



Northern Lights
LEARNING TRUST

Northern Lights Learning Trust

Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy



Review Date: Spring 2026
Next Review Date: Spring 2027
Person in Charge: Headteacher
Governance:

The quality of relationships between all members of school staff and pupils, and the relationship with parents and carers is the area that is most commonly associated with the ethos of the schools in our Trust. It is expressed in the terms of sharing and caring.

In the Church schools in our Trust, we follow the teachings of

Matthew 22:39 'Love your neighbour as yourself'

John 15:17 'This is my commandment: love each other'.

In the none Church schools in our Trust we follow the spiritual ethos of treating others as we would ask to be treated and to care for others with kindness.

In our schools we believe every pupil is an individual who is valued for who they are. We have a series of overlapping networks of relationships, which includes governors, staff, children, parents, church members, and members of the community which the school seeks to serve. Our pastoral work will strive to meet the significant challenge to create and maintain such networks, including in our Church schools in ways which reflect the Gospel. Those who are in leadership roles, which includes all who have a particular responsibility, ensure that by their personal example they set the highest standards expected.

It is from this premise that both Christian and spiritual love will pervade all aspects of life at Northern Lights Learning Trust. It will influence how we reward and teach discipline. It will affect how we value work and the achievements of pupils and staff. It will be seen in the way in which the school environments are created and cared for, in the way in which the needs of pupils, parents, and community are met, and in the way in which teaching and non-teaching staff work together effectively as a team.

Pastoral care pervades all aspects of school life and therefore will be reflected in the way the schools are organised and the policies are written and implemented.

INTRODUCTION

All staff in Holley Park Academy recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being.

Our policy on the use of restrictive intervention and reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures.

This policy should be read in conjunction with associated policies:

- Behaviour policy, inclusive of searching, screening and confiscation policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for England 2026 allows all staff at a school to use reasonable force to keep children safe. It also allows other adults in the school to use physical interventions, where reasonable, proportionate and necessary to ensure the safety of children.

The right for school staff to use reasonable force is further set out in the DfE document Behaviour in Schools, which states that members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property
- causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Positive Handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful, or in an emergency situation. It should be avoided where possible.

Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional ‘**duty of care**’ within their job description, which is underwritten by the Department of Education Teacher Standards.

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions will be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. Terminology used in this guidance and the DfE policy can be found in Appendix A

SCHOOL’S APPROACH TO THE USE OF FORCE:

DFE guidance states:

- Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a pupil.
- Schools should not have a ‘no contact’ policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil or prevent them from taking action needed to prevent a pupil from causing harm.
- There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:
 - to administer first aid
 - to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly (age dependent), 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 (taking into consideration professional boundaries)

DETERMINING WHEN USE OF RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS IS APPROPRIATE

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation.

To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation and assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should 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.
- Staff should 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.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff should 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, staff should 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.
- Staff should 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.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations

At Holley Park Academy we will always look to minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through prevention, de-escalation, and approaches for individual pupils.

Whole-school measures at Holley Park Academy include

- 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 such as corridors and playgrounds
- training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using an appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning and individual risk assessment/support plans

Please Note: We fully know, understand and acknowledge that schools cannot use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

POWER TO SEARCH PUPILS WITHOUT CONSENT

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Headteachers/Head of Schools and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable, given the circumstances to conduct a search for “legally prohibited items.”

At Holley Park Academy all searches will be conducted in line with the statutory Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance.

RISK ASSESSMENT/SUPPORT PLAN

Some children with SEND or additional needs may require an individual risk assessment/support plan/behaviour plan/positive handling plan. This will be communicated with parents/carers and reviewed and updated accordingly.

At Holley Park Academy we will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- the environment, including reducing stimuli or triggers that may be causing stress
- body language
- communication

The plan may also include:

- highlighting strategies to de-escalate a conflict or to diffuse a situation and holds to be used if necessary
- briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance and were this is the case as a school we will support with this)
- circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered
- involving the parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take, and these will be reviewed after significant incidents

Where there is an identified risk, such as an increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, we will have a specific risk assessment/plan in place and where possible, to mitigate risks such as through staff training and prevention strategies.

