Halliford School
SHEPPERTON

Restrictive Intervention Policy

June 2026

Approved by the Governing Body June 2026
To be reviewed June 2027

Contents

Mission Statement 2
Introduction and Purpose 2
Key Definitions 3
When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used? 3
Who Can Use Restrictive Interventions 3
When Seclusion May Be Used 4
Decision-Making Framework 4
Unacceptable Uses of Force 4
Prevention and De-escalation Strategies 5
Our Commitment to Prevention 5
Whole-School Strategies 5
Individual De-escalation Strategies 5
Students with SEND and/or Disabilities 6
Recording Requirements 7
What Must Be Recorded 7
Reporting Requirements 7
Reporting to Parents/Carers 7
Exceptions to Parental Reporting 8
Follow-up Meetings 8
Post-Incident procedures to support students and staff 8
Monitoring and Evaluation 9

Complaints and Allegations 10

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Mission Statement

Halliford is a school based on strong family values where we know and respect every student as an individual. We encourage and support Hallifordians to flourish and become the best version of themselves that they can possibly be.

We aim for excellence by being academically ambitious but at the same time academically sensitive.

We inspire Hallifordians within a community that is founded on high quality teaching and learning, outstanding pastoral care and first-class sporting, cultural and co-curricular opportunities.

Introduction and Purpose

This policy sets out our approach to the use of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force and seclusion, in line with the latest Department for Education guidance (Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE 2026)) and applicable legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. It sets out definitions and the circumstances in which staff may use reasonable force and seclusion on a student, as well as our statutory requirements for recording and reporting incidents.

At Halliford School, we recognise that the use of restrictive interventions can have a significant impact on the students, staff and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom, and should therefore be avoided where possible. This policy emphasises our commitment to minimising the need for restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary to keep individuals and the wider school community safe, and staff should be confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

This policy applies to all students and aligns with statutory guidance, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE 2026)
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025

This policy should be read alongside our:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safe Students, Safe Staff
- Students with SEND and EAL
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance

Key Definitions

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body, of a student. Restrictive interventions include physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain students.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

A significant incident is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a student. Appropriate contact might include a handshake to congratulate a student, giving first aid, or demonstrating how to use a musical instrument. A significant incident includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a student confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving, either by physical obstruction, blocking, or by making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint refers to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a student or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a student's arms to their sides or removing a student's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

When May Restrictive Interventions Be Used?

The School does not operate a 'no contact' policy and will not agree to requests from parents or staff that reasonable force or other restrictive interventions should never be used. There are circumstances when it may be appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with students which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions. For example, physical contact may be appropriate to comfort a distressed student or to demonstrate activities during PE lessons. Staff should use professional judgement to assess whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, taking into account factors such as the student's age, SEND or other vulnerabilities, whether other adults are present and any alternative strategies that do not involve physical contact.

Who Can Use Restrictive Interventions

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances to prevent or stop a student from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property

- Causing disorder among students at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Other restrictive interventions may be used only where lawful, necessary and proportionate in the circumstances, in accordance with this policy.

When Seclusion May Be Used
Staff should only put a student in seclusion to protect others from harm when a student is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is a non-disciplinary safety measure and should not be implemented through threat of punishment. The student should be supervised throughout the period of seclusion in a place that is safe and does not feel threatening or intimidating. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the student should be allowed to leave. All incidents of seclusion will be recorded and reported in line with the recording and reporting duties detailed in this policy.

Decision-Making Framework
Before using a restrictive intervention with a student, staff should consider:

- Is it necessary: staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation and whether the intervention is likely to reduce the relevant risks or might escalate the situation further. Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.
- 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. Staff should consider the individual circumstances of the student, including their age, size, medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities, and relevant equality implications. If the intervention is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- The student's welfare: staff should consider the impact that the use of force or other restrictive interventions can have on a student. Students who have experienced adverse life events, trauma or neglect, who have medical conditions or sensory impairments, communication difficulties or other needs may find such interventions particularly distressing. Staff should seek to maintain respect for a student's dignity by considering, where possible, the location and whether peers are present.

Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the student what is happening, why, and what the student needs to do. For students with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or who speak EAL, appropriate verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used and sufficient time allowed for the student to process information and respond. Staff should continue to consider whether the intervention remains necessary and should reduce or stop it as soon as circumstances permit.

Unacceptable Uses of Force

It is illegal to use force on a student for the purpose of punishment.

Reasonable force may not be used to conduct a search solely for an item prohibited under School rules. The statutory power to use reasonable force in a search applies only to legally prohibited

items, in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy and the Department for Education guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

Students should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation. For example, by covering the nose or mouth or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.

If a student is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release them, or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Prevention and De-escalation Strategies

Our Commitment to Prevention
At Halliford School, we seek to minimise the use of restrictive interventions and use them only where necessary and proportionate. We implement measures for prevention and de-escalation to help reduce the need to use restrictive interventions.

Whole-School Strategies
Our whole-school strategies include:

- Maintaining consistent routines and expectations explicitly shared with students in the School Rules and the Classroom Code of Conduct and reinforced in lessons, pastoral time, assemblies
- Development of social, emotional and self-regulation skills explicitly taught in PSHE sessions as well as group and individual ELSA sessions
- Adopting a consistent behaviour policy that includes verbal warnings, offering students a chance to correct their behaviour first with clear escalation and consequences. In addition, clear recognition and reinforcement of positive behaviour
- Use of restorative approaches and conversations to ensure positive relationships are maintained in the school community
- Identifying any 'hotspots' or times for behaviour issues, such as corridors or areas of the playground and ensuring suitable duty staff to support in these key areas
- Training staff in effective communication strategies to aid de-escalation, including using an appropriate tone of voice and empathy

Individual De-escalation Strategies
De-escalation strategies for individual students include:

- Working closely with parents to support individual students
- Developing individual Learning Profiles with the SENDco to identify strategies based on identified needs. For example, providing time-out cards or movement breaks
- Staff awareness of individual needs such as neurodiversity and the need to make reasonable adjustments

Students with SEND and/or Disabilities

Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, can be used on students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, we recognise that students with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours that may be harmful to themselves or others, which can lead to students with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

We recognise the importance of understanding the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that proactive support can be provided in an inclusive environment.

The School will use staff who know individual students well to identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur to develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being necessary. Prevention and de-escalation strategies may include removing stimuli causing distress or engaging the student in an activity which can help them manage their feelings.

Where appropriate, we will work with the student, their parents/carers and other professionals to develop an individual behaviour support plan that sets out reasonable adjustments to the school environment as well as individual support strategies. This behaviour support plan will detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a student, with parameters around its use stated clearly. Any such plan will be reviewed periodically with the student and parents/carers, and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made in light of what has and has not proved effective in practice.

Where there is an identified risk that reasonable force or another restrictive intervention may be required, an appropriate risk assessment will be put in place. This will identify reasonably foreseeable risks and the measures to mitigate them, including prevention strategies, reasonable adjustments and any necessary staff training.

Staff Training

The Department for Education recommends that staff who are likely to need to use restrictive interventions (including reasonable force) should be adequately trained to do so safely and lawfully and trained in strategies to prevent the need to use reasonable force.

At Halliford School, we will ensure that:

- All staff receive training on de-escalation techniques and our Behaviour Management Policy
- Staff who are likely to need to use restrictive interventions receive specific training on how to use reasonable force safely and lawfully
- Training is regularly reviewed and updated

Recording Requirements

What Must Be Recorded

From 1 April 2026, the School is required to have procedures for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a student, and each incident in which seclusion or restraint is used, including restraint which does not involve direct physical contact. The requirement to record applies even where the use of a restrictive intervention in certain circumstances has been agreed with parents/carers as part of a student's behaviour support plan.

