



NORTHGATE
High School

Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

Review period: Biennial

Review by: Mr J Tunaley

Date Reviewed: April 2026, *subject to Governor approval*

Next Review: April 2028

Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 At Northgate High School we have a behaviour policy that is built around consistency and restorative practices. This enables all stakeholders to feel safe in school and make positive behaviour choices. On rare occasions circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our policy for physical intervention is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention should only be used as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain safety and dignity of all concerned
- Incidents are recorded and reported to SLT as soon as possible
- Parents/Carers will be informed of each incident.

1.2 Our physical intervention policy is also based upon our wider beliefs around supporting young people and we expect all staff to:

- Build professional relationships of trust and understanding with students
- Understand the triggers and help find solutions
- Do everything possible to defuse the situation to make sure physical intervention is the last possible course of action.

2. The Legal Framework

2.1 Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 allows:

- All members of the school staff and other adults temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit, to use reasonable force to prevent a student:
 - causing injury to themselves or others
 - committing an offence
 - damaging property
 - causing disorder among students at the school.

3. DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools, March 2026

3.1 What is reasonable force?

- Reasonable force is usually used to either control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as a student needing to be restrained to prevent violence or injury
- Reasonable in the circumstances means using no more force than is needed
- Control can be achieved through passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is used typically in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to stop without physical intervention
- 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 student.

3.2 When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, causing disorder or committing an offence.
- At Northgate restrictive interventions can be used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances
- Staff at Northgate will always consider, is restrictive intervention necessary, and is it proportionate.

3.3 Schools cannot:

- Use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

4. Our Approach

- 4.1** At Northgate all staff are required to do everything possible to avoid the need to use restrictive interventions so that using reasonable force is a last resort in a very small minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and, therefore, this policy should be read alongside our behaviour policy.
- 4.2** It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical intervention would be necessary or appropriate and members of staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which fall within those stated as when reasonable force can be considered.
- 4.3** Members of staff should be aware that when in charge of students they have a duty of care to all the children of whom they are in charge. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all students' safety and wellbeing.
- 4.4** Members of staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.
- 4.5** All staff receive training around de-escalation and the fundamentals of when restrictive intervention can be used. Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force are trained in it's safe and lawful use.

5. Risk Assessments

- 5.1** If we become aware of a student that is likely to behave in a way which may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. The planning will address:
- identifying the triggers and how we can help mitigate these
 - strategies to be used to deescalate the situation
 - communication with parents/carers to help identify areas of concern
 - communication of safety plans to relevant staff to ensure they know what actions they should be taking
 - identifying further support to be contacted if appropriate.

6. When physical intervention becomes necessary

6.1 Staff members should:

- Tell the student what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the student what they must do to deescalate
- Use simple and clear language.

6.2 Staff members should not:

- Act in temper
- Involve in a prolonged verbal exchange with a student
- Involve other students in the restraint
- Hold the student in a way that will restrict blood flow or breathing
- Slap, punch, kick or trip a student
- Use physical intervention as a punishment.

7. Prevention

7.1 Northgate will aim to help prevent the need for physical intervention by:

- Identifying personal and environmental factors, which impact on individual students
- Ensuring we have strategies that prevent challenging behaviour through effective support, an example of which is Thrive
- Monitoring and evaluating behaviour and review interventions accordingly
- Holding positive views of students and building on relationships valued by the young person
- Developing positive relationships based on mutual respect and shared boundaries
- Creating an environment where students and staff feel safe and secure
- Working closely with families to help develop consistent experiences for students.

8. Seclusion

- 8.1** Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a student confined to a place away from others and prevented from learning.
- 8.2** Northgate staff will only consider using seclusion as a safety measure and as a very last resort.
- 8.3** The place where the student is confined must be safe and should not feel threatening. The student must be supervised at all times and allowed to leave the room as soon as the immediate risk level has reduced.

9. Considerations for students with Special Educational/Medical Needs

- 9.1** Some students with SEN may react to disorientating or confusing situations by demonstrating disruptive behaviour that could be harmful to the welfare of others. We recognise that this can lead to students with SEN being disproportionately subjected to the use of restrictive interventions.
- 9.2** Northgate plan carefully to support students with SEN to avoid situations that cause distress. These plans are communicated via the student passports and individual healthcare plans and we utilise staff who know the students best to help navigate times of dysregulation.

10. Reporting and Recording

- 10.1** Northgate will ensure that all incidents of restrictive interventions and restraint are recorded appropriately and investigated if appropriate to help with future prevention of further incidents.
- 10.2** In the event of the use of a physical intervention we will ensure the following details are recorded on the school safeguarding software CPOMS:
- Personal information relating to the student
 - Context of the incident, time, day and location
 - Who was present including other students, staff, family members
 - Type of incident and relative risk
 - What de-escalation strategies had been used if relevant
 - Reason for physical intervention and what was carried out
 - What occurred following the incident
 - Any injuries that came about as a result of the incident.

11. Actions after the incident

- 11.1** A member of SLT should be alerted about the incident as soon as possible
- 11.2** Support to be assessed for all of the people involved and planned accordingly
- 11.3** Phone call to parents to inform them of the nature of the physical intervention
- 11.4** Risk assessment to be completed to identify any future learning to help reduce the risk of further incidents
- 11.5** SLT member to record the incident on CPOMS and linked to all the students involved
- 11.6** Appropriate sanctions to be put in place
- 11.7** Where appropriate, restorative conversations are held.

12. Complaints and Allegations

- 12.1** A clear restraint policy, adhered to by all members of staff and shared with parents should help to avoid complaints. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation.