

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS (including use of reasonable force) POLICY

Policy Statement (1)

Restrictive interventions will only be used to avert an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, a person (including the student themselves) - Education Act 1996, Section 548 (5). Restrictive interventions allow all teachers to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- 1) committing a criminal offence
- 2) injuring themselves or others
- 3) damaging property
- 4) causing serious disorder

Reasonable force should never be used as a punishment.

The policy has been updated using the new guidance from the [DfE: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools – April 2026](#). This replaces the 2013 guidance and represents a safeguarding-focused shift from viewing restraint as behaviour management to seeing it as a restrictive intervention.

Although there is little likelihood of such action being necessary at AKS, teaching staff should be aware when they may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. This provision applies to a teacher, or other authorised person who has lawful control or charge of pupils, on school premises or elsewhere e.g. on a field trip or other authorised activity. It is understood that any application of unreasonable force, beyond the contexts and parameters outlined in this policy, is not permissible.

The policy now covers a broader range of "restrictive interventions," including seclusion, not just physical restraint.

AKS does not permit the use of threat of corporal punishment during any activity whether on or off the school premises (ISI Commentary 2023, Behaviour and Discipline).

Policy Statement (2)

- 1) This policy applies to all members of the AKS school community, including those in our EYFS setting.
- 2) AKS 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 our *Provision of Information* policy. It should be read in conjunction with the school's *Behaviour, Search & Confiscation* and respective *Rules, Rewards & Sanctions* policies.

- 4) The school 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 school's *Equal Opportunity* policy document.
- 5) This policy is reviewed at least annually, or as events or legislation changes require, by the Whole School Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body. The deadline for the next review is no later than 12 months after the most recent review date indicated above.

Key Personnel

- 1) David Harrow: Headmaster
- 2) Amanda Ilhan: Head of Nursery and Preparatory School
- 3) Allan McKeown: Senior Deputy Head
- 4) Phil Hayden: Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Definitions

- 1) Reasonable force is defined as using no more force than is necessary for the minimum amount of time to prevent harm, damage, or criminal offenses. It is used as a form of physical restrictive intervention. A restrictive intervention is any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or independence.
- 2) However, the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force or as a form of punishment.
- 3) The school emphasizes a "prevention first" approach, directing staff to use de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour strategies to minimize the need for, or duration of, restraint.
- 4) The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
- 5) Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding, and gender of the pupil. Details of the relevant DfE circular are available in Section 550A of the Education Act 1996, a provision of which came into force on 1 September 1998.
- 6) "Injury" means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour and self-poisoning.

What is reasonable force?

- 1) The term 'reasonable force' is a form of physical restrictive interventions.
- 2) Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 3) 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- 5) As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. Non-physical restraint is preventing movement without force (e.g. blocking exits).
- 6) Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- 7) School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. If at all possible staff should try and ensure another adult is present as a witness to any such situation.
- 8) Restraint must not:
 - Restrict breathing or circulation
 - Apply pressure to neck, chest, nose, mouth or abdomen
 - Intentionally hold a pupil on the ground
 - Be used to enforce compliance or manage routine behaviour

Medical attention must be sought where appropriate, even if injuries are not immediately visible.

SEND

Specific support and training should be given for staff working with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to avoid disproportionate use of restrictive interventions. The school recognises that students with SEND are vulnerable and distress behaviours may result from sensory needs or communication issues. As such, the school is committed to using early intervention to de-escalate issues where possible.

For pupils with SEND or known vulnerabilities, restraint raises heightened risk. The guidance expects:

- Prior planning (risk assessments, behaviour support plans)
- Improved understanding of triggers and distress responses
- Recognition that frequent restraint may indicate unmet need
- Alignment with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998

Seclusion

The school may use seclusion if necessary, stressing it should only be used as a last resort in a safe, supervised, confined isolation in a non-intimidating area to prevent immediate harm.

Formal guidance on seclusion includes:

- Only lawful to prevent immediate harm
- Must never be used as punishment or discipline
- Pupil must be supervised at all times
- Must be recorded and reported like physical restraint

Records

Schools must record and report all "significant incidents" involving the use of physical restraint or restrictive intervention, non-physical restraint or seclusion to parents/carers as soon as practicable (same day).

Detailed, written and up-to-date records are kept of any incidents where force is used. It is school policy to inform parents/carers of such an incident and to allow an opportunity to discuss the situation. The record of incidents of physical restraint are regularly monitored and reviewed by the Head or other senior member of staff to identify whether review or change in practice is needed and to review data on the use of force to monitor trends and improve behaviour management strategies.

If required due to the seriousness of an incident or its regularity then this may be deemed as necessary for a DSL referral.

Records of incidents include the following information:

- 1) the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved
- 2) when and where the incident took place
- 3) the name(s) of any staff or pupil witnesses
- 4) why the use of physical restraint was deemed necessary
- 5) details of the incident, including all steps taken to diffuse the situation and resolve it without force and the nature of the force used
- 6) the pupil's response
- 7) the outcome of the incident
- 8) a description of any injuries suffered by the pupil or others and/or any property damaged during the incident.

- 9) The record of incidents of physical restraint is regularly monitored by the Head or other senior member of staff to identify whether review or change in practice is needed.

Action in Self-Defence or in an Emergency

Section 550A does not cover all the situations in which it might be reasonable for someone to use a degree of force. For example, everyone has the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so. Similarly, in an emergency, for example if a pupil was at immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene. The purpose of Section 550A is to make it clear that teachers, and other authorised staff, are also entitled to intervene in other, less extreme, situations.

Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil. They will fall into three broad categories:

- 1) where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- 2) where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- 3) where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples of situations that fall within one of the first two categories are:

- 1) a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- 2) pupils are fighting;
- 3) a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- 4) a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- 5) a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- 6) a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (N.B. this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- 1) a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- 2) a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Training

School leaders ensure staff are properly trained in safe, legal, and appropriate use of reasonable force.

Complaints

Should a parent/carer be unhappy with the physical restraint used by the school on their son/daughter, they should follow the school’s Complaints Policy and Procedures, which is available on the school’s website.

Updated	9 th March 2026
Reason for changes	New DfE guidance from April 2026
Name of the owner	Allan McKeown – Senior Deputy Head/Phil Hayden – Deputy Head (Pastoral)/Amanda Ilhan – Head of Nursery and Prep School
Audience	Staff/School community
Location	Whole School Team and school website
Review date	July 2026
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Act 1996, Section 548 • The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 – Part 3 • Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (DfE, 2016) • KCSIE 2024 • DfE: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools, 2026