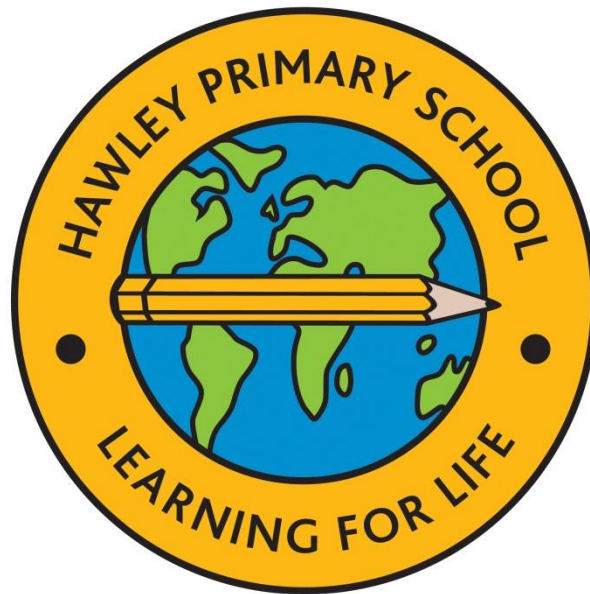


HAWLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



POSITIVE HANDLING: PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

AGREED BY HEADTEACHER & GOVERNORS: Summer 2026

LATEST REVIEW: Summer 2026

NEXT REVIEW: Summer 2027

Background

This policy has been created to align with our legal duties, including our obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 and outlines the requirements for recording and reporting incidents where restrictive physical intervention or seclusion has been used. This policy is based on guidance from the Department for Education [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance \(2026\)](#) which must be read alongside the model policy and HCC guidance document.

The following definitions inform this policy and how we might support pupils in our setting:

- **Restrictive physical intervention** - a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil.
- **Reasonable force**: a term used in legislation which includes restrictive physical interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.
- **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.
- **Restraint**: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

All staff within this setting help pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and all behaviour is viewed as a communication. We do this through a combination of approaches, which include:

- Relational practice.
- Trauma informed practice.
- Positive role modelling.
- Unconditional positive regard and trusting relationships.
- Teaching a broad and balanced curriculum that is well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Setting appropriate boundaries and holding high expectations for all.
- Providing supportive feedback.
- Consideration of how the 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.
- Training staff in effective communication strategies.
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive physical intervention to inform future plans.
- Working closely and collaboratively with parents of individual pupils
- Develop strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs
- Meeting the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 through provision of reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils can benefit from what our setting offers
- Using preventative de-escalation techniques giving pupils time, space, and taught strategies to be co-regulated or self-regulated.

More details about our positive approach to behaviour can be found in our Relationships and Behaviour Policy.

There are times when pupil's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require restrictive physical intervention and the use of reasonable force. These occasions will be rare, and intervention will only be used when necessary, appropriate and in the best interests of the pupil following the use of de-escalation strategies. This policy sets out our expectations for the use of such intervention. It is not intended to refer to the general use of physical contact which might be appropriate in a range of situations:

- To give first aid
- To support physical care
- To guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- To comfort a distressed pupil
- To congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

This policy is consistent with our Child Protection, Safeguarding and Equal Opportunities policies and with national and local guidance for schools on safeguarding pupils.

We exercise appropriate care when using physical contact and acknowledge that for some pupils, physical contact would be inappropriate. Although, it is acknowledged that in an emergency physical contact may be required. For example, those with a history of physical or sexual abuse or those from certain cultural or religious groups. We pay careful attention to issues of sex and privacy, and to any specific requirements of certain cultural or religious groups.

When can restrictive physical intervention be used

- To prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to cause injury to themselves or others.
- To prevent a pupil from committing or continuing to commit a criminal offence.
- To prevent a pupil from doing damage or continuing to do significant damage to property.
- To prevent a pupil from causing disorder among pupils at the setting, whether during a teaching session or otherwise or continuing to cause disorder among pupils at the setting. (However, we would not consider restrictive physical intervention or the use of reasonable force to be appropriate unless there was a direct risk of harm to a pupil, their peers or the staff involved as a result of the disorder.)

The decision to use restrictive physical intervention will be informed by the following questions as part of a dynamic, in the moment, risk assessment:

- Is it necessary?
- Is it proportionate?
- Has the pupil's welfare been considered?
- Is it a last resort?
- Is there an alternative less intrusive reasonably practicable action?

Restrictive Intervention Recording and Reporting Flowchart will support with this process (Appendix)

Who can use restrictive physical intervention

All staff can use restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force to maintain safety in an emergency.

