

# Restraint, Restrictive Intervention and Seclusion Policy

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Approved by: Management Board

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## 1. Policy Statement

Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity, rights and wellbeing of all pupils. We seek to create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where positive relationships, early intervention and de-escalation minimise the need for restrictive interventions.

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a restrictive intervention, including the use of reasonable force or seclusion, is necessary to prevent harm. Any such intervention will be lawful, necessary, proportionate, reasonable, time-limited and the least restrictive option available. Restrictive interventions will never be used as a punishment or solely to secure compliance.

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## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils.
- All employees.
- Agency, supply and temporary staff.
- Volunteers and contractors working with pupils.
- Governors/proprietors.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusion Policy.
  - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
  - SEND Policy.
  - Health and Safety Policy.
  - Staff Code of Conduct.
  - Complaints Policy.
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## 3. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Independent School Standards.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education.
  - DfE Guidance: *Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools* (April 2026).
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## 4. Definitions

### Restrictive Intervention

Any intervention that intentionally restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom of action in order to prevent harm. Restrictive interventions may be physical or non-physical.

### Reasonable Force

The degree of force that is proportionate, necessary and reasonable in the circumstances to prevent injury, serious damage, serious disorder or the commission of a criminal offence.

### Restraint

A restrictive intervention involving physical contact intended to limit a pupil's movement.

### Seclusion

The supervised confinement of a pupil in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving. Seclusion is a restrictive intervention and must only be used where lawful, necessary and proportionate.

### De-escalation

Strategies used to reduce anxiety, distress or risk without restricting a pupil's freedom of movement.

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## 5. Principles

The school will:

- Prioritise prevention and de-escalation.
- Consider pupils' individual needs, including SEND, disability, communication needs and trauma history.
- Use restrictive interventions only when necessary.

- Use the least restrictive intervention likely to be effective.
  - Ensure interventions are proportionate to the risk presented.
  - End interventions at the earliest safe opportunity.
  - Preserve pupils' dignity and wellbeing.
  - Learn from incidents to reduce future use.
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## **6. Preventative Approaches**

The school will seek to minimise restrictive interventions through:

- Positive behaviour support.
  - Individual risk assessments.
  - Behaviour support plans.
  - Trauma-informed practice.
  - Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
  - Effective communication strategies.
  - Staff training.
  - Early intervention and de-escalation techniques.
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## **7. Circumstances in Which Reasonable Force May Be Used**

Staff may use reasonable force where necessary to:

- Prevent a pupil injuring themselves.
- Prevent a pupil injuring others.
- Prevent serious damage to property.
- Prevent serious disruption where there is a significant risk of harm.
- Prevent the commission of a criminal offence.
- Maintain the safety and good order of the school.

Any force used must be:

- Necessary.
  - Reasonable.
  - Proportionate.
  - The minimum required.
  - Used for the shortest possible time.
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## 8. Prohibited Practices

The following are prohibited except where there is an immediate and unavoidable risk of serious injury and no safer alternative exists:

- Using force as a punishment.
  - Deliberately inflicting pain.
  - Restricting breathing.
  - Pressure on the neck, throat, chest, abdomen, face or head.
  - Holding a pupil on the ground unnecessarily.
  - Any intervention that compromises circulation or breathing.
  - Degrading, humiliating or discriminatory treatment.
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## 9. Use of Seclusion

Seclusion may only be considered when:

- There is an immediate and significant risk of harm.
- Less restrictive measures have failed or are clearly inappropriate.
- Continuous supervision is maintained.
- The pupil's welfare is monitored throughout.
- The seclusion ends immediately once risk reduces.

Seclusion must never be used:

- As a punishment.
  - For staff convenience.
  - Because of non-compliance alone.
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## 10. Staff Training

The school will ensure that relevant staff receive training in:

- Behaviour support.
- De-escalation.
- Safeguarding.
- Risk assessment.
- Safe restrictive intervention techniques where appropriate.
- Recording and reporting requirements.

Training records will be maintained.

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## **11. Recording of Incidents – refer to restraint and seclusion log**

The school will record all significant incidents involving:

- Use of reasonable force.
- Physical restraint.
- Seclusion.
- Other significant restrictive interventions.

Records will include:

- Date, time and location.
  - Names of those involved.
  - Antecedents and context.
  - Risk presented.
  - De-escalation attempts.
  - Type of intervention used including seclusion if used.
  - Duration.
  - Injuries sustained.
  - Outcome.
  - Follow-up actions.
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## **12. Reporting to Parents**

In accordance with the April 2026 framework, parents/carers will be informed of incidents involving force, restraint or seclusion as soon as reasonably practicable and ordinarily on the same day, unless a statutory exception applies. Written records will be retained – see restraint and seclusion log.

Reports will include:

- Date and time.
- Nature of the incident.
- Reason intervention was necessary.
- Type of intervention used.
- Any injury sustained.
- Support offered afterwards.

## 13. Post-Incident Support

Following an incident:

### For Pupils

- Opportunity to discuss the incident.
- Emotional support.
- Review of support plans.
- Restoration of relationships where appropriate.

### For Staff

- Debriefing.
  - Welfare support.
  - Review of practice.
  - Additional training where necessary.
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## 14. Monitoring and Governance

The Headteacher will:

- Monitor all incidents.
- Identify patterns and trends.
- Review equality implications.
- Ensure lessons are learned.

The School's Management Board will:

- Receive anonymised monitoring reports.
  - Review use of restrictive interventions.
  - Ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
  - Monitor staff training and policy implementation.
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## 15. Complaints

Parents, carers or pupils may raise concerns through the school's Complaints Policy. Allegations involving inappropriate use of force will be investigated promptly and fairly.

## 16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- DfE guidance changes.
- Legislative changes occur.
- Monitoring identifies a need for amendment.