

# Willow School Policy



## Physical Intervention Policy

Date: April 2026

Review Date: April 2027

## **Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools'
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025'
- HM Government 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Proprietors are responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Notifying the headteacher that the Behaviour Policy should include the power to use reasonable force.
- Evaluating, on an annual basis, instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- Maintaining the records of the use of reasonable force and evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used.

- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the Physical Intervention Report Form.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy sets out the circumstances in which force might be used.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the proprietors, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.
- Carrying out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils can use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions as safely as possible, if and when required.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual risk assessments for pupils with SEND or medical conditions that are agreed with the pupil's parents and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the headteacher.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Providing staff with annual reasonable force training where the headteacher deems it necessary.
- Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the headteacher and the proprietors.

All staff members will be responsible for:

- Avoiding restrictive interventions wherever possible and only using reasonable force as a last resort.
- Only using reasonable force in certain circumstances, including to prevent or stop a pupil from:
  - Causing injury to themselves or others.
  - Committing a criminal offence.
  - Damaging property.

- Causing disorder among pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.
- Understanding the unacceptable uses of force and the legal implications of using force in this way.

## **Definitions**

### Restrictive intervention:

An action or measure used to prevent, limit, or control the movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body. Within this policy, restrictive intervention is used as an umbrella term encompassing both physical and non-physical interventions intended to restrict a pupil's movement or behaviour.

### Reasonable force:

A legal term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the statutory power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable force refers to the minimum level of force necessary, applied for the shortest possible duration, and proportionate to the specific circumstances of the incident.

### Significant incident:

Any incident in which the use of force exceeds appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes situations where physical force is used to carry out or support a non-physical restrictive intervention.

### Seclusion:

A non-disciplinary intervention involving the confinement of a pupil to a space away from others, with their freedom to leave restricted. This may be achieved through physical obstruction, blocking exits, or actions that lead the pupil to believe they will face negative consequences if they attempt to leave.

### Restraint:

A term used in legislation to describe a non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or restricts their movement. Restraint may involve direct physical contact or indirect actions. Examples include holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing an item that enables mobility, such as crutches.

## **Avoiding Physical Intervention and Reducing Risk**

The school will expect staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention.

Where possible, the school implements an approach of prevention, where staff will be trained in recognising warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour, communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli.

Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class, and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs. Key information is outlined in pupils support plans and risk assessments, with regular updates shared during daily staff briefing, as appropriate.

Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first questioning whether there is a need to use physical intervention. Staff will question whether:

- It is necessary:
  - Staff will consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
  - Staff will 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, staff will communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.
- It is proportionate:
  - Staff will use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce relevant risks.
  - If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff will reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
  - Staff will consider the personal circumstances of the pupil, e.g. medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics, e.g. age and size, and relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.
- The pupil's welfare:
  - Staff will consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken.
  - Staff will maintain respect for a pupil's dignity.
  - Where possible, staff will clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
  - For pupils with communication difficulties or EAL, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies will be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
  - Staff will seek to understand the pupil's feelings and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Reasonable force will only be used in situations where it is needed to stop a pupil from causing harm to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder among pupils. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating.

The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are forced to pull the pupils apart. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.

Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline – only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

### **Seclusion**

The school will recognise seclusion as a non-disciplinary measure that may be used, in exceptional circumstances, to reduce risk and avoid the need for physical intervention when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent.

The school will ensure that seclusion is used only as a safety measure to protect the pupil or others from harm and will not use seclusion as a consequence or through the threat of punishment.

Where seclusion is used, the school will ensure that:

- The space used will be safe, suitable, and not intimidating or threatening to the pupil.
- The pupil will be appropriately supervised at all times.
- The restriction will last only for as long as the immediate risk of harm remains.
- The pupil will be allowed to leave as soon as it is safe to do so.

The school will record and report any incident involving seclusion in accordance with the procedures set out in the recording and reporting incidents section of this policy.

Seclusion will not be used as a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. The school will use appropriate disciplinary measures, such as removal from the classroom, in line with the Behaviour Policy.

### **Pupils with SEND**

Willow School will have due consideration to how pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Staff members will be trained on understanding triggers and how pupils that find communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions.

Willow School will seek to minimise the potential disproportionate use of restrictive interventions used on pupils with SEND by understanding underlying triggers of challenging behaviour and providing proactive support.

