



Policy Title:	Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy	
Author:	Deputy Head	
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Policy statement

Duke of Kent School is committed to providing a safe, caring and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive.

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which staff need to use physical contact, reasonable force or another restrictive intervention to prevent harm or maintain safety.

The purpose of this policy is to explain when reasonable force and other restrictive interventions may lawfully and appropriately be used; minimise the need for interventions through prevention and de-escalation; protect the welfare and dignity of pupils and staff; provide additional safeguards for younger children, pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils; and ensure incidents are recorded, reported, reviewed and learned from.

This policy has been developed with regard to the Education and Inspections Act 2006; Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025; Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended; DfE guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools' (effective 1 April 2026); Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; Equality Act 2010; Human Rights Act 1998; Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; the EYFS Statutory Framework applicable from September 2026; and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

I. Aims

The purpose of this policy is to explain when reasonable force and other restrictive interventions may lawfully and appropriately be used; minimise the need for interventions through prevention and de-escalation; protect the welfare and dignity of pupils and staff; provide additional safeguards for younger children, pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils; and ensure incidents are recorded, reported, reviewed and learned from.

This policy should be read in line with the Department for Education's guidance: [Use of Reasonable Force and Other Interventions Guidance](#)

1.1 What is reasonable force?

Reasonable force is a form of physical restrictive intervention. School staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances, including to prevent injury to another child or themselves, prevent a criminal offence, prevent damage to property, or maintain order. The decision must be based on the circumstances at the time. Staff do not have to wait until someone is injured before intervening.

1.2. Restrictive interventions

Restrictive intervention is the umbrella term for physical and non-physical actions intended to prevent, restrict or subdue a pupil's movement. Examples include standing between pupils, blocking a path, guiding or escorting, preventing access to a dangerous area, physical restraint and other actions that restrict movement. Any intervention must be necessary, proportionate and reasonable.

1.3. Appropriate physical contact

Not all physical contact is reasonable force. Appropriate contact can include first aid, helping a young child safely, holding a child's hand when appropriate, guiding or escorting, supporting a pupil who has chosen a regulation space, comforting a distressed child, or contact required for PE, music or other activities. Appropriateness depends on circumstances, age, individual needs and vulnerability.

2. Using Reasonable Force

2.1. When should staff consider reasonable force?

Staff should consider whether there is a genuine safety risk; whether a less restrictive strategy could work; whether intervention could escalate the situation; and what minimum intervention is required. Staff should consider age, size, SEND, medical needs, sensory needs, communication, emotional state, known triggers and vulnerability.

2.2. Prevention and de-escalation

Staff should use calm communication, clear instructions, processing time, reduced verbal demands, choices, environmental changes, distraction/redirection, trusted adults, removal of other pupils and appropriate time and space. Staff should avoid unnecessary shouting, threats, humiliation, crowding, arguing during high distress and unnecessary physical contact.

2.3. Early Years Foundation Stage

Physical intervention involving EYFS children requires particular care. Staff must consider age, development, communication, emotional and sensory needs and physical development. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Physical intervention may only be used where necessary to prevent harm or another serious safety risk. Every occasion when physical intervention is used with an EYFS child must be recorded, and parents/carers must be informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Of note, routine appropriate physical contact, such as first aid, comforting or guiding a child safely, does not constitute a restrictive intervention.

2.4. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities

Duke of Kent School recognises that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately affected. Behaviour may relate to sensory overload, anxiety, communication difficulties, pain, unfamiliar environments or emotional dysregulation. Where risk is foreseeable, we should consider reasonable adjustments, an individual risk assessment, a behaviour support plan, communication and environmental adaptations, parent/carer involvement and relevant professional advice.

2.5. Who may use reasonable force?

Any member of school staff has the legal power to use reasonable force in the circumstances described. Staff who are regularly likely to require restrictive interventions should receive appropriate training. Staff must not attempt techniques they have not been trained in unless immediate action is necessary to prevent serious harm and no safer alternative exists.

3. Incidents

3.1. During an incident

Remain calm; assess immediate risk; call for assistance where appropriate; remove other pupils from danger; use verbal de-escalation; use the least restrictive intervention necessary; use it for the shortest possible time; monitor the pupil continuously; and stop as soon as the immediate risk reduces. Staff could follow the questions in Appendix I.

3.2. After an incident

Check the welfare of the pupil and staff; provide first aid or medical assessment where necessary; consider pupils who witnessed the incident; inform the DSL or appropriate senior leader; complete the school Google Form; inform parents/carers as required; consider safeguarding action; review support plans/risk assessments; and provide appropriate debriefing. Parents should be informed of:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

3.3. Recording incidents – school Google Form

The school will use its Restrictive Intervention / Reasonable Force Google Form as the electronic recording mechanism (see link in 3.5). Staff involved should complete it as soon as practicable and,

wherever possible, on the same day. The form must capture the circumstances, intervention, duration, relevant needs, injuries, follow-up and parent notification.

3.4. Recording every significant use of force

The school will record each significant incident in which staff use force on a pupil. This includes significant physical restrictive intervention and circumstances where force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. Recording applies even where an intervention was anticipated in a behaviour support plan.