REPORTING AND RECORDING

Statutory guidance states that governing bodies must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, as part of the school’s duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

At Holley Park Academy we will contact parents/carers to share incidents as appropriate and for every significant incident (statutory)*. The DfE states that a significant incident is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in ‘Other physical contact with pupil’. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and on the same day following a significant incident, and the incident explained to them. This action will also be recorded.

In deciding what a serious incident is, school leaders will use their professional judgment and consider the following:

- pupil’s behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident

- degree of force used
- effect on the pupil or member of staff
- the child's age

Staff will record (Appendix B as appropriate) all incidents of reasonable force in accordance with school policy and report these to the Head teacher.

**Exceptions to the requirement to report are where: the pupil is aged 20 or over; or it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.*

SECLUSION

At Holley Park Academy we may use seclusion as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent. Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving. Seclusion will not be implemented by staff through the threat of punishment.

The place to which the pupil is confined will be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil will be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil would be allowed to leave.

All incidents involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with our procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting'.

PUPIL AND STAFF SUPPORT

As a school we will evaluate all incidents involving restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after an event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff. We will also look for any patterns or trends and identify how the use of restrictive interventions may be avoided in the future.

If appropriate or necessary, the pupils and staff members involved would receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Injuries will be recorded in line with our Health and Safety policy.

As a school we will also hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation will be part of the debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why. This will allow a closure to the incident. As a school, we will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed.

COMPLAINTS

Please refer to the School/Trust complaints policy

APPENDIX A

TERMINOLOGY

For clarity, this policy will use the following definitions:

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive 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.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this document. 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.

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.

APPENDIX B

RECORDING AND REPORTING FORMS



Incident Report Holley Park Academy

Student Name:	Key Stage	
Age:	Year Group	
Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:	Duration of Incident:
Report Compiler:	Date of report :	

Names of those involved/present

Staff	Pupils

BEHAVIOUR(S) REASON FOR INTERVENTION

...injury to other pupils <input type="checkbox"/>	...member of staff <input type="checkbox"/>	...to self <input type="checkbox"/>	Violence & aggression <input type="checkbox"/>
Disruption <input type="checkbox"/>	Harassment <input type="checkbox"/>	Inapp. Sexual behaviour <input type="checkbox"/>	Bullying <input type="checkbox"/>
Self harming <input type="checkbox"/>	Medically related <input type="checkbox"/>	Verbally abusive <input type="checkbox"/>	Fight <input type="checkbox"/>
Absented <input type="checkbox"/>	Absconding <input type="checkbox"/>	Property damage/vandalism <input type="checkbox"/>	other <input type="checkbox"/>

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE INCIDENT?

--

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE INCIDENT (describe the incident, what happened, who was involved, what did they do/say, what de-escalation strategies were used, time scales)

--

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE INCIDENT?

--

FIRST AID

--

DE-ESCALATION / INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES USED

Verbal advice and support <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Reminder of targets/plans <input type="checkbox"/>	Positive touch <input type="checkbox"/>
Distraction/Diversion <input type="checkbox"/>	Reassurance <input type="checkbox"/>	Restriction of Access <input type="checkbox"/>	Calm talking <input type="checkbox"/>
Time out offered <input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate Humour <input type="checkbox"/>	Restriction of Exit <input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiation <input type="checkbox"/>
Staff changeover <input type="checkbox"/>	Time out directed <input type="checkbox"/>	Planned ignoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Choices / limits / consequences <input type="checkbox"/>

Risk assessment implications following this incident:

--

Follow up actions required:

--

Others informed	Who	Time	Who by

APPENDIX C
PARENT/CARER COMMUNICATION

Subject: Notification of Restrictive Physical Intervention – *(Pupil Name)*

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to inform you that a restrictive physical intervention was used with **(Pupil Name)** today.

Please find the incident summary below if you would like further information or clarification then please contact school via the main school office

Name of Pupil	
Date	
Time	
Location	
Approximate duration of intervention	
Why the intervention was necessary	
Brief description of the type of force used	
Details of any injuries sustained and first aid administered	

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

(Senior Leader Name)

(Senior Leader Role)