The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

The school will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. The school will also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil will be applicable to other pupils. All pupils have support plans in place which outline key support for individuals, as well as their needs. These are regularly reviewed alongside staff and families.

Where there is an identified risk, e.g. an increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and other physical interventions, the school will put risk assessments in place and mitigate these risks through training and prevention strategies. These are regularly updated and shared with all staff.

### **Post Incident Support**

The school will evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in the future.

If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved will receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible

In line with the Behaviour Policy, Repair and Reflect takes place following the incident at a time when is appropriate for the individual pupil. This should only take place when the pupil is regulated. Repair and Reflect takes place using the same structured questions and script, focusing on the events, the feelings and moving forward. This can take place as holistic conversation, using set Widgit cards to support the process or with a set comic strip, providing pupils an opportunity to write, draw and have an adult to scribe. These details are included as part of the recording process.

The school will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention will also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

### **Recording and Reporting Incidents**

The proprietor will ensure that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each significant event in which a staff member uses force on a pupil.

Incidents involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event by the staff members involved and, wherever possible, no later than the

same day. Staff involved record on the agreed form, signed and contributed to by staff members involved, the form is signed off by the headteacher and uploaded to BromCom.

For the purposes of this policy, non-physical restrictive interventions include actions that restrict a pupil's movement without direct physical contact, such as preventing a pupil from leaving a space or removing an item that enables mobility.

The school will record the following details (see Appendix 1):

- Names of the pupil and staff directly involved.
- The time, date, location, antecedents and approximate duration of the intervention.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil.
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance and what strategies were used.
- Any post-incident support provided, including medical or emotional support where relevant.
- Any follow up actions, including staff briefing update, liaising with external agencies and updating pupil risk assessment.
- The voice of the parent and the pupil, where able to be gained.

Parents will be informed of incidents involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention as soon as practicable, and no later than the same day, unless it appears that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. Where parents cannot be informed for this reason, the incident will be reported to the local authority. Where a child is looked after, the social worker will be informed. Where the incident is verbally shared, this will be followed up in writing to the parent by the staff member. This process is outlined on the reporting form.

Where an incident involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention also constitutes a significant use of force, the school will follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force only, and information will not be duplicated.

Records of seclusion and non-physical restrictive interventions will be retained, monitored, and reviewed alongside records of physical intervention to support oversight, identify patterns or trends, and inform any necessary changes to school practice or pupil support.

### **Complaints**

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force or other restrictive interventions is made against a staff member, the procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education will be followed, including the provisions regarding suspension of staff.

## Appendix 1: Physical Intervention Report Form

SECTION A					
Name of the young person involved in physical intervention					
Name of staff applying physical intervention:					
Location of incident:		Date of incident:		Time of incident:	
SECTION B					
Antecedents:					
Further details of the event:					
De-escalation strategies employed (highlight):					
Firm, clear instruction	Verbal reminder of instruction	Choices offered	Distraction and Diversion	Humour	Space and wait time given
Change of environment offered	Change of environment directed	Total change of face	Personalised strategy offered	De-escalation activity offered	Other:
<b>Why was physical intervention deemed necessary?</b> (1) To prevent or stop a pupil from committing any offence. (2) To prevent or stop a pupil causing personal injury to any person including the pupil themselves. (3) To prevent or stop damage to property. (4) To prevent or stop disruption to education and keep good order at the school.					
<b>Detail type of holds applied:</b> Name of Staff: _____ Name of hold applied: _____ Position: _____ Duration applied for: _____					
SECTION C					
Were there any injuries sustained by any person as a result of the incident?					
Describe any action taken in relation to injuries sustained:					
Describe any serious damage to property:					
SECTION D					
Views of young person:					
Details of report to parents/carers:					
This has also been followed up on Tapestry with the following message: <i>"Following our earlier conversation, this is to confirm that physical intervention was deemed necessary and therefore applied today."</i>					
Follow up actions (highlight):					
Update at staff briefing	Inform social worker	Refer to Occupational Therapist	Refer to external agency	Update risk assessment	
Other (please specify)					
SECTION E					
Name of staff member completing the form:				Text colour: Black	
Signed:		Date:		Time:	
Further information provided by:				Text colour: Red	
Signed:		Date:		Time:	
Further information provided by:				Text colour: Blue	

Signed:	Date:	Time:
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