3.5. Recording restraint and seclusion

The school will record each incident involving seclusion or restraint, including restraint that does not involve direct physical contact. Records should be completed as soon as practicable and, wherever possible, on the same day. They should be filled out on the Google Form found here:

<https://forms.gle/aRU2y2A1vUuVDMfg6>

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary restrictive intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving, for example by physically obstructing the pupil's way of leaving, securing the place or causing the pupil to believe that they will be punished if they leave

3.6. Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers will be informed of each significant use of force as soon as practicable, with the school aiming to do so on the same day. Communication should include the date, time, location, approximate duration, why the intervention was necessary, type/degree of force and any physical injuries. Where informing a particular parent/carer could place a pupil at risk, safeguarding procedures will determine who should be informed. Where there is no parent/carer to whom information can safely be provided, the school will provide the information to the local authority in whose area the pupil ordinarily resides.

3.7. EYFS reporting to parents

For EYFS pupils, parents/carers will be informed of any physical intervention on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

3.8. Safeguarding considerations

Any use of force must be considered within the school's safeguarding framework. Concerns may arise where force appears excessive or punitive, a prohibited technique was used, injury occurred, there is a pattern of interventions, there is concern about staff conduct, or a pupil/parent makes an allegation. The Safeguarding Policy and procedures for allegations against staff will apply where relevant.

4. Complaints and Monitoring

4.1. Complaints and allegations

Parents/carers and pupils may raise concerns about reasonable force. Complaints will be managed under the Complaints Policy. Allegations of inappropriate or excessive force will be considered under the school's procedures for allegations concerning staff where applicable.

4.2. Monitoring and review

The DSL will monitor recorded incidents and analyse frequency, pupils, age/year group, location, time, staff involved, intervention type and duration, triggers, de-escalation strategies, SEND/vulnerability factors, injuries, seclusion and repeated incidents. The purpose is learning and reduction, not blame.

4.3. Governors oversight

The governing body will receive appropriate aggregated information and monitor trends, repeated incidents, use of seclusion, injuries, disproportionate impact, training needs and actions taken to reduce interventions.

4.4. Confidentiality and data protection

Restrictive intervention records contain personal and potentially sensitive information. Access to the Google Form and response sheet must be restricted to authorised staff. The school will comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, retain records according to its retention schedule and avoid unnecessary sensitive information in email or shared documents.

4.5. Review After a Significant Incident

Following a significant incident, the school should ask: What happened? Why? What were the triggers? What strategies were attempted? What worked? What did not? Could the intervention have been avoided? Were reasonable adjustments effective? Does the pupil need additional support? Do the behaviour plan or risk assessment need changing? Does staff training need review? What can the school change to reduce recurrence?

5. Staff Responsibilities

5.1. Staff responsibilities

All staff must understand this policy, use preventative strategies, act proportionately, safeguard pupils, report incidents promptly, complete the Google Form where required, seek assistance appropriately and report concerns about another adult. Senior leaders oversee recording, parent communication, safeguarding, training and review. The DSL considers safeguarding implications. The /governing body provides oversight.

5.2. Staff training

Training will cover prevention, de-escalation, recognising escalation, SEND and vulnerability, legal requirements, proportionality, prohibited practices, recording/reporting and post-incident support. If physical intervention techniques are taught, training should be provided by an appropriately qualified provider and reflect current DfE guidance.

Appendix 1 - Staff Decision Making Guide

1. Is there an immediate risk?

If no, continue de-escalation and normal behaviour procedures. If yes, move to the next question.

2. Can it be managed safely without physical intervention?

Use the least restrictive safe option wherever possible.

3. Have de-escalation strategies been attempted?

Use calm communication, choices, space, environmental change, distraction and trusted-adult support where practicable.

4. If intervention is necessary

Use the minimum necessary force, for the shortest possible time. Monitor continuously and stop when the immediate risk reduces.

5. Afterwards

Check welfare → first aid/medical support → inform senior leader/DSL → complete Google Form → inform parents/carers → debrief → review support/risk assessment → identify learning.

Appendix 2 - Staff Flow Chart

SAFE? → Is anyone at immediate risk of harm?

NO → Continue de-escalation / behaviour support. No force.

YES → Call for help if appropriate. Remove others from danger.

DE-ESCALATE → Use calm communication, choices, space, reduced demands, distraction, trusted adult and environmental change where practicable.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE OPTION → Can the risk be safely managed without force? If yes, do so.

INTERVENTION → If necessary: minimum force, shortest time, continuous monitoring. Never as punishment. Never obstruct breathing/circulation.

STOP → End intervention as soon as immediate risk reduces.

AFTERWARDS → Check pupil and staff. First aid / medical support if required.

REPORT → Inform senior leader / DSL. Complete Google Form as soon as practicable, ideally same day.

PARENTS → Inform parent/carer as required; EYFS physical intervention: same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

LEARN → Debrief, review risk/behaviour plan, identify learning and actions.

REASONABLE FORCE IS NEVER A PUNISHMENT. USE THE MINIMUM NECESSARY FORCE FOR THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.