

Hillside Community Primary School



Use of Positive Handling & Restrictive Physical Intervention

Mission Statement

We at Hillside strive for excellence in education by providing a safe, secure, caring family environment, where individuals are valued and respected, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Approved by:	Adell Smith & Governing Body
Reviewed on :	June 2026
Next Review due by:	June 2027

Introduction

Hillside Community Primary School is committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which pupils can thrive. We recognise that positive relationships, clear boundaries, emotional regulation support and high-quality behaviour practice are the foundation of our culture.

Physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort, and only when necessary to prevent harm to the pupil or others, or to prevent serious damage to property. All interventions must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Hillside Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Safer Working Practices Guidance
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour in Schools (DfE)
 - [Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
 - [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance (DfE)
 - [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)
- Statutory Guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE April 2026)
 - [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#)

Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Ensure restrictive interventions are used safely, lawfully and appropriately
- Protect pupils and staff from harm
- Reduce the need for restraint or seclusion through positive behavioural strategies
- Ensure all staff understand their duty of care and legal responsibilities
- Clarify expectations regarding recording, reporting and oversight
- Promote consistency in practice across the school
- Support pupils' dignity, rights and emotional well-being
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training

Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 & 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Education Acts 1996 & 2011
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The SEND Code of Practice
- DfE Statutory Guidance (April 2026)

Key Definitions (Updated in line with 2026 DfE Guidance)

Restrictive Intervention

Any physical or non-physical action used to prevent, restrict or subdue a pupil's movement.

Reasonable Force

Using no more force than is necessary, for the shortest duration, to prevent harm.

Restraint

An intervention (physical or non-physical) that immobilises or restricts movement.

Seclusion

The non-disciplinary, forced confinement of a pupil alone in a room/area where they are prevented from leaving. Used only as a safety measure during acute dysregulation.

Significant Incident

Any incident where staff use force beyond appropriate physical contact (e.g., guiding a pupil by the hand) OR use physical force as part of a wider restrictive intervention.

Appropriate Physical Contact

Physical contact for care, guidance or safety, such as:

- Holding a pupil's hand to guide
- Administering first aid
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Demonstrating techniques during PE or music
- Supporting a pupil to access a self-chosen calm space

Prevention and De-escalation

Hillside prioritises early help, proactive strategies, and relational practice to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.

Strategies include:

- Positive relationships and consistent emotional support
- Understanding triggers and communication needs
- Environmental adjustments
- Sensory regulation approaches (OT-informed)
- SALT-supported communication aids
- Distraction, redirection and low-arousal responses
- Clear, calm, non-confrontational communication
- Co-produced Behaviour Support Plans (parents, staff, professionals, pupils where appropriate)
- Staff use de-escalation strategies unless immediate safety requires intervention.

Minimising the Need for Use of Force

The school creates a calm, predictable environment through:

- Clear routines and expectations
- High-quality curriculum and personalised support
- Individual Behaviour Plans and Risk Assessments
- Staff training in positive handling, Team Teach and trauma-informed practice

- Promoting emotional literacy and regulation skills

Restrictive interventions are considered only when:

- Risks of not intervening outweigh risks of intervening
- De-escalation has been attempted where safe to do so

Primary Prevention

- Avoiding known triggers
- Understanding triggers
- Predictable routines
- Positive relationships
- Staff training and appropriate deployment
- Co-produced behaviour plans (All about me/ Spotlight to Success)

Secondary Prevention (Non-Physical Diffusion)

- Early recognition of escalating behaviours
- Supportive interventions to prevent crisis
- Only if risk escalates rapidly and primary prevention fails might early physical intervention be justified to prevent harm

• Types of Incident

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 permits reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Self-injury
- Causing harm to others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Behaving in a way that disrupts good order and discipline, whether in class, elsewhere on school grounds, or during authorised off-site activities

Incidents fall into three categories:

1. Immediate self-defence or imminent risk of injury
2. Developing risk of injury or significant property damage
3. Behaviour compromising good order or discipline

Examples for categories 1 and 2:

