



Abbey Gate College

POLICY: Restrictive Intervention (including the Use of Reasonable Force)	
Scope	Whole College
Responsibility	Deputy Head (Pastoral); Deputy Head of IJS
Reviewed & Updated	April 2026
Governor Approval	Gareth Lee & Vanessa Brodie

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Policy Statement (1)

The policy has been developed in response to The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93 and follows the guidance for 'Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools, April 2026.

This policy sets out how the College prevents, manages, records and reviews restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, to keep pupils and staff safe and to uphold pupils' dignity and rights. It applies to all staff working with pupils on or off site, including trips and alternative provision.

Restrictive interventions should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil themselves)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion are part of a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion, and de-escalation. Risk assessment identifies positive prevention strategies and how a pupil may need to be supported in a crisis.

Policy Statement (2)

- 1) This policy applies to all members of the Abbey Gate College community, including those in our EYFS setting.
- 2) Abbey Gate College implements this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.
- 3) This policy is made available to all interested parties in accordance with the *Provision of Information* policy. It should be read in conjunction with the College's *Behaviour, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Complaints and Data Protection* policies.
- 4) Abbey Gate College is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the College's *EDI* policy document.
- 5) This policy is reviewed at least annually, or as events or legislation changes require, by the College Leadership Team and the Governing Body. The deadline for the next review is no later than 12 months after the most recent review date indicated above.
- 6) The most recent updates were made on account of updated legislation.

Legal and Statutory Framework:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, s93: gives school staff the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent an offence, injury, property damage, or to maintain good order and discipline.

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, s93A: underpins statutory guidance requiring recording and reporting of each significant incident involving the use of force. Governing bodies must have regard to this guidance.
- DfE: Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools April 2026, introduces duties to record and report significant uses of force and to record and report the use of seclusion.
- HRA 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025

Key Personnel

- 1) Craig Jenkinson: Head
- 2) Carole Houghton: Deputy Head (Pastoral)
- 3) Marie Hickey: Head of Infant & Junior School
- 4) Corinna Travis: Deputy Head of Infant and Junior School
- 5) Gareth Lee: Chair of Governing Body
- 6) Vanessa Brodie: Chair of Wellbeing Committee

Definitions:

Restrictive intervention: An action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty and/or freedom to act. It includes reasonable force, restraint and seclusion.

Reasonable force: The minimum force needed, proportionate to risk, applied for the shortest time necessary to achieve a legitimate safety aim (prevent injury, crime, property damage or disorder). Never used as punishment.

Restraint: Holding or physically blocking a pupil's movement to reduce risk.

Seclusion: Supervising a pupil alone and preventing them from leaving, used only as a safety measure in acute situations; it is not a disciplinary sanction and must be recorded and reported.

Significant Incident: Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate contact between pupils and staff.

Principles:

Prevention first: Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure a safe and happy school. It is recognised that the majority of Abbey Gate College pupils including EYFS have excellent conduct and respond positively to the discipline systems in school. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school.

However, it is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, despite high-quality relationships, an appropriate curriculum, expectations of behaviour and culture, de-escalation techniques and reasonable adjustments, especially for pupils with SEND, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required:

- 1) To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- 2) To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive, or harmful.

The College ensures that all members of staff, including EYFS clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care.

The College provides information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and how to deal effectively with situations that require Restrictive Interventions.

Any intervention must be lawful, proportionate, necessary and time-limited, with the least restrictive option used.

Any intervention must ensure the safety and dignity of students: The College safeguards physical and psychological welfare and never uses techniques that compromise breathing or circulation, applies pressure to the neck/nose/mouth/abdomen, or intentionally holds a pupil on the ground.

All significant incidents in which a member of staff uses force, or seclusion, or non-force related restraint on a pupil or are recorded and reported to parents/carers as soon as practicable after the incident and no later than the same day. Following an incident, there should be a de-brief of pupils and staff, where, if necessary, triggers are reviewed, plans updated and any additional training provided.

The use of reasonable force

All members of College staff, and others authorised by the Head, may use reasonable force in line with this policy and their training. This applies on school premises and where pupils are under the College's lawful control (e.g. educational visits). **A member of the College Leadership Team should be informed of any use of restrictive interventions as soon as possible.**

When restrictive interventions may be used

Staff may use reasonable force only when they reasonably believe it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others;
- committing a criminal offence;
- causing serious damage to property;
- or seriously prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline.

Examples (not exhaustive) include separating pupils who are fighting; preventing a pupil endangering themselves by running into the road; or stopping serious, sustained disruption where risk is present. Force is never a punishment.

There will be times when College 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?

- Are there other, more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation?
- Is a restrictive intervention likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or would it use escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself?

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. Training given on the use of restrictive interventions should equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It should also help staff understand how to assess whether their response is reasonable under pressure. If an assessment has been made to use restrictive interventions, staff should be supported in their decision making.

Unacceptable practices

Staff must not:

- use force as a punishment;
- use holds or positions that restrict breathing or circulation or apply pressure to neck, nose, mouth, abdomen;
- intentionally force a pupil to the floor or use pain compliance;
- use seclusion as a disciplinary response or threat.