All teachers and any other person, who by virtue of their contract, have control or charge of pupils are authorised to use restrictive physical intervention including reasonable force under the conditions listed above.

At times, the Headteacher may authorise additional staff to have control or charge of pupils and therefore be able to use restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force. This may include supply teachers, volunteers accompanying school trips, sports coaches, or other temporary staff working with pupils.

Such authorisation will be:

- Provided in writing by the Headteacher
- Recorded in the staff member's file and on our central record
- Time-limited and specific to the circumstances (e.g., duration of a school trip or supply assignment)
- Only granted where the staff member has received appropriate training or briefing on our behaviour management approaches.

All staff in our school receive regular training in relation to managing behaviour including co-regulation, de-escalation and planning for behaviour change. Records of this are maintained by the school and monitored by the governing body.

Where it is likely that a member of staff may be required to support a pupil using restrictive physical intervention, they access training from an accredited provider and risk assessments are used to ensure that this can happen as safely as possible.

What type of physical intervention can be used

We all have a duty of care towards the pupils in our setting. This applies as much to what we don't do as what we do. We have a responsibility to intervene to keep pupils safe, taking control for the pupil, not control of them.

We do not use restrictive physical intervention for the purpose of punishment. We do not make use of any technique that could affect a pupil's breathing, risk positional asphyxia, or affect circulation or apply pressure to their neck or abdomen. Pupils are not held on the ground. If a pupil goes to ground independently, they are immediately released.

Staff do not act in ways that might reasonably be expected to cause injury for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck or collar.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against the joint.
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear.

Where staff require specific training in the use of restrictive physical intervention and reasonable force, we arrange that they receive training via the Hampshire County Council Primary Behaviour Service Team Teach training courses. The Institute of Conflict Management (ICM) accredits this training. Staff that are trained to a higher level (Teach Team Level 2) have access to annual refresher training.

Seclusion is only ever used as a safety measure to protect others from harm whilst a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent. This is an emergency response, and seclusion does not form part of our wide range of planned interventions.

Where seclusion has been the only safe and practicable response in an emergency, we ensure that the pupil is confined in a safe and non-threatening or intimidating environment. We always supervise the pupil and as soon as the risk of immediate harm has reduced, we enter the space to support the pupil to regulate.

As part of our duties all instances of restrictive physical intervention, reasonable force and seclusion are recorded and reported.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

All staff are aware that some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. We acknowledge the potential triggers that may include:

- Pain / medical needs
- sensory overload
- unfamiliar situations or environments
- feelings of fear and anxiety.

We seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND. We are aware that pupils with SEND may become disproportionately subject to the use of physical intervention and the use of reasonable force. We seek ways to mitigate this risk through working with pupils, parents, and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies. Strategies would include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, we have risk assessments in place. We make use of co-produced behaviour support plans which outline adjustments to the school environment and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively. Our behaviour support plans detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. Support plans are reviewed periodically with the pupil and their parents/carers.

Where a pupil has a disability, we have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage so that the pupil can fully participate in the education provided by our school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

Recording and Reporting

Our Governing Body ensure that all instances of the use of restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force and seclusion are recorded and reported in line with Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act (2006).

We complete records as soon as possible after the incident and no later than the same day. We record incidents despite restrictive physical intervention being used in with prior agreement of the parents / carers.

Our records include:

- Name of pupil and all staff involved – participants and observers.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including if they have an identified special educational need or disability, and their SEN status code (E - EHCP, K - SEN Support, N - No identified SEN)
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention or series of short interventions.
- What was happening before?
- What do you think triggered this behaviour?
- What de-escalating techniques were used prior to physical intervention?
- Any other information relevant to include.
- Why was restrictive physical intervention used?
- Post incident support.

We report each incident of restrictive physical intervention to parents within 24 hours.

We report to parents verbally and then follow up in writing sharing a copy of the record form. Our report to parents will include:

- Time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- Why intervention was deemed appropriate.
- What type of intervention was used including the amount of force.
- Details of any injuries sustained by the pupil.

For incidents involving seclusion or restraint (without force), we will inform parents verbally as soon as possible and follow up in writing. As a maintained school, we will supply a copy of the written internal record to parents upon request. Parents can request this copy at any time following the incident.

As part of our commitment to working collaboratively with parents we arrange follow up meetings to discuss potential triggers for behaviour, review the behaviour support plan in place, reflect on de-escalation strategies and what might be done differently moving forward. In addition, we review risk assessments, ensuring that all pupils where there is a risk of the need to use restrictive physical intervention have an individual risk assessment in place.

As per the school's duty under the schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025 we record and report instances of seclusion and non-force related restraint as per the procedure above.

Exceptions to reporting to parents

We do not have to report an incident to parents if:

- Telling the parents would likely result in serious harm to the pupil, or
- The pupil is 20 years old or older

In cases where reporting to a parent would likely result in serious harm to the pupil, we will: • Report the incident to any other parent(s) it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm, or

- If there are no parents we can safely report to, report the incident to the local authority via pbs.teamteach@hants.gov.uk with the subject line 'RPI Report – Risk of Significant Harm'

We will consult with our Designated Safeguarding Lead before making any decision not to report to parents and will document the reasons for this decision.

Pupil and Staff Support

We acknowledge that any restrictive physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force may be distressing for both pupils and staff. We ensure that any necessary medical assessment and treatment is sought following an incident. Injuries to the pupil are recorded on the restrictive physical intervention record and the school's accident book, staff report injuries via the HCC online reporting system in addition to the restrictive physical intervention record.

Supporting staff to complete records

We recognise that completing written records following an incident can be challenging. To support staff, we will:

- Provide time out of class to write the internal record if needed
- Offer a quiet, private space where staff won't be disturbed
- Make a senior leader available to provide support (while ensuring the staff member writes the record themselves)
- Check in on staff wellbeing while they're completing the record

Ongoing wellbeing support

To support the wellbeing of both pupils and staff we hold de-briefs to facilitate reflection as well as repairing and rebuilding relationships and inform future actions. Where possible a member of staff who was not involved in the incident supports the de-brief process.

Following an incident, we will:

- Have an immediate debrief with the staff member(s) involved on the same day where possible
- Continue to monitor staff wellbeing in the days and weeks following the incident
- Provide additional support if needed, such as:
 - Further conversations with a senior leader
 - Access to occupational health services
 - Adjustments to workload or duties if appropriate
 - Signposting to external support services such as the Education Support Partnership

Monitoring

Our safeguarding governor, Craig Woolnough, supports our school to comply with this policy and the associated DfE guidance. School leaders and governors / proprietors review incidents of restrictive physical intervention to:

- Identify and implement improvements to policy and practice paying particular attention to situations where the same intervention has been used over a period and remains ineffective.
- Identify areas of learning and development.
- Understand patterns of behaviour, triggers, and the effectiveness of pupil plans.
- Identify any disproportionate use of restrictive physical intervention in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, SEND or other vulnerabilities.

These reviews take place at least termly at governing board meetings, with a comprehensive annual review.

At each termly governing board meeting, we share headline data on restrictive interventions including:

- The number of incidents involving restrictive interventions during the term
- What kinds of restrictive interventions were used (reasonable force, seclusion, restraint)
- Any patterns or trends we've identified, such as:
 - Particular times of day, locations, or situations where incidents occur
 - Individual pupils who are frequently involved
 - Staff members who are frequently involved
 - Actions we're taking to address any patterns or trends
 - Any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions for pupils with SEN, protected characteristics, or other vulnerabilities
 - Training needs identified and how these are being addressed

Our safeguarding governor, Craig Woolnough, may request to see individual anonymised records or ask detailed questions about how the process set out in this policy is being followed. We will share records with governors if requested.

Where data is collated, we ensure that we do not over-interpret small sub-groups and appreciate the limitations of our data and what can be inferred from it.

Concerns and Complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force can be distressing for all involved which can lead to concerns, allegations, or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use.

Our school's complaints policy outlines how to make a complaint as well as the timescales for responses.

Where an allegation of assault or abusive behaviour is made, our Headteacher is immediately informed. If the allegation relates to the Headteacher then the Chair of Governors is immediately informed. We follow our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies in these instances.

Safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff is our upmost priority, and we always seek to avoid injury. It is possible that as part of a restrictive physical intervention including the use of reasonable force a pupil may accidentally be scratched or bruised. This should not necessarily be seen as a failure of the professional technique but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of making sure the pupil remains safe.

Staff Training and Development

All staff receive regular training in relation to managing behaviour including co-regulation, de-escalation and planning for behaviour change. This includes:

- Induction training for all new staff on our positive behaviour approach and this policy
- Annual refresher training on restrictive interventions for all staff
- The Key's eLearning course on reasonable force in schools, which covers the requirements for internal recording and reporting to parents
- Team Teach training for staff who are likely to need to use restrictive physical intervention, with annual refresher training for those trained to Level 2

Records of all training are maintained by the school and monitored by the governing body.

Reviewing

The Governing Body will annually review the policy.