Restrictive Interventions & Physical Intervention Policy

Related documents: Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy, What We Do & How We Do It Policy

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OUR VISION

Our vision is to provide pupils with the confidence, skills and ambition to achieve a successful and productive life. We aim to ensure they leave the school with a 'new day, new opportunity' ethos and are capable of becoming positive members of their communities. To do this, we have 3 principles that underpin our policies, practices and everything we do:

Everyone can learn, achieve and has the potential to be successful

Positive relationships are key to success and are underpinned by mutual trust, respect and caring for one another

We have high expectations in everything we do

Policy owner	WhiteTrees School	**Last review**	April 2026
Date Created	July 2019	**Next review**	April 2027

April 2026 compliance update - summary of changes added

- Updated terminology from "physical intervention" alone to the broader term "restrictive interventions", including reasonable force, restraint, immobilisation and seclusion.
- Added explicit reference to new Independent School Standards 16A and 32A, covering recording and reporting of use of force, seclusion and restraint incidents.
- Strengthened the duty to record significant use of force, seclusion and restraint in writing as soon as practicable and ideally on the same day.
- Strengthened the duty to report relevant incidents to parents as soon as practicable and ideally the same day, in writing, unless doing so is likely to result in significant harm to the pupil.
- Added definitions of significant incident, seclusion, restraint and non-force related restraint, including deprivation of an auxiliary aid such as a walking aid.
- Added SEND, Equality Act and reasonable adjustment expectations, including co-production of behaviour support / positive handling plans where appropriate.

Introduction

Staff at White Trees School are trained to work with challenging pupils and work to a clear, positive pupil-centred behaviour policy, which focuses on prevention and de-escalation. This policy is based on guidance issued by the Secretary of State, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2025), Use of Reasonable Force – advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE), Behaviour in Schools (latest version), and Positive environments where children can flourish (Ofsted, March 2018).

Where the wealth of strategies available to colleagues fail, physical handling of pupils is the absolute last resort and is used to keep pupils, and staff, safe. It is used safely and positively, drawing upon the formal physical intervention training staff have received, when all other strategies have failed to avert behaviour that is likely to cause harm to the pupil or others around them.

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how White Trees Independent School prevents, minimises, records, reports and reviews the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force,

restraint, immobilisation and seclusion. It applies during the school day, educational visits, off-site activities, transport arrangements where staff are supervising pupils, and any school-arranged activity.

The policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND, health and safety, attendance, complaints and staff code of conduct policies. The policy is intended to support compliance with the Independent School Standards, particularly Standards 7, 9, 14, 16, 16A, 32A and 34.

2. Core principles

Restrictive intervention is never used as a punishment, sanction, threat or behaviour management strategy. Prevention, early help, environmental adaptation, relational practice and de-escalation will always be prioritised.
Any intervention will be necessary, proportionate, reasonable, for the shortest possible time and use the least restrictive approach available. The pupil's dignity, rights, communication needs, SEND profile, trauma history, medical needs and emotional wellbeing must and will be considered at all times.
Staff will continuously monitor the pupil's physical presentation, breathing, distress, pain, communication and safety during any intervention.
All significant incidents must be recorded and reported in line with the April 2026 DfE guidance and the new ISS Standards 16A and 32Am, using school systems we have in place.
White Trees Independent School will use incident data to reduce restrictive practice over time and improve support for pupils and staff, this data is reported to at full Governors throughout the academic year.

3. Key definitions

Term	Definition
Restrictive intervention	Any action used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body of a pupil. It includes both physical and non-physical actions aimed at restraining pupils in different ways.
Reasonable force	The use of no more force than is necessary, for the least amount of time, in the circumstances. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances.
Significant incident	Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate everyday physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes where physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.
Restraint / immobilisation	A non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may include direct physical contact or non-contact restraint, such as removing a mobility aid or preventing access to movement.
Seclusion	A non-disciplinary intervention where a pupil is kept apart from others and prevented from leaving, including through physical obstruction, securing the place, or causing the pupil to believe they will be punished if they leave.

Physical contact that is not restrictive intervention	Every day, appropriate contact such as guiding, comforting, first aid, PE support or preventing a trip/fall. This must be professional, proportionate, wanted where possible, and consistent with safeguarding expectations.

4. When reasonable force may be used

Staff may use reasonable force only where it is necessary 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.

Before using force, staff should consider whether there are less restrictive ways to manage the situation, unless the immediacy of risk means urgent action is required. The decision must be based on a dynamic risk assessment of the circumstances at the time.

5. Prevention and de-escalation

The school's first response will always be to prevent situations escalating. Leaders and staff must use whole-school and pupil-specific strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention.

- Build trusting staff-pupil relationships and use staff who know the pupil well wherever possible.
- Use calm tone, reduced language, non-threatening body language and emotional co-regulation – using SET communication.
- Remove or reduce known triggers, sensory stimuli, audience effects or environmental pressures.
- Offer choices, take-up time, distraction, withdrawal to a planned calm space, trusted adult support or a change of face.
- Support pupils to communicate distress before they become overwhelmed.
- Use Positive Behaviour Support / behaviour support plans/behaviour Waves to identify triggers, early warning signs and agreed regulation strategies.
- Consider reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, SEMH needs, trauma histories, communication differences or medical needs.

6. Prohibited practice and high-risk practice

Staff will not:

- use restrictive intervention as punishment, discipline, humiliation, retaliation or convenience;

- use any intervention that deliberately restricts breathing, compromises the airway, applies pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen, or causes avoidable pain;
- use prone or supine restraint except in an unforeseen emergency where there is immediate risk and staff must move to a safer position as quickly as possible; Any prone or supine restraint must trigger immediate senior leadership review, be treated as a significant incident, and be fully recorded and reviewed under safeguarding and leadership procedures.
- hold a pupil for longer than is necessary;
- use seclusion as a disciplinary penalty;
- withhold mobility aids, communication aids, medication, food, drink, toilet access or medical support as a sanction;
- continue an intervention where the risk created by the intervention is greater than the risk it is intended to reduce.

7. SEND, Equality Act and reasonable adjustments

Where pupils have SEND, SEMH needs, disabilities, medical needs, communication differences or trauma-related presentations, staff must consider these needs before, during and after any incident. White Trees will take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage and ensure pupils can access education safely.

- Individual risk assessments will be in place where there is an identified likelihood of restrictive intervention.
- Behaviour support plans / Positive Handling Plans/Behaviour waves will be co-produced where appropriate with the pupil, parents/carers, pastoral staff, SEND staff and relevant professionals.
- Plans will set out triggers, early warning signs, environmental adjustments, communication strategies, preferred adults, de-escalation strategies and any agreed parameters for physical contact.
- Plans will be reviewed termly and after every significant incident or emerging pattern.
- Where an intervention is used with a pupil with SEND, the record will include relevant SEND status, needs, adjustments and whether the pupil's plan was followed.

8. Positive Handling Plans / Behaviour Support Plans

A Positive Handling Plan must be considered where a pupil has repeated incidents, foreseeable risk, known triggers or where staff may need specific guidance to keep the pupil and others safe. More than two physical interventions in a week over a period of time must trigger leadership review and consideration of a Positive Handling Plan, but leaders may create a plan earlier if risk indicates this is necessary.

Plans will not be used to authorise routine restrictive intervention. They exist to reduce risk, prevent incidents and ensure staff understand the least restrictive approach.

9. Recording duties - ISS Standard 16A

The proprietor will ensure there is a procedure for recording each significant use of force and each seclusion or restraint incident. Records must be made in writing as soon as practicable after the incident and staff should endeavor to complete the record on the same day. The requirement applies even when the intervention is referenced in an agreed behaviour support plan.

Minimum recording requirement	What must be captured
People involved	Names of pupil and staff directly involved, plus any witnesses where relevant.
Pupil needs	Relevant needs or circumstances, including whether the pupil has SEND, their SEND status/code, communication needs, disability, medical needs or known trauma triggers.
Incident details	Time, date, location, antecedent and approximate duration of the intervention.
Context and triggers	What led up to the incident, known or potential triggers, and any preventative or de-escalation strategies attempted.
Type of intervention	Whether the incident involved reasonable force, restraint, immobilisation, seclusion or non-contact restraint; the type and degree of force used where relevant.
Necessity and proportionality	Why the intervention was assessed as necessary at that time and why less restrictive options were not sufficient.
Impact and injuries	Any injuries, distress, first aid, medical treatment or adverse impact for pupil, staff or witnesses.
Post-incident support	Support offered to pupil, staff and witnesses; debriefs; restorative work; parent contact; plan updates and next actions.

All incidents must be recorded on CPOMS and in the bound physical intervention / restrictive intervention log. Records must be reviewed by a senior leader and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where there are safeguarding concerns, injury, allegation, repeated pattern, social care involvement or any uncertainty about proportionality.

10. Reporting to parents - ISS Standard 32A

The school will report each significant use of force and each seclusion or restraint incident to parents as soon as practicable after the incident. Staff will endeavour to ensure this is done on the same day. Reports should be in writing, such as email, letter or secure online messaging.

Information shared will obtain the following:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- Why the intervention was assessed as necessary.
- The type of intervention used and, where force was used, the degree of force.

- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.
- The support provided following the incident and any proposed next steps.

The school will offer parents/carers a follow-up discussion where appropriate to review triggers, warning signs, whether agreed plans were followed, how de-escalation strategies worked and whether amendments are needed. Parents will be invited in to attend the Reflect & Restore meeting, if appropriate, the following day.

Exception: information will not be provided to a parent if the person reporting reasonably believes doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil. Where there is no parent to whom information can be provided without likely significant harm, the information must be provided to the local authority where the pupil is ordinarily resident. The DSL/Head of Safeguarding must be involved in this decision and the rationale must be recorded.

11. Post-incident support and debrief

- The pupil will be offered a calm recovery period and a restorative follow-up conversation when emotionally ready.
- The pupil will be offered the opportunity to give their account to a member of staff who was not directly involved, wherever practicable – this is usually undertaken as part of the Reflect & Restore process.
- Staff involved will have a reflective debrief with a senior leader, including consideration of staff wellbeing.
- Witnesses, including other pupils, will be offered support where they were distressed or affected by the incident.
- Any injuries must be recorded in first aid/accident book and logged on cpoms, handing relevant information over to parents/carers/relevant professionals.
- The incident will be evaluated to identify what happened, why it happened, whether the intervention was necessary/proportionate, and how future incidents can be prevented.

12. Staff training and competence

Staff who are likely to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions will receive appropriate training in safe and lawful practice, prevention, de-escalation, SEND, trauma-informed approaches, safeguarding, recording and reporting. White Trees aims to maintain in-date accredited training (NFPS) for relevant staff, with refresher training offered at least annually and formal renewal in line with the training provider's requirements.

New staff will not deliberately become involved in planned physical intervention until trained, except in an emergency where immediate action is required to prevent harm. Training records, certificates and renewal dates are maintained centrally with refreshers and new courses being managed by our Training and Development Academy team. Leaders will ensure staff understand this policy, the legal threshold for reasonable force, the recording/reporting duties and the prohibition on seclusion or restraint as a disciplinary

penalty. All staff will have that they have read and agree to all policies using our HR system called Cezanne.
Supply staff and will be briefed on the school's expectations and escalation procedures.

13. Leadership, proprietor and governance oversight

Senior leaders must review all incidents on the day they occur or as soon as practicable. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must review incidents where safeguarding, injury, allegation, social care, discrimination, repeated patterns or significant harm concerns arise. They must also liaise and work collaboratively with the Head of Safeguarding so informed decisions can be made. The Head of Safeguarding will then liaise directly with the Executive Headteacher as and when required.
The leadership team must review incident data weekly, including frequency, duration, location, time, pupils involved, staff involved, injuries, triggers, plans followed and repeated patterns. Each site Leadership team meets weekly where the above will be discussed as and when appropriate.

The proprietor/governing body will receive full reports on restrictive intervention, seclusion and restraint, including trend analysis, disproportionality, SEND considerations, pupil voice, staff training and actions to reduce restrictive practice. These are presented during Full Governors meetings.

Leaders will evaluate whether behaviour support plans, curriculum access, staffing, environment, timetables, attendance support or external professional input require adjustment. This is done on a dynamic basis to ensure practice is relevant and up to date with needs and the environment.
Any concern that an intervention may have been inappropriate, excessive, unsafe or discriminatory will be managed under safeguarding, complaints, disciplinary and/or allegation procedures as appropriate, logging concerns on Staff safe on cpoms.

