

Restrictive Interventions Policy

(Including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion)

Policy owner	Headteacher
Safeguarding lead	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Approval	Full Governing Board
Version	1.0 - FGB draft
Effective from	Following FGB approval 23.9.26
Next review	September 2027, or sooner if legislation/guidance changes

Development basis: This draft has been developed against the DfE restrictive-interventions guidance effective from 1 April 2026, The Key September 2026 model policy, and Hampshire County Council Primary Behaviour Service (PBS) Restrictive Physical Intervention Model Policy (final version 24 March 2026).

1. Aims and scope

The Hayling College is committed to a calm, safe and supportive environment in which pupils are treated with dignity and staff can act confidently to keep people safe. Restrictive intervention is not a behaviour sanction. It is a non-disciplinary safety response and will only be used where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate.

- Minimise the need for restrictive intervention through positive relationships, early support, prevention, co-regulation and de-escalation.
- Provide staff with a clear framework for safe and lawful decision-making when intervention is necessary.
- Protect the safety, dignity and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Ensure significant incidents involving force, and all restraint and seclusion incidents, are recorded and reported in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Use incident review, equality analysis and pupil-support planning to reduce recurrence and improve practice.

This policy applies to all pupils and to all staff who have lawful control or charge of pupils, including during College activities and educational visits where the College retains responsibility.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to current legislation and guidance, including:

- DfE: Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective 1 April 2026).
- Section 93 and section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

3. Definitions

3.1 Restrictive intervention

Restrictive intervention is an umbrella term for physical or non-physical actions used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. It includes reasonable force, restraint and seclusion.

3.2 Reasonable force

Reasonable force is physical contact used to restrain or control a pupil, using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time required in the circumstances. What is reasonable depends on the individual situation.

3.3 Restraint

Restraint is a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. It may involve direct physical contact or another action which restricts movement.

3.4 Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined in a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, whether through physical obstruction, blocking or causing the pupil to believe they cannot leave. Seclusion is used only as a safety measure and never as punishment or a disciplinary response.

3.5 Significant incident involving force

A significant incident is an incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. Significant incidents must be recorded and reported in accordance with section 12.

3.6 Appropriate physical contact

The College does not operate a “no contact” policy. Appropriate physical contact may include first aid, guiding or escorting a pupil, comforting a distressed pupil, congratulating a pupil, or demonstrating an activity in PE, sport, music or another practical subject. Staff must use professional judgement and take account of the pupil’s age, wishes where possible, SEND, medical needs, previous trauma, cultural or religious considerations and safeguarding context.

4. Positive behaviour support, prevention and de-escalation

The College’s first response is always to reduce the likelihood that restrictive intervention will be needed. Our whole-school approach is rooted in the Behaviour Policy, the Hayling College Charter and the principle that behaviour can communicate need, distress, dysregulation or unmet support requirements.

- Relational and trauma-informed practice, positive role modelling and trusting staff-pupil relationships.
- High expectations, clear boundaries, explicit routines and a curriculum matched to pupil need.
- Positive reinforcement and supportive feedback.
- Consideration of how the classroom and wider College environment can reduce triggers and support regulation.
- Effective communication, including calm tone, appropriate body language, empathy and sufficient processing time.
- Giving time and space, reducing an audience, offering a safe calm space, distraction/redirection and clear verbal reminders.
- Working with parents/carers and professionals to develop individual prevention and de-escalation strategies where needed.
- Behaviour support plans and risk assessments for pupils where there is an increased likelihood that restrictive intervention may be needed.

5. When reasonable force may be used

Members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. Reasonable force may be used to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- hurting themselves or another person;
- committing a criminal offence;
- damaging property; or
- causing disorder among pupils, in or out of lessons.

The decision is a matter of professional judgement in the circumstances. Staff must consider whether intervention is necessary, whether a less restrictive option is reasonably practicable, whether the intervention is proportionate, the likely impact on the pupil, and whether it is likely to reduce rather than escalate risk.

6. Unacceptable uses of force

Force must never be used as punishment, a threat or a deterrent. Staff must not use techniques that are likely to interfere with breathing, airway or circulation; apply pressure to the neck or abdomen; or deliberately hold a pupil on the ground. If a pupil goes to the ground, staff should release or move to a safer position as quickly as it is safe to do so.

Staff must not use force in a way that would reasonably be expected to cause unnecessary pain or injury. Any intervention must stop as soon as it is no longer necessary.

7. Seclusion

The College does not use seclusion as a planned behaviour sanction or as a routine intervention. In an emergency, seclusion may be used only where it is the only safe and practicable way of protecting the pupil or others from immediate harm during a period of significant dysregulation.

- The space used must be safe, non-threatening and appropriate to the pupil.
- The pupil must be supervised continuously by at least one member of staff.
- The pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.
- Seclusion must never be used to punish deliberate or wilful misbehaviour.
- Every seclusion incident must be recorded and reported under section 12.

8. Searching pupils

The Headteacher and staff authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to search for prohibited items where the law permits this. Reasonable force cannot be used merely to search for items that are banned only by College rules. Any decision to use force to conduct a search will be made case by case, taking account of the level of risk and the pupil's welfare. The Behaviour Policy sets out the College's full searching procedure.

9. Deciding whether restrictive intervention is appropriate

Before and during intervention, staff should conduct a dynamic risk assessment and ask:

- Is intervention necessary to reduce an immediate risk or prevent one of the circumstances permitted by law?
- Is there a less restrictive, reasonably practicable alternative?
- Is the intervention proportionate to the seriousness and likelihood of harm?
- Will the intervention reduce risk, or might it escalate the situation?
- What is the least restrictive option for the shortest possible time?
- What are the pupil's age, size, medical needs, SEND, communication needs, trauma history or other vulnerabilities?
- How can the pupil's dignity and privacy be maintained?
- Is additional staff support needed?

