

OLD VICARAGE SCHOOL

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Restrictive Interventions Policy Guidance

(Including the Use of Reasonable Force)

This policy, which applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors working with pupils including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is publicly available on the school website, on the staff share and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. This policy reflects current legislation, the new recording/parent-notification duties and emerging DfE/Ofsted/ISI expectations for schools.

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of the school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (child protection). Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

Statement of intent: Old Vicarage School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary. The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy sets out how the school prevents, manages and records physical intervention and restraint to safeguard pupils, staff and others. This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so. The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance. Where this policy refers to "must", it reflects legal duties or statutory guidance; "should" reflects best practice.

This policy applies in:

- classrooms and learning spaces;
- on-site and off-site activities, including trips, transport and work experience.

The school is committed to:

- promoting positive relationships, de-escalation and non-restrictive approaches as the norm;
- minimising, and where possible eliminating, the use of restraint and other restrictive interventions;
- ensuring any use of force is lawful, necessary, proportionate, in the child's best interests and for the shortest duration.

Restraint must be avoided where risk can be safely managed via:

- verbal de-escalation and negotiation;
- adjusting demands, environment or sensory load;
- offering time and space, including supervised withdrawal to a low-stimulus area which the pupil can freely leave

Legal and regulatory framework: This policy is informed by, and should be read alongside, all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, sections 90–93A (including powers to use reasonable force and duties to record).
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint Incidents) (England) Regulations 2025 (from 1 April 2026).
- Children Act 1989 and 2004, including duties to safeguard and promote welfare.

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- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.
- SEND Code of Practice 0–25 years and pupils’ EHC plans.
- DfE guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (from April 2026).
- DHSC/DfE guidance on reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention for children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health needs (2019).
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, particularly:
 - Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils)
 - Part 8 (Quality of Leadership and Management)
 - Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (DfE: April 2026)
- Working together to safeguard children (HM Government: December 2023 and updated 12 June 2025 – Statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children)
- Working together to safeguard children: an illustrated guide for children, young people and their families (Crown Copyright 2025)
- Keeping children safe in education 2025 – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (DfE: September 2025)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Management, Discipline, Sanctions and Rewards Policy.
- Exclusions Policy
- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (Incl. SEN) Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Staff Behaviour Policy (Staff Code of Conduct)
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Safeguarding Child Protection Policy

Statutory recording duties: In line with section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint Incidents) (England) Regulations 2025, the school must:

- Record every significant incident of use of force and every incident of seclusion or restraint.
- Report each seclusion or restraint incident to each parent of the pupil involved as soon as practicable.

Monitoring and Review: This policy is necessary, proportionate and designed to support the Old Vicarage School staff who work with our pupils making clearer the responsibilities of school staff, and the governors. These arrangements are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement, and audit by the Proprietors and the Head of School.

Proprietors will undertake a full annual review of this document, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been implemented. This review will be formally documented in writing. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed arrangements, and it will be made available to them in writing or electronically.

Policy Updated and Agreed: March 2026

Date Published: April 2026

Next Review: December 2026

Signed

Matthew Adshead
Proprietor

Mrs. K. Wise
Head of School

Roles and responsibilities:

The Proprietors are responsible for:

- monitoring the overall implementation of this policy;
- Notifying the Head of School 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 alongside the regular report from DSL;
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The Head of School is responsible for:

- implementing this policy and ensures it is understood and followed by all staff and 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;
- designating a senior leader as Behaviour and Restrictive Practice Lead
- 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 Head of School is the Behaviour and Restrictive Practice Lead: This role will:

- maintain the central Restrictive Intervention and Restraint Log;
- review every recorded incident, sign off reports and ensure debriefing for pupils and staff;
- lead data analysis, monitoring patterns and advising SLT and Proprietors on proactive improvements;
- liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where there are safeguarding concerns.

The SENDCo 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:

- reviewing incidents where restraint may indicate abuse, misuse or poor practice;
 - Regular report to Proprietors including review of incidents and their patterns, disproportionality and SEND impact;
 - ensuring restraint and restrictive intervention are addressed in safeguarding training and supervision.
 - deciding when incidents become safeguarding concerns and when to refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), children's social care or the police, in line with the Child Protection Policy;
- Concerns or allegations against staff will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Derby City Council (Tel: 01332 642376, Email: lado@derby.gov.uk).
- The school works in partnership with the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

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;

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- 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: This is 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 to hold or immobilise a pupil to prevent harm, serious disruption or a criminal offence.

Reasonable force: A legal term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions occurs on any occasion where a member of staff uses physical contact with the intention of controlling or directing a pupil's movement or behaviour. The term "reasonable force" means using no more force than is necessary, for the minimum time required, to achieve a legitimate aim such as preventing injury. 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.

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.