All staff involved in an incident involving a restrictive intervention must inform the Headmaster or Deputy Head Pastoral/DSL as soon as possible. The member or members of staff directly involved must make a written record of the incident as soon as practicable and should endeavour to do so no later than the same day.

The DSL (or Designated Deputy) will review the record and ensure that it contains, as a minimum, the following details:

- The names of the student(s) and staff involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the student, including if the student has SEND and their SEN code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to it, 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
- A brief account of why the staff member(s) assessed that the restrictive intervention was necessary in that instance
- Any support provided after the incident, including any medical treatment for injuries

Reporting Requirements

From 1 April 2026, the School is required to have procedures for reporting each significant use of force to the parents/carers of the student involved and for providing information in writing to parents/carers about each seclusion or restraint incident. Where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, the same information does not need to be reported twice.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

Incidents will be reported to each of the student's parents/carers as soon as practicable after the incident and the School will endeavour to do so no later than the same day. The requirement to report applies even if the use of a restrictive intervention in certain circumstances has been agreed with parents/carers as part of a student's behaviour support plan.

The information will be provided in writing. It will include, as appropriate, at least:

- Time, date location and approximate duration of the intervention

- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- A brief account of the nature of the intervention and, where force was used, what type of force was applied and the degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable, and any post-incident support provided

We will not include identifying details of any other student, as this is likely to be a breach of data protection law.

Exceptions to Parental Reporting
An incident does not have to be reported to a parent/carer if:

- A student is 20 years old or older
- It appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the student. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent/carer to whom it can be reported without resulting in significant harm or, if there is none, to the local authority within whose area the student is ordinarily resident

Follow-up Meetings
Where appropriate, parents/carers will be invited to a follow-up discussion following an incident. This could include discussion about any behavioural triggers or warning signs, whether any agreed behaviour support plan was followed, what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were, and what might be done differently in the future.

Post-Incident procedures to support students and staff

After a restrictive intervention:

1. **Medical assessment**: if appropriate, the student(s) and staff member(s) should be medically assessed and any injuries treated as soon as possible. The injury will be recorded in accordance with Halliford's normal procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.
2. **Follow-up conversation**: we will have a follow-up conversation with the staff member(s) and student(s) involved, facilitated by a staff member who wasn't involved in the incident, to allow reflection and learning and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, repair and rebuild relationships, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.
3. **Evaluation:** incidents will be evaluated as soon as practicable after the event to understand why the restrictive intervention was used, the impact on students and staff, any patterns or trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future - for example, by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan for the student.
4. **Ongoing monitoring**: we will continue to monitor the wellbeing of the student(s) and staff member(s) and provide additional support where needed. Students who witnessed the incident may also need support.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to relevant legislation or guidance from the DfE or ISI.

The Safeguarding committee under the guidance of the Governor responsible for Safeguarding will review this policy annually and monitor its effective implementation and the record keeping and reporting of all restrictive interventions.

The Governing Body will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the School's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force, seclusion and restraint are complied with.

SMT and the Governors will ensure regular review and analysis of data on restrictive interventions to:

- Identify areas for improvement to policies and practices, particularly where strategies and interventions have not been effective
- Identify areas for training and development for staff, for example on how to use de-escalation techniques effectively
- Understand regular patterns or triggers of behaviour for key students, to better support them through behaviour support plans
- Identify when the use of restrictive interventions has been disproportionate in relation to students who share protected characteristics, have SEND or have other types of vulnerability

In reviewing data, the School and Governing Body will consider the limitations of the data available. Analysis will be proportionate and will avoid over-interpreting small subgroups.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaint regarding the use of reasonable force or another restrictive intervention will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy.

Where an allegation is made that a member of staff has used force or another restrictive intervention inappropriately, the School will follow the procedures set out in its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education, including, where relevant, the provisions concerning suspension of staff.