Cornerstone Schools (Barton. East Cowton and Ravensworth CE Primary Schools)

Cornerstone Schools

"Building Futures with Love"

Physical Intervention Policy 2026

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Approved by – Headteacher	KPetch

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Statement of intent

Cornerstone CE Primary Schools believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary.

The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

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Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)
- Section 93A statutory guidance on recording and reporting
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- HM Government 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Notifying the headteacher that the Behaviour Policy should include the power to use reasonable force.

- Evaluating, on an annual basis, instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether members of staff require additional training (Team Teach) to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- Maintaining the records of the use of reasonable force and evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the Physical Intervention Report Form.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy sets out the circumstances in which force might be used.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.
- Carrying out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils can use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions as safely as possible, if and when required.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.

- Developing individual risk assessments for pupils with SEND or medical conditions that are agreed with the pupil's parents and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that all teaching and classroom-based staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the headteacher.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Providing all teaching and classroom-based staff with annual reasonable force training where the headteacher deems it necessary.
- Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the headteacher and governing board.

All staff members will be responsible for:

- Avoiding restrictive interventions wherever possible and only using reasonable force as a last resort.
- Only using reasonable force in certain circumstances, including to prevent or stop a pupil from:
    - Causing injury to themselves or others.
    - Committing a criminal offence.
    - Damaging property.
    - Causing disorder among pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.
- Understanding the unacceptable uses of force and the legal implications of using force in this way.

Definitions

Restrictive intervention: An action or measure used to prevent, limit, or control the movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body. Within this policy, *restrictive intervention* is used as an umbrella term encompassing both physical and non-physical interventions intended to restrict a pupil's movement or behaviour.

Reasonable force: A legal term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the statutory power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable force refers to the minimum level of force necessary, applied for the shortest possible duration, and proportionate to the specific circumstances of the incident.

Significant incident: Any incident in which the use of force exceeds appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes situations where physical force is used to carry out or support a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: A non-disciplinary intervention involving the confinement of a pupil to a space away from others, with their freedom to leave restricted. This may be achieved through physical obstruction, blocking exits, or actions that lead the pupil to believe they will face negative consequences if they attempt to leave.

Restraint: A term used in legislation to describe a non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or restricts their movement. Restraint may involve direct physical contact or indirect actions. Examples include holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing an item that enables mobility, such as crutches.

Avoiding physical intervention and reducing risk

Seclusion

The school will recognise seclusion as a non-disciplinary measure that may be used, in exceptional circumstances, to reduce risk and avoid the need for physical intervention when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent.

The school will ensure that seclusion is used only as a safety measure to protect the pupil or others from harm and will not use seclusion as a consequence or through the threat of punishment.

Where seclusion is used, the school will ensure that:

- The space used will be safe, suitable, and not intimidating or threatening to the pupil.
- The pupil will be appropriately supervised at all times.
- The restriction will last only for as long as the immediate risk of harm remains.
- The pupil will be allowed to leave as soon as it is safe to do so.

The school will record and report any incident involving seclusion in accordance with the procedures set out in the recording and reporting incidents section of this policy.

Seclusion will not be used as a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. The school will use appropriate disciplinary measures, such as removal from the classroom, in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Pupils with SEND

The school will have due consideration to how ALL pupils may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Staff members will be trained on understanding triggers and how pupils that find communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions.

The school will seek to minimise the potential disproportionate use of restrictive interventions used on pupils with SEND by understanding underlying triggers of challenging behaviour and providing proactive support.

The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

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.

De-escalation strategies may include:

- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress.
- Changing body language, facial expression, or tone of voice.
- Supporting the pupil to express their emotions before they become overwhelmed.
- Engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety.
- Distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention.
- Changing the adult interacting with the child.

Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil with SEND will be applicable to other pupils with SEND.

Where appropriate, staff will work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of behaviour support plans. These plans will outline any adjustments and methods to communicate their needs effectively. Behaviour support plans will also detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. Any behaviour support plan will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident.

Where there is an identified risk, e.g. an increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and other physical interventions, the school will put risk assessments in place and mitigate these risks through training and prevention strategies.