Planned intervention: Restrictive intervention anticipated in a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan / MEP and/or EHCP plan, with agreed strategies, risk assessment and parental involvement.

Emergency intervention: Unplanned intervention required to respond immediately to unforeseen risk of harm.

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. 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 and:

- 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 alternative strategies;
- 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.

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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 English as an Additional Language (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: 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.

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;
- pupil will be appropriately supervised at all times;
- restriction will last only for as long as the immediate risk of harm remains;
- pupil will be allowed to leave as soon as it is safe to do so and there is a clear exit criteria.

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.

Unacceptable Practices: The following are prohibited:

- Using force as punishment.
- Restraining in a way that restricts breathing.
- Forcing a pupil to the floor and applying pressure.
- Applying pain-compliance techniques.
- Using seclusion for non-safety reasons.
- Prolonged isolation without review.
- Prone restraint (face-down) is not permitted.

Pupils with SEND: The 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. Individual risk assessments, behaviour support plans and reasonable adjustments will all be taken into account.

The 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 SENDCo 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 that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND 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.

De-escalation strategies may include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress;
- changing body language, facial expression, or tone of voice;
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before they become 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.

Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil with SEND will be applicable to other pupils with SEND.

Where appropriate, staff will work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of behaviour support plans. These plans will outline any adjustments and methods to communicate their needs effectively. Behaviour support plans will also detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. Any behaviour support plan will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident.

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. All staff receive training in behaviour management and de-escalation. Identified staff are trained in an accredited physical intervention programme (e.g. Team Teach or equivalent). Training is refreshed regularly and monitored by senior leaders.

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

Follow-up conversations will be used to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. Such conversations will be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and seek to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved. This process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident, with input from an additional person to ensure impartiality and support.

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 Proprietors 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 will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It will be recorded by the staff members involved and they will aim to do this no later than the same day. The requirement to record will apply even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The school will record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of pupils and staff directly involved.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has SEND, and their SEN status.
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained.
- A brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Any post-incident support, e.g. details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

The school may also record details such as witness accounts, how and when parents were notified, and what follow-up action has taken place from the Senior Leadership Team. (Parents must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, normally on the same day.) Records should be retained and analysed by the Head of School and the SENDCo where physical intervention was used on a pupil with SEND, on a termly basis to ensure that such interventions are being used appropriately, and to identify patterns of behaviour and responses to that behaviour that may require changes to school practice, e.g. increased staff training or further behavioural or emotional support. Records should also be sent to the Proprietors annually for evaluation. The number of incidents including a breakdown of what was required will also be compiled for review by the Proprietors.

Where reasonable force or physical restraint has been used, the pupil's parents will be informed unless it appears that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. If the decision is made that the parents cannot be informed as this would place the child at greater risk, the incident will be reported to Derby City Council and if applicable the local authority where the pupil lives.

A report of the incident made to parents will include the following details as a minimum:

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

Parents will also be invited to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This may include a discussion about:

- behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident;
- whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed;
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were;
- what might be done differently in the future.

The Head of School will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint: The Proprietors will ensure that a procedure is also in place for recording and reporting any incident involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention, whether or not physical force has been used. This duty applies even where such interventions are agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan. 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. 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.

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The school will record the following details as a minimum :

- the names of the pupil and staff directly involved;
- the time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention;
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including SEND where applicable;
- an account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- any post-incident support provided, including medical or emotional support where relevant.

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 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 Procedures.

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.

Where an allegation relates to the conduct of a member of staff, the matter will be referred to the LADO in line with safeguarding procedures.

Physical Intervention Report Form

We believe that reasonable force should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded. Incidents must also be documented in the [Physical Intervention Log](#).

Name of staff member(s)	
Name of pupil(s)	
Date	
Time	
Location	
Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident	
Informed parties (parents, social workers, police, etc.)	
Circumstances prior to the incident	
Brief account of the incident	
Details of any negative impact on other pupils	
Reason(s) for physical intervention (please tick)	
To prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others.	☐
To prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence.	☐
To prevent a pupil from damaging property.	☐
To prevent a pupil from causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.	☐

Was it a planned intervention, e.g. in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils? (Please circle)	Yes/No
Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary	
Any post-incident support required	
Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils	
Damage (if any) to property	
Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents	
Headteacher's signature:	Date:
Signature of staff member concerned:	Date:

Physical Intervention Log

We believe that reasonable force must only be used when absolutely necessary. Reasonable force will always to be used in accordance with the Physical Intervention Policy. All incidents of this nature must be recorded in this log. Details of the individual incident will be recorded using the [Physical Intervention Report Form](#).

• Date and time	Name of pupil	Name of staff member	Name(s) of witnesses	Injuries (if any) to pupils or staff	Damage (if any) to property	Nature of intervention	Was the headteacher notified?	Signed by staff member
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