

Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force

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1. Policy Statement

Coworth Flexlands School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity and rights of all pupils and staff. The School recognises that restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, can have a significant physical, emotional and psychological impact and therefore **must only ever be used as a last resort, for the shortest time necessary, and only to maintain safety.**

Any use of restrictive intervention which results in injury, distress, repeated use, or raises concern about proportionality must be considered as a safeguarding concern and referred in line with the school’s safeguarding procedures, including consultation with the LADO where appropriate.

This policy reflects:

- The Department for Education (DfE) *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (effective 1 April 2026).
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A).
- Education Act 1996, Section 548
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended).
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 – Part 3
- The Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (DfE, 2016)
- KCSIE 2025

Restrictive interventions are **never used as a punishment**, to enforce compliance, or as part of routine behaviour management. The School places a strong emphasis on **prevention, de-escalation, relationship-based practice and early intervention**.

This policy **supersedes and incorporates** the School's previous *Physical Restraint Policy (March 2025)* and must be read in conjunction with the School's **Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy and Health & Safety Policy**.

2. Scope and Application

This policy applies to:

- All teaching and support staff, including EYFS staff
- Peripatetic staff, contractors and volunteers
- All school activities, whether on or off site

All staff are authorised to use reasonable force **only where lawful, necessary and proportionate**.

3. Definitions (DfE 2026)

The Department for Education (DfE) *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (effective 1 April 2026) sets out clear definitions which will be used throughout this policy:

- **Restrictive intervention:** Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement, liberty or independence. This includes physical and non-physical interventions.
- **Reasonable force:** A form of restrictive intervention involving physical contact. "Reasonable" means using **no more force than is necessary** and for the **minimum amount of time**.
- **Restraint:** A non-disciplinary intervention that restricts a pupil's movement, with or without physical contact.
- **Seclusion:** A non-disciplinary intervention where a pupil is kept away from others and prevented from leaving a space, whether by physical obstruction or by making them believe they will be punished if they leave.
- **Significant incident:** Any incident where physical force goes beyond normal, appropriate physical contact.

4. Guiding principles

Restrictive interventions at Coworth Flexlands School must always:

- Be **necessary to prevent harm** to the pupil or others
- Be **proportionate to the risk presented**
- Be the **least intrusive option available**
- **Maintain the dignity** of all involved
- Be **time-limited** and cease once the risk has reduced

Restrictive interventions at Coworth Flexlands School must **never** use:

- Any technique causing pain deliberately
- Restriction of airway/breathing
- Force to neck/head
- Prone restraint unless life-threatening situation

Staff are **not expected** to place themselves at unreasonable personal risk.

The law clearly forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish, or primarily cause pain, injury or humiliation. Corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances.

The touching, physical restraint, use of force against, or constraint of a pupil is something to be approached with great caution.

Restrictive Intervention in any of the above circumstances must only be used when there is **no alternative**.

Restrictive Intervention may involve blocking the path of pupils, positioning oneself between pupils, touching, holding, pushing, pulling or leading a pupil by the arm or shepherding a pupil away, by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

Restrictive Intervention must involve the **minimum force** necessary to prevent injury or remove the risk of harm and should be gradually relaxed as the pupil gains self-control. It must not be used to gain compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk to the pupil or to other individuals.

Staff are NOT expected to restrain a pupil if, by so doing, they consider they are putting themselves at unacceptable risk.

Any incident resulting in restrictive intervention **must be recorded** on CPOMS and the Head notified. Such accounts may be made available to outsiders (parents, governors, consulting professionals) to review if changes in practice are needed.

Parents must also be advised and given the opportunity to discuss the incident. Guidance about what to include in the report is in appendix 1. The record of incidents of Restrictive Intervention are regularly monitored by the Head and the Deputy Head.

When the school has a pupil, whose needs may require incidents of physical intervention then the key staff involved in that pupil's care will attend Positive Touch Training.

Further advice for schools on the use of reasonable force can be found on the DfES website www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-forcein-schools

5. Prevention and De-escalation

The School is committed to minimising the use of restrictive interventions through:

- Strong, positive relationships
- Clear routines and expectations
- Trauma-informed and emotionally literate practice
- Early identification of triggers
- Individual behaviour support and risk assessments where needed
- Use of calm language, choice, space and time
- Support from senior staff when escalation is likely

Restrictive interventions must **never replace effective behaviour planning**.

6. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force only to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing serious damage to property
- Causing serious disorder

Examples may include:

- Breaking up a fight
- Preventing dangerous behaviour
- Escorting a pupil from a situation where there is immediate risk

Restrictive intervention **must not** be used:

- To secure compliance where there is no immediate risk
- As a sanction
- As a planned behaviour strategy on its own

Duty of Care and Dynamic Risk Assessment –

- Staff must continuously assess risk
- Intervention must stop immediately when no longer necessary
- Least restrictive option always used

7. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used as a **safety measure**, never as a punishment.

Where seclusion is used:

- The pupil must be continuously supervised
- The duration must be as short as possible
- The incident must be recorded and reported in line with statutory requirements

Seclusion must not be confused with withdrawal or time-out, where a pupil chooses or is supported to move to a quieter space and is free to leave.

8. Recording and Reporting (Statutory)

In line with statutory requirements from April 2026:

- **All significant incidents** involving restrictive intervention, restraint or seclusion **must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable and no later than the same day.**
- Incidents must be logged on CPOMS and notified to the Head.
- Parents must be informed **as soon as practicable**, ideally the same day, and provided with written information.
- Parents should be signposted to the complaints procedure should they feel the actions taken were not in line with the Restrictive Intervention Policy.

(Restrictive Intervention Log and Parent Follow-Up Templates form appendices to this policy.)

Where there is foreseeable risk, an individual risk assessment and positive handling plan must be in place, shared with staff and reviewed regularly

9. Post-Incident Support and Review

Following any restrictive intervention:

- The immediate wellbeing and medical needs of the pupil and staff will be assessed
- Emotional support will be offered
- A reflective review will take place
- Behaviour support plans and risk assessments will be reviewed as necessary
- Where appropriate, the pupil's views must be sought and recorded following the incident.

10. Pupils with SEND

The school will ensure that restrictive interventions are not used in a way that discriminates, directly or indirectly, against pupils with protected characteristics.

For pupils with SEND or known vulnerabilities:

- Strategies must be proactive and individualised
- Restrictive interventions must not be the default response
- Reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 must be considered

11. Training

Staff who may be required to use restrictive interventions receive appropriate training, including Positive Touch / Safe Handling training, refreshers and induction input.

12. Governance and Monitoring

The Head and Local Governing Body monitor:

- Frequency and patterns of use
- Safeguarding implications
- Equality considerations

Data is used to inform practice and reduce future need.

Reviewed by	Joe Yates
Role	Deputy Head Wellbeing
Review schedule	Annually
Date Authorised	April 2026
Reason for review	Annual check
Review Date	October 2026 (In line with annual policy update timetable)

Appendix 1: Restrictive Intervention Log Template

Coworth Flexlands - Statutory Record of Restrictive Intervention

Pupil Name:		DoB:		Year Group:	
Member(s) of staff involved:					
Date of incident:					
Start time of incident:					
End time of incident:					
Location of incident:					
Name(s) of additional staff witnesses:			Name(s) of additional pupil witnesses:		
Stressors leading up to the incident:					
Co-regulation prior to the decision to use of restrictive intervention:					
Verbal support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swapping of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Personalised co-reg strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distraction/diversion	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Humour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offering safe space	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (Specify	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Reason for the restrictive intervention:	To prevent or stop a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
	To prevent or stop a pupil from damaging property		<input type="checkbox"/>		
	To prevent or stop a pupil from committing a criminal offence.		<input type="checkbox"/>		
	To prevent or stop a pupil from causing disorder among pupils at the school,		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Detail of the incident:					
<p><i>(brief account of the incident, including what led up to it, identified or potential triggers / stressors 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)</i></p>					

Detail of intervention:			
Time started	Technique	Duration	Staff name
Any physical mark or harm caused by the use of the intervention to the pupil:	Yes/No	Details:	

Signed off by staff involved:		
Staff name	Staff signature	Date

Action following the incident:			
	Name	Date/Time	Detail:
Incident reported to SLT			
Verbal communication to parents/carer			
Written communication to parents/carer			
Pupil wellbeing/ medical check			
Staff wellbeing check			
Restorative conversation with pupil			
Medical/First Aid record of injury			
Incident recorded on CPOMs			

SLT Monitoring and Quality Assurance		
	Yes/No	Detail:
Staff wellbeing checks undertaken		
Witness accounts obtained and verified		
The intervention was acceptable (and in accordance with statutory guidance)		
Any learning identified		
Reported to LADO (if required)		
Any safeguarding or other response required		

SLT member name:		SLT signature	
Date:			

Appendix 2: Parent Contact (Post-Incident) Written Record Template

Dear (parent / carer),

Further to our earlier telephone conversation, I am writing to confirm our discussion about the incident today. As discussed, it was deemed necessary to use a restrictive intervention [ensure this reflects the incident] with [Pupil name].

You will be aware that such an intervention is used in our setting only as a last resort, where other interventions and de-escalation techniques have not been sufficient. As already shared with you, it was felt by staff involved that it was a necessary, proportionate and appropriate response at the time in order to keep your child and everyone else safe.

In line with our policy and procedures, I am sharing the detail of the incident with you:

Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention:	
Why the intervention was assessed as necessary:	
What type of force was applied, and the degree of force:	
Any physical injuries sustained [delete if not applicable]	

It is important that we continue to work together, going forward. I would like to invite you to a meeting to write / review a risk assessment and support plan for [Pupil name] and we can discuss the matter in more detail then. Yours sincerely