- A pupil attacks staff or peers
- Pupils fighting
- Deliberate or near damage to property
- Risk of injury from rough play or misuse of dangerous items
- Unsafe running in corridors or stairways
- A pupil attempting to leave class or school when at risk

Examples for category 3:

- Refusal to leave a classroom when instructed
- Serious disruption to lessons

Recommended responses:

- Offer calming activities or allow withdrawal from the task
- Give clear, positive instructions on expected behaviour
- Use praise and reward for any effort to calm or comply
- Warn before physical intervention, which should stop once compliance is achieved; seek assistance if possible
- Use positive handling techniques (e.g., Team Teach) to prevent harm

When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Staff may use restrictive interventions to prevent:

- Injury to the pupil or others
- Serious damage to property
- A criminal offence
- Behaviour that seriously disrupts order or safety

Interventions must always be reasonable, proportionate, necessary.

Staff must consider:

- Whether other strategies may be effective
- Whether the intervention risks escalating harm
- The pupil's age, size, SEND, trauma history, communication needs
- The pupil's dignity and emotional welfare
- Whether the pupil understands what is happening

Using Force

- No legal definition of reasonable force exists however, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it within Hillside Community Primary School:
- Positive handling and physical intervention uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil from harming themselves, others, or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Staff would be expected to follow the School Behaviour Management Policy/One page profile/Emotional Support Plan in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate staff would then be expected to employ other Team Teach techniques that they have been trained in

Any use of force by staff outside of the Team Teach training framework would need to be judged on whether it was **reasonable, proportionate and necessary** in the particular circumstances concerned.

All the techniques taught take account of a young person's;

- age
- gender
- level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
- special needs
- social context

They also provide a gradual, graded system of response.

- **Acceptable measures of physical intervention (PI)**

The use of Team Teach PI techniques can be justified if:

- (a) it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident;
- (a) it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent;
- (b) it is carried out as the minimum needed to achieve the desired result;
- (c) the age, understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- (d) it is likely to achieve the desired result.

- **Airway and Circulation:**

- Explicitly forbid any restraint that affects "airway, breathing or circulation," such as covering the mouth/nose or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.

- **Ground Restraint:**

- If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff must "release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative" as quickly as possible.

First Aid

Most staff are trained in First Aid. Any of these may be called upon to implement First Aid or to seek further guidance from in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention.

Pupils

Where a pupil has sufficient understanding their behaviour should be discussed with them.

Unacceptable Uses of Force

Staff must never:

- Use force as punishment
- Use restraint that affects airway, breathing or circulation
- Hold a pupil face-down or apply pressure to the neck, chest, torso or abdomen
- Use techniques requiring pain compliance
- Use seclusion as discipline
- Threaten seclusion as punishment

If a pupil ends up on the ground unintentionally, staff must immediately release and reposition safely.

Seclusion (Updated for 2026 Requirements)

Seclusion is only permitted when:

- A pupil is highly dysregulated and poses immediate risk of harm
- It is not a disciplinary response
- The pupil is supervised at all times

- The environment is safe and non-threatening
- The pupil is allowed to leave as soon as the danger reduces

All seclusion incidents must be recorded under statutory requirements.

Prohibited use of seclusion must never be used as a disciplinary penalty or implemented through the threat of punishment. It is a protective response to a safety crisis, not a sanction for misbehaviour.

Supervision and Safety Any pupil placed in seclusion must be supervised at all times by a member of staff. Staff must maintain continuous visual or audible contact to monitor the pupil's physical and emotional well-being and to ensure the environment remains safe.

Duration and Ending the Intervention The use of seclusion must be as brief as possible. The pupil must be allowed to leave the area as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced and they have regained enough composure to be safe. Staff must constantly reassess the situation to ensure the confinement does not last a moment longer than is strictly necessary for safety.

Behaviour Support Plans

Behaviour Support Plans:

- Are presented as one page profile/Emotional Support Plan.
- Be co-produced with staff, parents and (where appropriate) pupils
- Detail known triggers and effective strategies
- Specify when physical contact or increased supervision may be required
- Include strategies to avoid restrictive interventions
- Be reviewed frequently and after any significant incident

Planned and Emergency Interventions

Planned Intervention

Described in the pupil's Behaviour Plan and Risk Assessment. Plans must not predetermine restraint as routine but may outline likely support strategies.

