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RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY, INCLUDING THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

Author: Senior Deputy Head	Reviewer: Assistant Head Pupils
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Introduction

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom or other context.

There may be a very rare circumstance when a pupil at Bryanston or Bryanston Prep needs to be physically restrained by a member of staff. This document is intended to clarify when such occasions might occur and the procedures which should be adopted to help staff feel more confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

It is important to minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, such as through prevention and de-escalation. At Bryanston, we consider how the school environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive. We train staff in effective communication strategies, such as appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation. Our approach is pupil-centred and we build trust between staff and pupils.

Relevant legislation

The principal legislation to which this guidance relates are:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Equality Act 2010

Terminology

The restrictive interventions listed below must not be construed as an endorsement or otherwise for their use at Bryanston; most are not relevant and others may be required on a very rare occasion to keep a child and our community safe.

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of 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.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this policy. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

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

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

Part 1: Understanding restrictive interventions

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

To prevent or stop a pupil from:

- i. Causing injury to themselves or others
- ii. Committing a criminal offence
- iii. Damaging property
- iv. Causing disorder among pupils at school, whether during a class or otherwise

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

The Head and staff authorised by the Head have statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only. Staff should refer to and follow the Bryanston School Search and Confiscation Policy.

Unacceptable uses of force

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

Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

Other physical contact with pupils

Bryanston does not have a 'no contact' policy because there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self regulate
- to comfort a distressed pupil • to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff will use their judgement and have regard to:

- Bryanston School Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures
- Bryanston School Code of Conduct
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
- any other material factors, including whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving. It should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

An incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting duties'.

Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom and, on these occasions, staff will follow guidance in Bryanston School Relationship and Behavioural Policy.

Part 2: Policy and Practice

Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

There will be times when staff may need to use restrictive interventions. This decision will depend on the individual circumstances of each situation. The member of staff should consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.

- assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- if the intervention itself is escalating the situation, reconsider the approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Has the pupil's welfare been considered?

- consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- where possible, communicate clearly and calmly to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- for pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be applied, reduced or stopped.

Consideration for pupils with SEND

Some pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

The School will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour to provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND.

The School will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and

develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. The School will also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Where appropriate, staff will work with pupils with SEND, the SENDCo and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans. These plans will outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively.

Pupil and staff support

The School will evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan.

Incidents in which a member of staff uses reasonable force or seclusion on a pupil must be recorded as described in 'Recording and reporting duties' in this policy. In addition, any injuries should be recorded in accordance with school policy.

A follow up conversation with a senior leader will be held to facilitate reflection and any lessons learned to support pupil and staff wellbeing. Additional support will be provided as required.

Part 3: Recording and Reporting Duties

Recording of incidents where reasonable force has been used

The Senior Deputy Head or other appropriate senior leader at the senior or prep school must be informed as soon as practically possible after an incident of this nature occurs. In practice, it is likely that another staff member or pupil will have informed a senior leader of the situation and they will be present at or soon after the event.

Any incident involving the use of restraint or reasonable force must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It must be recorded by the staff member involved this should happen on the same day that the event occurred.

The record must include the following information as a minimum:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, 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
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

In the interests of evaluating the incident, identifying best practice and areas for improvement, it may also be appropriate to gather witness statements, when and how

parents were notified and what follow-up took place.

The incident **must** also be recorded on MyConcern.

Reporting the use of force

The School will ensure that significant use of force will be reported to the parents of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and they should endeavour to do this on the same day that the incident occurred.

The only exception to this would be if it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to Dorset children's social care.

A report of the incident made to parents will be made in writing and must include the following details as a minimum:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

The School may invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident. The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as required.

Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

The School will record each seclusion or restraint incident as part of the school's duty under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

As outlined in these regulations, an incident of restraint may occur with or without direct physical contact. For restraint incidents that occur without direct physical contact, for example, the removal of a walking aid, these must be recorded under the procedures outlined above in the same way as reporting use of force procedure.

Guidance for governing body on using data

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

This document should be read in conjunction with:

Bryanston School Rules and Regulations
Bryanston School Relationships and Behaviour Policy
Bryanston School Search and Confiscation

Policy Reference also may be made to:

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (especially sections 93 and 93A),
Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools: Guidance
for schools in England – April 2026 (Department for Education),
the Schools (Recording and reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No 2) (England)
Regulations 2025
'Behaviour and discipline in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff' -
January 2016 (Department for Education)
'Screening, searching and confiscation: Advice for headteachers, school staff and
governing bodies – July 2022 (Department for Education).

