



Restrictive Interventions Policy

Restrictive Interventions Policy (Including the use of reasonable force within schools)

March 2026

This policy outlines how staff at Hopton Primary School create and maintain good order and relationships through positive approaches. These approaches are successful for the vast majority of the time. Effective relationships are developed between staff and pupils and PSHE activities support pupils in managing conflict and coping with feelings. This policy on the use of restrictive physical interventions supplements the main positive behaviour and discipline policy. Both should be read in conjunction with the school SEND policy, the Health and Safety policy, and the Safeguarding policy.

Restrictive intervention is never used as a disciplinary measure, but there may be times when it is needed to keep pupils and staff safe. In such circumstances, staff will follow this policy. This policy sets out the school's approach to the use of restrictive interventions, ensuring that any use of physical intervention is lawful, necessary and grounded in the best interests of the child.

Objectives

- To maintain the safety of pupils and staff.
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline.
- To prevent serious damage to property.

Physical touch

The staff at Hopton Primary School believe that physical touch is an essential part of human relationships. In our school adults may well use appropriate touch to prompt, to give reassurance or to provide support in PE. At Hopton Primary School, we do not have a 'no contact' policy, nor will we grant any requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy in school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary are:

- Holding a hand
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Giving praise or congratulation by shaking hands, giving a high five or placing a hand on a child's shoulder



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- Demonstrating how to use equipment, for example, holding a child's hand in place on a pair of scissors
- Demonstrating or supporting exercises or techniques during Physical Education, e.g. assisting the hold on a tennis racket, or touching the ankle to position a foot in a balance hold
- To give First Aid
- To provide intimate care – please refer to intimate care policy.

Staff need to be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with students. If staff feel uncomfortable, they are able to remove themselves from the situation, for example if a child grabbed an adult's leg, they can ask the child to stop.

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:

- the school's child protection policy and staff code of conduct
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
- any other material factors, including but not limited to whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities and whether any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used instead.



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Is it necessary?

Staff should:

- consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Ask themselves, 'if we wait, might it get better or is it likely to get worse?'
- assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

Staff should:

- ask themselves, 'If we do not take action, is something worse likely to happen?'
- use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks. If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Is it in the child's best interest?

Staff should

- consider whether to use a restrictive intervention is in the child's best interest.
- seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- where possible, clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- 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.

Restrictive interventions should be used with the minimum amount of force for the shortest time needed. The emphasis should always be on using the least restrictive of interventions that are most likely to be successful. This is the meaning of the term 'last resort'.

Definitions:

Control means either passive physical contact (standing between pupils) or active physical contact (leading a pupil by the hand or arm).



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Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is when staff physically prevent a pupil from continuing what he/she was doing when told to stop or when involved in a fight.

Non-restrictive physical interventions:

Either where the child's movement is not restricted or where the child is held supportively but such that they will be released immediately should they so wish. (As already stated, touch/physical contact is a small but important and natural part of teacher-pupil relationships in our school.)

Restrictive physical interventions:

Prevent, impede or restrict movement or mobility.

Reasonable Force:

Force is used either to control or restrain. Reasonable means using no more force than is needed. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

The use of reasonable force can be identified by the following:



(React UK, School Positive Handling, 4th Edition, Page 9)

Significant incident:

Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion:

A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

What the law says: When is restrictive physical intervention permissible?

Physical restraint can be defined as the positive application of force for the purpose of overcoming a subject's resistance with the aim of

1. Preventing the actual or imminent assault of self or others;



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2. Stopping and/or preventing serious damage to property;
3. Effecting a lawful arrest.

There are three main laws that govern the use of physical force in the UK, and they are:

1. Common Law
2. Section 3(1) of the Criminal Law Act 1967
3. Section 76 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008

(React UK, School Positive Handling, 4th Edition, Page 8)

Common Law applies in particular to children below the age of criminal responsibility (age 10). There are a number of other laws and guidance documents which are represented as a hierarchy below.

One of the most important is The Human Rights Act 1998, in particular Article 2 – The Right to Life (Absolute Right)



(React UK, School Positive Handling, 4th Edition, Page 8)

Government's View on the use of Force in Education
Education and Inspection Act 2006 (C.40 Part 7 Ch1 Pt93)



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Powers of members of staff to use force.