Staff should clearly and calmly explain what is happening and why, as far as the circumstances allow, and give the pupil time to process and respond where practicable. If the intervention is increasing risk, staff should reconsider and change strategy where safe to do so.

10. Pupils with SEND, disability and other vulnerabilities

The College recognises that pupils with SEND may communicate distress, pain, sensory overload, fear, anxiety or confusion through behaviour. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities can be disproportionately exposed to restrictive intervention if proactive support is not in place.

- Make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.
- Use staff who know the pupil well to identify triggers and effective regulation strategies.
- Work with the pupil, parents/carers, SENDCo and relevant professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation approaches.
- Use individual behaviour support plans and risk assessments where there is an increased likelihood that intervention may be required.
- Review plans after significant incidents and at agreed intervals.
- Record communication needs, environmental adjustments and any agreed circumstances in which increased physical contact might be necessary for safety.

11. Roles, training and risk assessment

11.1 Full Governing Board

- Approve and review this policy.
- Ensure procedures exist for recording and reporting significant force, restraint and seclusion.
- Receive and interrogate appropriate data, including disproportionate use affecting pupils with protected characteristics, SEND or other vulnerabilities.
- Support and challenge leaders to improve practice where interventions are repeated or ineffective.

11.2 Headteacher

- Oversee implementation of the policy and compliance with recording/reporting duties.
- Ensure adequate staffing and access to appropriate training.
- Ensure incidents are reviewed and practice is improved where necessary.
- Ensure complaints or allegations are managed under the appropriate safeguarding/complaints procedures.

11.3 DSL

- Ensure safeguarding implications are considered after restrictive-intervention incidents.
- Ensure required parent/carer reporting takes place and records are held securely.
- Where informing a parent/carer would be likely to cause significant harm to the pupil, ensure reporting is made through the appropriate local-authority route.
- Consider early help, children's social care or other safeguarding action where appropriate.

11.4 SENDCo

- Coordinate behaviour support plans and risk assessments for pupils with SEND where relevant.
- Advise on reasonable adjustments, triggers, communication and prevention/de-escalation strategies.
- Contribute to incident review and staff training.

11.5 All staff

- Read and follow this policy and linked policies.
- Use positive behaviour support and de-escalation to minimise the need for intervention.

- Record and report incidents promptly and accurately.
- Record and report injuries through the College health and safety process.
- Take part in required training and post-incident reflection/debrief.

11.6 Training

All staff receive behaviour-management and de-escalation information appropriate to their role. Staff identified as likely to need to use planned restrictive physical intervention will receive appropriate accredited training, including regular refreshers, matched to the needs and risks of the College. The training provider and refresher cycle will be recorded in the College training log. Where Hampshire PBS/Team Teach provision is commissioned, its requirements will be followed.

12. Recording and reporting

The College has a legal duty to record and report all significant incidents involving force and all restraint and seclusion incidents. Records must be completed in writing as soon as possible after the event and the College expects this to be done on the same day, including where an intervention was anticipated or agreed in a pupil support plan.

12.1 Recording incidents

Incidents will be recorded on CPOMS and, where injury occurs, through the appropriate College/Hampshire health and safety reporting route. The record will include, as a minimum:

- the pupil and staff directly involved and, where relevant, witnesses;
- the pupil's relevant needs/circumstances, including SEND status where applicable;
- date, time, location and approximate duration;
- what happened before the incident and any known or possible triggers;
- prevention and de-escalation strategies attempted;
- the type and degree of force, restraint or seclusion used;
- why the intervention was assessed as necessary and proportionate;
- any injuries or medical attention;
- support provided afterwards; and
- parent/carers contact and agreed follow-up.

12.2 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as practicable and the College will endeavour to do so on the same day. For a significant incident involving force, the report will include the time, date, location, approximate duration, why force was necessary, the type/degree of force used and any injury. For seclusion and restraint incidents, as a maintained school, the College will provide the parent/carers with a copy of the written incident record.

If telling a parent/carers would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil, the College will report to another parent/carers where safe to do so or to the local authority in accordance with statutory requirements and the current Hampshire reporting route. Where a pupil is looked after, relevant local-authority reporting requirements will also be followed.

12.3 Post-incident support and debrief

As soon as possible after an incident, the College will consider medical needs and the emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff. Pupils and staff will be given an opportunity to reflect separately on what happened. Where possible, debrief will be supported by someone not directly involved in the

intervention. The purpose is to understand triggers, review de-escalation strategies, repair relationships, update support/risk plans and reduce recurrence. Witnesses may also require support.

13. Complaints, concerns and allegations

Complaints about restrictive intervention will be handled through the College Complaints Policy. Any allegation that a member of staff used force or another restrictive intervention inappropriately will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the College's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. If an allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will be informed in line with the safeguarding procedures.

14. Monitoring, equality and review

SLT will review restrictive-intervention records to identify patterns, triggers, repeated use, effectiveness of pupil plans, staff training needs and opportunities to reduce intervention. FGB will receive appropriate summary information at least annually and more frequently where use is significant or concerns arise.

Monitoring will consider disproportionate use in relation to protected characteristics, SEND and other vulnerabilities. The College will avoid over-interpreting very small cohorts and will consider context alongside numerical patterns.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and approved by FGB. It will be reviewed sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local authority advice, safeguarding learning or College practice requires change.

15. Links with other policies

- Behaviour Policy and Statement of Behaviour Principles
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Searching / confiscation arrangements within the Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct / Staff Behaviour Policy