck, chest or abdomen
✗ Use techniques that are deliberately painful or humiliating

🧠 STOP AND THINK:

- Can this be de-escalated?
- Is there a safer, less restrictive option?
- Does this pupil have SEND, trauma or medical needs?

🚀 IF YOU USE FORCE:

- Use the **least amount** for the **shortest time**
- Communicate calmly and clearly
- Stop as soon as risk reduces

📝 AFTER THE INCIDENT – YOU MUST:

✅ Record the incident (same day)
✅ Inform senior staff immediately
✅ Support the pupil and yourself
✅ Cooperate with reporting to parents

📞 IF IN DOUBT

Speak to:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- A Deputy Head
- Senior Leadership