A person to whom this section applies may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following:

- A) Committing an offence,
- B) Causing personal injury to or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself), or
- C) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Schools may not use force as a punishment – that is always unlawful.

Risk assessment

The use of a restrictive physical intervention will be the outcome of a professional judgement made by staff on the basis of this school policy. It is avoided whenever possible and will not be used for staff convenience.

Restrictive physical intervention will only be considered if other behaviour management options have proved ineffective or are judged to be inappropriate (or in an emergency situation). Before deciding to intervene in this way, staff will weigh up whether the risk of not intervening is greater than the risk of intervening. Any actions will be carried out with the child's best interests at heart. Physical intervention will never be used to punish a pupil or cause pain, injury or humiliation. Staff are not expected to intervene physically against their better judgement nor are they expected to place themselves at unreasonable risk. In such circumstances, they must take steps to minimise risks. For example, by removing other pupils and calling for assistance. Supply staff will not be authorised to use restrictive physical interventions. Parents and volunteers in the school are not given authorisation. Staff from the local education authority may have their own policies about the care and control of pupils but, whilst on the premises, they will be expected to be aware of, and operate within, the policy of this school.

Staff Training

- The majority of staff are trained in 'React UK' so that their use of physical restraint /positive handling falls within safe and statutory guidelines. Training was completed 01/05/2025
- We also train staff in legal requirements and general advice on managing behaviour.
- Staff have a duty to inform the Senior Management team of any injuries which affect their ability to handle children.
- Training for all staff will be made available and will be the responsibility of the Senior Member of Staff responsible for Behaviour and Positive Handling.
- No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training.
- Hopton Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.



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The use of 'safe spaces' to calm children is included in our Behaviour Policy. The removal of children from the class base should be used as a final resort and when all other strategies for managing the situation have been exhausted.

How staff might intervene?

When a restrictive physical intervention is justified, staff will use 'reasonable force'. This is the degree of force 'warranted by the situation'. It will be proportionate to the circumstances of the incident and the consequences it is intended to prevent'. Any force used will always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result and for the shortest amount of time.

During an incident the member of staff involved will tell the pupil that his or her behaviour may be leading to restraint. This will not be used as a threat or said in a way that could inflame the situation. Staff will not act out of anger or frustration. They will try to adopt a calm, measured approach and maintain communication with the pupil at all times. Staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

The place of restrictive physical intervention within broader behavioural planning

If, through the school's special needs assessment procedures, it is determined that a restrictive physical intervention is likely to be appropriate to help a pupil make progress, a risk assessment will be carried out.

If appropriate, an individual positive handling plan will then be drawn up for that pupil (see Appendix A). This plan will aim to reduce the likelihood of the need for restrictive physical intervention as well as describing how such intervention will be carried out. This plan will be discussed with parents/carers. Before the risk assessment is implemented, any necessary training or guidance will be provided for the staff involved. The Headteacher or SENCo will be responsible for establishing staff needs and for organising necessary training.

Recording and Reporting Significant Incidents

This part of the guidance is statutory

- The Governing Body must ensure appropriate procedures are in place for recording and reporting significant incidents where a member of staff has used a restrictive physical intervention on a pupil.
- After the use of an unplanned restrictive physical intervention, the following steps will be taken. Details of the incident will be recorded by all adults involved immediately on the positive handling incident report form (see Appendix B).
- Recording will be completed within the same day whenever possible. Staff will be offered the opportunity to seek advice from a senior colleague or professional representative when compiling their report.
- Any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded following normal school procedures, using the Local Authority 'Incident Reporting Form'.



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- The Headteacher will check that there is no cause for concern regarding the actions of adults involved. If it is felt that an action has 'caused or put a child at risk of significant harm' the Headteacher will follow the school's child protection procedures and also inform parents / carers.
- Parents/carers will be informed by the Headteacher/SENCO on the day of the incident or as soon as is practicable and this will be followed up in writing (see Appendix C)
- Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have regarding an incident.
- Support/debriefing will be available for adults and pupils who have been involved in any incident involving restrictive physical interventions.

Arrangements for recording and informing parents in the case of a planned restrictive intervention will be followed as agreed beforehand but broadly will follow the same pattern as above.

The Senior Management Team will use the records kept to analyse patterns of behaviour and so decide whether responses are being effective. The Headteacher/SENCO will report this information to the SEN Governor at their termly meetings.

Complaints procedure

If a complaint is made the school's complaints procedure and guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse by staff will be followed.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be on-going and carried out by the SLT. This policy will be evaluated and reviewed in line with the Behaviour Policy and any new legislation and guidance provided by the DfE such as Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools April 2026.



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Appendix A

HOPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL Positive Handling Plan

Name:		DOB:		Date:	
Triggers /Behaviours / Situations likely to result in Physical Intervention: <i>What is the behaviour like? When does it occur? Where does it occur?</i>					
Strategies to be used (where possible before physical intervention)					
Chill out time		Distraction		State alternatives /consequences choices/limits	Praise partial compliance
Give space		Reassure / success reminder		Other staff intervene	Repeat request
Talk calmly		Give a count		Planned ignoring	Remove stimulus
Verbal advice		Negotiation		Contingent touch	Humour
Other strategies:					
Preferred Handling Strategies to be used: – React UK					
Friendly Hold –arm around shoulder.				Escorting (single or two person) –hand on child’s back as prompt.	
Walking – hand out in front as prompt to move forwards with hand on child’s shoulder.				Holding (single or two person) –extra support across back of child as adults cross arms.	
Double wrist hold (two person) – child’s arms being held back and high with elbows tucked back.				Cupped fist hold (two person) – cover the fist by cupping hands over without pressure, hold arms back and high with elbows tucked back.	
Straight arm immobilisation (two person) – hold arms at arm pit and wrist, stand slightly to back of child.				Seated hold (two person) – adults either side with child’s arms being held back and high with elbows tucked back.	



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Appendix B

All incidents involving the use of force to control or restrain a pupil should be logged using the template below and should be given to the Headteacher.



USE OF FORCE INCIDENT REPORT FORM



Hopton Primary School

1. Name of Person Restrained:									
2. Your Name:									
3. Date and Time of Incident									
Date (inc Day)					Time				
4. Location of Incident (To be edited by the setting as these are just suggestions)									
<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom		<input type="checkbox"/> Playground		<input type="checkbox"/> Hall		<input type="checkbox"/> Corridor			
<input type="checkbox"/> Reception		<input type="checkbox"/> Stairwell		<input type="checkbox"/> Toilets		<input type="checkbox"/> Library			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Location – Please specify									
5. Why was it necessary to restrain?									
<input type="checkbox"/> Harm to Self			<input type="checkbox"/> Harm to Others			<input type="checkbox"/> Damage to property			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other – Please specify									
6. Was any verbal reasoning / de-escalation used prior to the need to restrain?									
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes				<input type="checkbox"/> No					
Please expand: <i>(Or explain in your statement)</i>									
7. Were any weapons involved?									
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes				<input type="checkbox"/> No					
If 'yes' please stipulate what type of weapon was involved:									
<input type="checkbox"/> Knife		<input type="checkbox"/> Glass/Cup		<input type="checkbox"/> Chair		<input type="checkbox"/> Bottle		<input type="checkbox"/> Pen	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):									
8. Which technique/s position of restraint did you use?									
(Please refer to Annex A and circle the technique / position used)									
9. Who else was involved in the restraint?									
Name(s):									
10. Please list any injuries to you									
11. Please list any injuries to the person restrained									



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Appendix 3 – Email to send to parents following verbally reporting the use of force (as per page 15 of DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools document)

*Following the conversation with **staff member name** at the **end of the day or via telephone (delete as applicable)**, this is email is to confirm that on **date** at **time** in **location** it was necessary for **staff member/s names** to use a **restrictive intervention in the form of a React preferred technique of _____** with **child's name** for **duration of the intervention, e.g. 3 minutes** to **brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance, e.g. to keep child's name safe by stopping him from punching and kicking Mrs XXXX***

Please can you acknowledge receipt of this email.