Hightown Primary School

At Hightown we work together as a school community with pride, respect, rigour and fairness. We celebrate effort, respond enthusiastically to challenges and create positive opportunities that enable everyone to achieve in every way.

Restrictive Interventions & Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Policy date:	September 2026
Link school staff:	Russell Ingleby
Link governor:	Kay Brennan
Next review date	September 2027

Introduction

At Hightown JIN School, we are dedicated to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every pupil can achieve and thrive. Our behaviour management approach is firmly rooted in relational and restorative principles, emphasising understanding the causes of behaviour, repairing harm, and rebuilding positive relationships. While we prioritise prevention and de-escalation, we recognise that on rare occasions, restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, may be necessary to safeguard pupils and staff.

Policy Purpose

This policy outlines the framework for the lawful, necessary, and proportionate use of restrictive interventions and reasonable force. It ensures that any such use aligns with our values of pride, respect, rigour, and fairness, while complying with legislation including the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, and the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

Definitions

- **Restrictive Interventions**: Actions that prevent, restrict, or subdue a pupil's movement, encompassing physical restraint, seclusion, and other non-physical methods aimed at controlling behaviour.
- **Reasonable Force**: The minimum force necessary, for the shortest time, to prevent harm, maintain safety, or prevent criminal activity.
- **Seclusion**: The supervised confinement of a pupil away from others to manage high emotional or behavioural dysregulation, used solely as a safety measure, never as punishment.

Guiding Principles

- **Relational and Restorative Ethos**: We prioritise understanding pupils' behaviour, supporting reflection, repairing harm, and rebuilding trust, always separating behaviour from the child's character.
- **Minimisation**: We actively minimise the need for restrictive interventions through early support, prevention, and de-escalation strategies embedded across school life.

- **Safety and Dignity**: Interventions must respect pupil dignity, welfare, and rights, avoiding harm or distress wherever possible.
- **Legal Compliance**: All interventions comply with statutory duties and guidance, including safeguarding and equality obligations.

Circumstances for Use of Restrictive Interventions

Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, may only be used when:

- A pupil poses an immediate risk of injury to themselves or others;
- There is a risk of significant damage to property;
- A criminal offence is being committed;
- Maintaining good order and discipline is essential for safety.

Use of force for punishment is illegal and strictly prohibited.

Preventative and De-escalation Strategies

We embed the following whole-school and individual strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions:

- **Whole-School Measures:**
    - *Creating a supportive school and classroom environment that promotes positive behaviour;*
    - *Consistently teaching and reinforcing the "Behaving the Hightown Way" values: gentleness, kindness, honesty, hard work, respect for property, readiness to learn, and safety;*
    - *Staff training in communication, empathy, and de-escalation techniques;*
    - *Clear, consistent behaviour expectations and routines;*
    - *Positive reinforcement through praise, awards, and recognition (e.g., Hot Chocolate with the Head, Hightown Hero awards);*
    - *Effective transition management between year groups and phases;*
    - *Regular communication and partnership with families to share responsibility for behaviour.*

- **Individualised Approaches:**

- *Collaborative development of behaviour support plans tailored to pupils' needs, including those with SEND;*
- *Risk assessments to identify triggers and manage potential escalation;*
- *Providing pupils with strategies and time to self-regulate;*
- *Use of familiar staff and environments to support pupils in distress;*
- *Engagement with external agencies (e.g., Educational Psychologists, CAMHS) as needed.*

Use of Physical Contact and Reasonable Force

- Physical contact is appropriate in contexts such as guiding or escorting pupils safely, comforting distressed pupils, administering first aid, or teaching physical skills.
- Reasonable force may be used only when necessary and proportionate, applying the least amount of force for the shortest time to manage the situation.
- Staff must consider the pupil's age, size, SEND status, medical conditions, and vulnerabilities before and during any intervention.
- Staff should avoid holds that restrict breathing or circulation and reposition pupils promptly if they are held on the ground.
- Seclusion is only used as a last resort safety measure for pupils experiencing emotional dysregulation, with continuous supervision in a safe environment. It must never be used as a punishment or threat.

Staff Training and Support

- All staff receive training in behaviour management aligned with our relational and restorative approach, including managing challenging behaviour safely.
- Staff likely to use restrictive interventions receive additional training on lawful, safe, and appropriate use of reasonable force and seclusion.
- Risk assessments ensure staff safety and inform training needs.
- After incidents, staff are supported through debriefs and wellbeing resources.

Recording and Reporting Procedures

- All significant incidents involving restrictive interventions or reasonable force must be recorded promptly, ideally on the same day, detailing:
  - *Names of pupil and staff involved;*

- *Date, time, location, and duration;*
- *Description of behaviour, identified triggers, and de-escalation attempts;*
- *Type and degree of force or intervention used;*
- *Reasons for intervention;*
- *Any injuries or post-incident support provided.*
- *Parents/carers must be informed as soon as practicable, with communication in writing and opportunities for follow-up discussions.*
- *Records support ongoing reflection, learning, and policy review to improve practice and reduce incidents.*

Restorative Follow-up

- Staff will engage pupils in restorative conversations to reflect on behaviour, understand impact, repair relationships, and develop strategies to prevent recurrence.
- Support is provided to pupils and staff involved, including counselling or further interventions as needed.
- Witnesses to incidents are also offered appropriate support.

Partnership with Families and Agencies

- We recognise families as critical partners in behaviour management, sharing responsibility for pupils' conduct.
- Documented agreements with families set clear expectations and mutual responsibilities.
- Reintegration Support Partnerships follow suspensions or significant incidents to co-develop reflection and reintegration plans.
- We collaborate with external agencies to provide holistic support for pupils with complex needs.

Complaints and Allegations

- Complaints about restrictive interventions are handled through the school's standard complaints procedure.
- Allegations of misuse are managed according to safeguarding policies, including potential staff suspension where appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

- The governing body regularly reviews data on restrictive interventions to identify patterns, training needs, and areas for improvement.
- Special attention is given to any disproportionate use relating to pupils with protected characteristics or vulnerabilities.
- The policy is reviewed at least every two years or sooner if required by changes in legislation or school context.