14. Complaints and allegations

Parents/carers, pupils or staff may raise concerns about any restrictive intervention through the school's complaints, safeguarding or whistleblowing procedures. Any allegation that a member of staff used force inappropriately, caused harm, acted with malice, used seclusion as punishment or failed to follow safeguarding expectations must be referred to the Executive Headteacher/DSL and managed in line with the safeguarding & complaints policy, staff code of conduct and LADO procedures where the threshold is met.

15. Monitoring impact and reducing restrictive practice

White Trees Independent School will use records and termly analysis to reduce restrictive interventions over time. The school will consider patterns by pupil, staff member, site, lesson, time of day, trigger, activity, SEND need, protected characteristic and intervention type. Where patterns are identified, leaders will act promptly. Monthly safeguarding/line concerns meetings take place, which is led by the Head of Safeguarding where all DSL's

attend and can discuss concerns and patters during those meetings, as well during their own on site leadership meetings.

The result of this might include:

- Review or introduce a Positive Handling Plan / behaviour support plan.
- Amend risk assessments, staffing, environment, timetable or transition arrangements.
- Seek advice from SEND, therapy, social care, our in house GP's or Training and Development Academy team.
- Provide staff coaching, supervision or refresher training.
- Review whether the curriculum offer or placement arrangements are meeting need.
- Capture pupil and parent voice to improve support.

Risk Assessments

- All pupils have an **individual risk assessment** which outlines specific considerations for that pupil in relation to physical intervention. These are updated on a termly basis, or more frequently if specific issues arise
- In an emergency situation, staff will inevitably need to make a **dynamic risk assessment**, which will include a judgement of the capacity of a young person at that moment to make a safe choice
- When considering a pupil's dynamic risk assessment, if there is a temporary period of incapacity that may place a pupil at risk of significant physical or emotional harm, staff may need to use physical intervention as one of the measures to protect the pupil
- When it comes to protecting pupils, staff are encouraged to consider what they would want somebody else to do **if that was their child** - this helps to direct staff towards best practice.

Appendix 1.)

Positive Handling Plan

Pupil Name:	**Group**:
Date of Plan:	**Date of Review:**

ENVIRONMENTS AND TRIGGERS: Describe situations which have led to serious incidents in the past. When is such behaviour likely to occur?

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .
-

Level of potential risk: **Low** **Medium** **High**

Describe what might happen: Describe what the behaviour looks/sounds like.

Slap **Punch** **Bite** **Spit** **Kick** **Hair Grab** **Clothing Grab** **Missiles** **Targeting**

Preventive Measures: Describe what can be done in relation to routines, personnel or the environment which may reduce the risk of an incident happening:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.

Describe interests, words, objects which may divert attention from an escalating crisis: Clear guidelines about fair play and justice.

PREFERED Supportive & Intervention Strategies: Ways of Calming behaviour. Describe strategies that, where and when possible should be attempted before positive handling techniques are used.

Active listening and support
Distraction (key words, objects, likes etc)
Reassurance
Take up Time
Time Out (with written plan)
Negotiation
Withdrawal
Choices/Limits
Cool off: directed/Offered
Moderated Tone of voice
Named adult
Planned Ignoring
Consequences

Other: 2- 3 person intervention

MEDICAL CONDITIONS that should be considered before physically intervening:

PREFERRED HANDLING STRATEGIES (Describe the preferred holds: standing, sitting, ground, stating numbers of staff, what "get outs" to be used when holding etc)

<u>Positive handling to be used:</u>

Single person escort/prompt
2 person holding technique

Straight arm immobilisation
Cupped fist

Seated position
Kneeling position

Other:
Describe any **specific cautions** to be aware of with physical intervention in relation to this pupil that may lead to further escalation:

- might lash out
- Minimise personnel involved, get other pupils away –to avoid giving Sarah an audience/attention.

DE-BRIEFING PROCESS following incident: (What is the care to be provided)

- Quiet space offered
- Talk to staff
- Support into next activity – if appropriate, if not then parked with a senior member of staff
- Staff debrief at end of day if incident

RECORDING AND NOTIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

School: White Trees Independent School

Name: Head Teacher Signed:……

Placing Authority:

Parents/Carers:

Pupil Name:

Date:

Published on	
By	
Chair of Gov Sig/Date	
Head Teacher Sig/Date	