Emergency Intervention

Used when an unforeseen situation poses immediate risk.

Staff must still act in a manner that is:

- Reasonable
- Proportionate
- Necessary

Airway and Circulation:

- Explicitly forbid any restraint that affects "airway, breathing or circulation," such as covering the mouth/nose or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.

Ground Restraint:

- If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff must "release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative" as quickly as possible.

Recording of Incidents (Statutory Requirements 2026)

All significant use of force, seclusion, and non-force restraint must be recorded as soon as practicable and no later than the same day on CPOMS.

Records must include at minimum:

- Names of pupil and staff involved
- Time, date, location, duration
- Brief factual account of events
- Triggers and de-escalation strategies used
- Type and degree of force used
- Why the intervention was necessary
- Injuries and medical treatment
- Post-incident support provided

Reporting to Parents

There is a shared responsibility and accountability between school and families in behaviour support.

Parents will be involved in designing plans.

Parents must be informed:

- As soon as practicable on the same day
- With a written report

Follow-up conversations will be offered to discuss:

- Triggers
- Effectiveness of strategies
- Plans to prevent recurrence

All incidents are recorded on CPOMS and will be reported to parents. This in the first instance will be by telephone, or where contact can't be made, a message by the class teacher.

On the day, there will also be a message sent to parents/ carers (following a phone call) stating:

'We are writing to inform you that your child has been involved in a physical intervention today. School staff should have contacted you to inform you of the details of the incident which included the time, duration, location and the reason for the intervention. You will receive a written summary of the report by the end of the following working day.'

By the end of the following/ next school day the following report will be shared.

We are writing to inform you that your child has been involved in a physical intervention:

Child's name:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Approximate duration of the physical intervention:

Brief account of the incident:

Any injuries:

Repair completed:

Oversight, Monitoring and Governance

The Headteacher and Governing Body must regularly review:

- Frequency and patterns of restrictive interventions
- Training needs
- Policy effectiveness

Governors have a statutory duty to analyse data and ensure compliance.

Staff Support After Incidents

- A staff debrief may be appropriate and if so, should occur as soon as practicable, led by someone not involved
- Focus is on learning, reflection, relationship repair, and reducing future risk
- Staff may access support or counselling if needed
- Staff may need further support

Pupil Support After Incidents

Following an incident, distressed pupils are offered tailored support, including:

- **Calming Measures:** Access to quiet time, calming activities, or physical distance from the original trigger.
- **Routine Restoration:** A swift return to usual routines where appropriate.
- **Guided Reflection/ restorative practice:** time with staff to "discuss" the incident, facilitated by a staff member to ensure impartiality and reflection.

Searches

The school does not ordinarily conduct searches.

If a search for a legally prohibited item is necessary, only the Headteacher or authorised staff may do so.

Reasonable force may only be used to search for legally prohibited items—not items banned under school rules.

If unsafe, police will be called.

Health and Safety of Staff

Staff must:

- Report any medical condition affecting their ability to follow pupil plans
- Follow Behaviour Plans as Safe Systems of Work
- Use Team Teach techniques only if trained
- Complete required documentation/ logs

Staff Training

- All staff receive behaviour and de-escalation training through induction
- Staff receive Team Teach training as soon as practicably possible
- Training is refreshed regularly and in line with regulations
- Induction includes guidance on restrictive interventions

Authorised Staff

All teachers and authorised support staff may use reasonable force.

The Headteacher:

- Maintains a list of authorised staff
- Ensures authorisation is clear and reviewed annually

Complaints and Allegations

Complaints are handled through the school complaints procedure.

Allegations involving misuse of force are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and managed under safeguarding procedures.

Whistleblowing

Staff must report concerns about unsafe practice or misuse of restrictive interventions to the Headteacher, Deputy, or Chair of Governors.

Visits Out of School

Risk assessments must be completed for pupils prior to trips, considering:

- Appropriateness of activity
- Staff training levels
- Emergency communication procedures

Completed by A. Smith (Headteacher)