Other physical contact with pupils

The College does not have a 'no contact' policy. There are circumstances where physical contact is appropriate and necessary. Examples include first aid, comforting a distressed pupil

and practical demonstrations in Music and PE. Staff should use their professional judgement, along with regard to guidance in the Safeguarding Policy in these circumstances.

Seclusion

Seclusion should only be used where strictly necessary to reduce immediate risk; for the shortest time possible; with continuous supervision, recorded and reported to parents, as per this policy; with welfare checks and post-incident review. It must not be used as punishment.

Pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities

Staff should consider known needs, triggers and reasonable adjustments (e.g. quiet spaces, sensory regulation, differentiated instructions). Pupil passports and individual risk assessments will set proactive strategies and specify any emergency restrictive interventions that may be required, including circumstances where increased physical contact with a pupil may be necessary. The College monitors data to ensure no disproportionate impact on groups (e.g., SEND, ethnicity, gender).

Use of force in searches

Authorised staff may use reasonable force when conducting a search for legally prohibited items and only where it is necessary to prevent harm and in line with DfE searching, screening and confiscation guidance and the College's Behaviour Policy. Less intrusive options are prioritised; any such incidents are recorded and reported as set out in this policy.

Staff training and competence

The College ensures staff likely to need to use restrictive interventions are trained in de-escalation, risk assessment and safe, lawful techniques. These are refreshed regularly and after incidents. All training is recorded, evaluated and HR monitors completion.

Dynamic risk assessment and decision-making

Before using restrictive interventions, staff (where practicable) assess:

- the immediacy and severity of risk;
- likely effectiveness of non-physical strategies;
- the least restrictive option likely to reduce risk;
- proportionality and the pupil's known needs/medical factors.

Staff should aim to continue verbal de-escalation during any intervention and cease the use of force as soon as the risk reduces. Appendix 2 contains prompts for staff to support with such decision-making.

Medical attention and welfare checks

Where injury is suspected or any restraint has occurred, appropriate first aid/medical assessment should be arranged for the pupil (and staff if needed) and staff should remain alert to that harm may not be immediately visible and continue observation.

Recording the use of force; seclusion; non-force related restraint (statutory)

The College keeps a secure record on ISAMS of every significant incident involving:

- use of force by a staff member; and
- seclusion or non-force related restraint (e.g., removal of mobility aid).

This record includes:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- 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 (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- when and how parents were notified
- follow-up actions or areas for improvement.

Reporting to parents/carers (statutory)

For each significant incident, parents should be informed in writing as soon as practicable and no later than the same day (unless doing so would be likely to result in serious harm, in which case the DSL will notify the local authority instead). The report should include as a minimum the date, time, location as well as approximate duration of the intervention, why this was necessary in this instance, a brief account of the type and degree force and any injuries sustained. Parents should also be invited to a follow up conversation. Parents can request in writing a copy of the school record of the incident. Such requests should be addressed to the Head.

Post-incident review and pupil/staff support

Following any incident of restrictive intervention, there should be a restorative conversation with the pupil at the earliest appropriate time, capturing their voice and offering support. Staff should also be supported by a member of CLT to debrief, to reflect, to identify learning and any training needs.

All post-incident reviews (recorded as follow up actions on the secure record) should plan any necessary updates to risk assessments, pupil passports or College procedures. These reviews should take into consideration safeguarding, SEND and equality implications

Governance, oversight and data use

The Governing Board receives termly anonymised data on restrictive interventions (type, frequency, location, protected characteristics, SEND, injuries, medical referrals, complaints) through the Governors' Wellbeing Committee to:

- identify patterns and reduce need;
- assure compliance and equity;
- inform training, prevention strategies and policy development

Complaints and allegations

Any concerns or complaints following an incident involving Restrictive Interventions should follow the College's Complaints Policy. Any allegations concerning staff following such an incident should be referred to the Head. All records are retained in accordance with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

Data protection and information security

All records are kept securely and retained/disposed of in line with our Data Protection Policy, the UK GDPR and the school's retention schedule.

Appendix 1: Use of force; seclusion or non-force related restraint Form

Pupil's Name :		
Pupil's DOB :		
SEND/Disability/SEMH needs:		
Date, time, location and duration of force, seclusion or non-force related restraint :		
Name/s of staff involved/present:		
Account of Incident (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 (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained):		
Why was the use of force assessed as necessary in this instance?		
Parents/guardians informed in writing :		
Post-incident support (e.g. medical treatment):		
Any additional information (e.g. pupil statements):		
Follow up action and areas for improvement:		
Staff name :	Staff signature:	Date:

Appendix 2 – Dynamic risk assessment prompt for staff

- Is there an immediate risk? (injury/crime/property damage/serious disorder)
- Have I tried lower-level options? (time/space, change adult, distraction, negotiation)
- Least restrictive and proportionate? For shortest time possible?
- What are the known needs/risks? (SEND/medical)
- How will this be recorded and who must be informed? (same day where practicable)