



PAPILLON HOUSE SCHOOL

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

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Introduction and Context

Papillon House School is an independent specialist primary and secondary school for autistic children and young people. It provides a caring and nurturing environment with an emphasis on strong, positive relationships between staff and pupils, which is a major determinant of good behaviour and a positive ethos. At Papillon House School we treat all our pupils with respect for personal space and encourage their independence. We also want all our pupils to feel safe and secure at school and to achieve their potential whilst they are here. On occasion some pupils may display challenging behaviour which requires safe and skilled management. We understand that the use of restrictive interventions can have a significant impact on pupils, staff and parents/carers. In our school, they are only ever considered as a last resort, once all other prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted.

Our Behaviour Policy and Physical Intervention Policy are set in the context of understanding that all our pupils are autistic and have a high level of need. This means they can present with a range of possible associated difficulties, including but not limited to, challenges with communication, sensory processing, attention, anxiety. Behaviours can be a form of communication. All staff are trained to consider and understand pupils' needs and the impact this has on their behaviour.

This policy should be read in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Principles

At Papillon House School we are committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for pupil's safety and welfare will:

- Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all pupils and staff, and help create a positive and safe place for everyone at school
- Minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Feel confident in knowing how to use restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully, when they are necessary
- Understand that physical intervention will never be used as a punishment, but only to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and property
- Understand how to record and report incidents of reasonable force, seclusion and restraint

Relevant Legislation

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools](#). It also meets the requirements of:

- [Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, inserted by the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#)
- [Section 550ZA](#) and [section 550ZB](#) of the Education Act 1996

- › [Equality Act 2010](#)
- › [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) and associated regulations
- › [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [The Schools \(Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint\) \(No. 2\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#)
- › Department for Education guidance on [searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- › Paragraph 16A of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (inserted by [The Schools \(Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint\) \(No. 2\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#))

Definitions

The terms we use in this policy are defined as follows. These definitions are based on the Department for Education's guidance on restrictive interventions (linked to in section 2 of this policy).

- › **Restrictive interventions** are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.
- › **Reasonable force** refers to the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain children, using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.
- › **Restraint** is a form of non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.
- › **Seclusion** is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.
- › **A significant incident** is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. E.g. moving a child to shut and lock a door.

Appropriate Physical Contact with Pupils

Our school does not have a 'no contact' policy. We do not grant any requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions.

Examples include, but are not exclusive to:

- › Providing first aid to a pupil
- › Guiding or escorting a pupil through the school building or on a school trip by holding their hand
- › Comforting a pupil who is upset
- › Use of physical touch to assist regulation e.g. offering deep pressure
- › Provision of Personal care (see Intimate Care Policy)
- › To enable engagement and interaction with pupils or to model/assist with therapy or learning activities
- › Offering praise and building rapport, such as with a pat on the back or high five

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, staff should use their professional judgement, and have regard to:

- › Our school's child protection and safeguarding policy
- › The specific circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- › Factors including, but not limited to:
 - The pupil's age
 - Their level of understanding
 - Their physical capability and independence
 - Whether any alternative strategies that don't involve physical contact can be used

Seclusion

As defined above, seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

We only use seclusion as a safety measure when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is not used as a threat or punishment. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. Please see our behaviour policy for information on our response to misbehaviour.

During seclusion:

- › The pupil will be secluded in the safest place possible, with regard given to their physical and mental wellbeing
- › The pupil will be supervised at all times, by at least one member of staff

As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave.

Any incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out below.

Roles and responsibilities

Director

- › The Director/Proprietor has overall responsibility for this policy as well as supporting and challenging school leaders to identify where changes may be needed to practice.

The Management Team:

Is responsible for:

- › Reviewing and approving this policy
- › Ensuring that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each:
 - Significant incident involving force
 - Seclusion incident
 - Restraint incident
- › Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the procedures for recording and reporting the use of force, seclusion and restraint are followed
- › Regularly reviewing and understanding data on the use of restrictive interventions in our school
- › Making sure that appropriate and high-quality training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions is provided for staff who need it, based on our school's individual context and needs
- › Overall implementation and oversight of this policy
- › Following the procedures set out in our complaints policy to deal with any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions
- › Following the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy if an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive intervention is made against a member of staff

The Headteacher and Head of Behaviour and Therapy

The Headteacher and Head of Behaviour and Therapy (who also have DSL responsibility) are responsible for:

- › Ensuring that all pupils have Pupil Support Profiles to ensure their needs are understood and met
- › Ensuring that all pupils known to be at risk of physical intervention have detailed Positive Behaviour Support plans so that all staff are aware of appropriate proactive and de-escalation strategies for individual pupils.
- › Working with pupils, parents/carers, staff and other relevant professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies
- › Ensuring adequate staffing levels to support positive behaviour management
- › Monitoring incidents involving restrictive interventions, including regular review of incidents to refine and improve processes
- › Ensuring compliance with recording and reporting requirements
- › Authorising staff to search a pupil or their belongings if they have good reason to think the pupil has a prohibited or banned item
- › Alongside the Deputy Headteacher, reporting every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force to each parent/carer of the pupil involved

- › Making sure records are kept securely and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures
- › Contacting the local authority in cases where informing a pupil's parent/carer of the use of reasonable force, seclusion or restraint on their child would put that child at risk of significant harm

All staff

All members of staff are responsible for:

- › Making sure they have read and understood this policy, our Behaviour Policy and any other linked policies
- › Knowing and understanding the pupils in their care; contributing to and understanding their Pupil Support Profiles and Positive Behaviour Support plans; so that they can ensure pupils needs are met, to minimise the risk of escalation and physical intervention.
- › Using de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour management strategies to try to minimise and prevent the need for restrictive interventions
- › Accurately recording every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force that they are involved in
- › Reporting these incidents to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and/or Head of Behaviour and Therapy
- › Recording any injuries that occur as part of an incident involving restrictive intervention, and following our health and safety policy to ensure these are reported to the Health and Safety Executive where necessary
- › Taking part in training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions
- › Engaging in follow-up conversation(s) to debrief and reflect on incidents involving restrictive intervention that they were involved in, to help us understand what happened and why and learn from this

Acceptable uses of force

All our school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain situations.

Staff can use reasonable force to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- › Hurting themselves or others
- › Committing a criminal offence
- › Damaging property
- › Causing disorder among pupils, in or out of lessons

While all staff have this power, some staff, especially those who work closely with pupils who might show challenging behaviour, are more likely to need to use it than others.

We will ensure staff are adequately trained and that risk assessments are carried out where necessary.

Any significant incident involving the use of force will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out below.

Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. We never use force as a sanction, threat or deterrent.

Our staff understand that any form of force or restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, so we always avoid using these measures where possible.

The following uses of force are **never acceptable**:

- › Staff using force for the purpose of punishment
- › Staff restraining a pupil in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example by covering their nose and/or mouth or applying pressure to their neck or abdomen
- › Staff using force on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their hold or move into a safer position as quickly as possible

Using reasonable force to search pupils

The headteacher and any member of staff authorised by the headteacher have a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item (as listed in the DfE's [searching, screening and confiscation guidance](#)) or an item banned under our school rules.

They **can** use reasonable force to search for prohibited items (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance), such as knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs. They **cannot** use reasonable force to search for items that are banned under our school rules only, such as mobile phones.

The decision to use reasonable force to carry out a search should be made carefully, on a case-by-case basis and taking into consideration the level of risk to pupils and staff. Please see our behaviour policy for more information on how we conduct searches.

Prevention and de-escalation strategies

Restrictive intervention is used only when necessary. We aim to minimise its use as much as possible, using both whole-school and individual approaches.

Our whole-school approach includes:

- › Consideration of how our school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive
- › Sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds which can be challenging for pupils

- › Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- › Development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- › Working closely with parents/carers to support individual pupils
- › Ensuring strategies are individualised to the pupil and documented in their Pupil Support Profile and Positive Behaviour Support Plans and kept updated
- › Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning
- › Our Behaviour Policy provides further information on the whole school approach to behaviour management.

Individual approaches are tailored to each person and are outlined in each young person's pupil support profile and/or PBS plan

Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

Necessity and proportionality

The decision on whether to use restrictive interventions is down to the professional judgment of the staff member and will always depend on the individual circumstances of each situation.

Staff should always consider whether there are other ways to manage the situation, such as the de-escalation techniques outlined above and/or seeking assistance from a colleague. However, there may be times when staff have no other choice but to use restrictive interventions, to reduce the risk of harm to the pupil and/or others.

When assessing whether a restrictive intervention is required, staff should always consider:

- › **Is it necessary?**
 - Are there other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
 - Is a restrictive intervention likely to successfully reduce the risks, or could its use escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself?
- › **Is it proportionate?**
 - Is the level of restrictive intervention proportionate to the risks of the current situation?
 - Staff should use the **least** amount of force or the **least** restrictive intervention for the **least** amount of time required to reduce the risks
 - If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy
 - Staff should consider the individual circumstances of the pupil, such as their age, size and any medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities

Pupil and staff welfare

Pupil welfare

The most important consideration when using a restrictive intervention is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil involved, as well as the safety of other pupils and staff. Staff should always consider the potential impact on the pupil's welfare balanced against any actions taken. For example, staff should bear in mind that pupils who have experienced adverse life events, trauma or neglect, or who have diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, communication difficulties or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

If a restrictive intervention is needed, staff should always aim to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This includes consideration of the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.

Staff should, wherever possible, clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and what the pupil needs to do, including using verbal and non-verbal strategies where needed, and giving time for the pupil to process information and respond where appropriate.

Staff should 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.

Support following an incident

As soon as possible after any use of restrictive intervention, our school will evaluate the incident to understand why restrictive intervention was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how another incident could be avoided in the future.

Our school will make sure each pupil and staff member involved get the right support, including a medical assessment and treatment if needed, and an opportunity to reflect on and talk through the incident.

This follow-up conversation(s) will be part of the overall debriefing process to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from all parties involved. Conversations should also aim to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue.

Debriefs should be organised by the class teacher of the pupil involved and wherever possible, this process will be facilitated by a senior staff member who was not involved in the incident. It may also include the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support. The school will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed.

Depending on the circumstances, support may also be offered to those who witnessed the incident.

Training and risk assessments

All staff at Papillon House School are trained in the use of Team Teach, which also follows a

Positive Behaviour Support Approach, in keeping with our Behaviour Policy. The training includes training in the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions, to ensure that staff and pupils are kept as safe as possible. The training is renewed every year to make sure all staff are up to date. Having all staff trained, in every staff role in the school, means all our staff are able to respond to incidents and support our pupils in the safest way.

We also have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff. Therefore, we carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

Recording and reporting arrangements

We have a legal duty to record and report all:

- › Significant incidents involving force
- › Seclusion incidents
- › Restraint incidents

Recording incidents

Our school has a clear process in place for recording the incidents listed above. All incidents will be recorded on CPOMS, as soon as possible after the event, and should endeavour to do so on the same day. Staff should alert the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Behaviour and Therapy of the incident, using the alert system on CPOMS. Incidents must be recorded even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's Positive Behaviour Support plan.

In addition to recording on CPOMS, any injuries to staff resulting from incidents with pupils will be recorded on the Accident Report Form and kept in the Accident folder as detailed in the Health and Safety Policy.

For significant incidents involving force, we will record:

- › The names of the pupil and staff members directly involved
- › Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil
- › The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- › A clear and brief description of what happened, including:
 - What led up to the incident
 - Any known or potential triggers for the behaviour
 - Any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
 - The type and degree of reasonable force used
 - Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- › A brief explanation of why using force was assessed as necessary in that situation
- › Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support

For seclusion incidents and restraint incidents, we will record:

- › The names of the pupil and staff members directly involved
- › The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- › A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- › Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- › Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support
- › **Note:** if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will record it in line with our procedure for recording significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be recorded twice.

Completed reports are stored securely on CPOMS and retained in line with our data protection procedures.

Reporting incidents to parents/carers

We will inform parents/carers about an incident as soon as we can after it happens and will endeavour to do this on the same day. We will do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Where possible parents/carers will be informed by telephone call in the first instance, from the class teacher or a senior member of staff and this will be followed by a written record: usually a letter, sent via email. This will include the following details:

- › The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- › A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- › A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- › Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

The exception to this is if a member of staff thinks that telling the pupil's parents/carers would likely result in significant harm to that pupil. In these cases, we will report the incident to any parent(s)/carer(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily resides.

When reporting to parents/carers, we will have regard to data protection requirements when deciding what information to share. For example, we will not include any identifying details of any other pupil.

Reporting incidents to the local authority

In cases where we have assessed that an incident needs to be reported to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily resides (as outlined above), this report will include all the information that we would normally share with the pupil's parents/carers, as well as the reasons why we thought it was unsafe to tell the pupil's parents/carers directly.

In cases where a pupil has parents/carers and is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, we will report the incident to the relevant local authority in addition to the parents/carers (unless we deem it unsafe to inform the parents/carers, as set out above).

Complaints and allegations

Any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled through our school's complaints policy, which you can find on the school website.

We take any allegation of inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff very seriously. We will deal with allegations in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Behaviour and Therapy

At every review, this policy will be approved by the Management team.

Links with other policies

- This policy links to the following policies and procedures:
- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health and safety policy

This policy was previously reviewed and agreed by the Management Team in July 2024.