The school will always adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

Post-incident 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 the future.

If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved will receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible

Follow-up conversations will be used to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. Such conversations will be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and seek to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved. This process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident, with input from an additional person to ensure impartiality and support.

The school will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention will also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

Recording and reporting incidents

All incidents involving the use of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint or seclusion, will be recorded on the school's safeguarding and child protection recording system (CPOMS).

Records will be entered as soon as practicable after the incident and, wherever possible, no later than the same day. Entries will be made by the staff members directly involved in the incident and reviewed by the headteacher and DSL.

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The use of CPOMS ensures that:

- all incidents are recorded consistently and securely
- patterns or repeated concerns can be identified
- safeguarding oversight is maintained
- records can be appropriately reviewed by senior leaders, the DSL and the governing board

Where relevant, CPOMS records will be linked to behaviour support plans, risk assessments and SEND documentation to support effective monitoring, safeguarding decision making and compliance with statutory recording and reporting duties.

Incidents will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It will be recorded by the staff members involved and they will aim to do this no later than the same day. The requirement to record will apply even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The school will record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of pupils and staff directly involved.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has SEND, and their SEN status code.
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- A 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 what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained.
- A brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Any post-incident support, e.g. details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

The school may also record details such as witness accounts, how and when parents were notified, and what follow-up action has taken place.

Records should be retained and analysed by the headteacher, and SENCO where physical intervention was used on a pupil with SEND, on a termly basis to ensure that such interventions are being used appropriately, and to identify patterns of behaviour and responses to that behaviour that may require changes to school practice, e.g. increased staff training or further behavioural or emotional support. Records should also be shared with the Safeguarding governor for evaluation.

Where reasonable force or physical restraint has been used, the pupil's parents will be informed unless it appears that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. If the decision is made that the parents cannot be informed as this would place the child at greater risk, the incident will be reported to the LA.

A report of the incident made to parents will include the following details as a minimum:

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

Parents will also be invited to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This may include a discussion about:

- Behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident.
- Whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed.
- What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were.
- What might be done differently in the future.

The headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

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

The governing board will ensure that a procedure is also in place for recording and reporting any incident involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention, whether or not physical force has been used. This duty applies even where such interventions are agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Incidents involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event by the staff members involved and, wherever possible, no later than the same day.

For the purposes of this policy, non-physical restrictive interventions include actions that restrict a pupil's movement without direct physical contact, such as preventing a pupil from leaving a space or removing an item that enables mobility.

The school will record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of the pupil and staff directly involved.
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including SEND where applicable.
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Any post-incident support provided, including medical or emotional support where relevant.

Parents will be informed of incidents involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention as soon as practicable, and no later than the same day, unless it appears that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. Where parents cannot be informed for this reason, the incident will be reported to the local authority.

Where an incident involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention also constitutes a significant use of force, the school will follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force only, and information will not be duplicated.

Records of seclusion and non-physical restrictive interventions will be retained, monitored, and reviewed alongside records of physical intervention to support oversight, identify patterns or trends, and inform any necessary changes to school practice or pupil support.

Complaints

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force or other restrictive interventions is made against a staff member, the procedures in Keeping children safe in education will be followed, including the provisions regarding suspension of staff.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on a biannual basis by the headteacher, DSL, SENCO and governing board, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review for this policy is April 2028.

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Physical Intervention Report Form

We believe that reasonable force should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded. Incidents must also be documented on CPOMS.

Name of staff member(s)	
Name of pupil(s)	
Date	
Time	
Location	
Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident	
Informed parties (parents, social workers, police, etc.)	
Circumstances prior to the incident	
Brief account of the incident	

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Details of any negative impact on other pupils	
Reason(s) for physical intervention (please tick)	
To prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others.	☐
To prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence.	☐
To prevent a pupil from damaging property.	☐
To prevent a pupil from causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.	☐
Was it a planned intervention, e.g. in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils? (Please circle)	Yes/No
Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary	
Any post-incident support required	

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Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils	
Damage (if any) to property	
Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents	
Headteacher's signature:	**Date:**
Signature of staff member concerned:	**Date:**