



The Crypt School

Pupil Restraint Policy

Lead Person: Deputy Head – Safeguarding, Inclusion and Wellbeing

Governing Body Committee: Pupil Education and Outcomes

Rationale

In line with school values of Respect, Responsibility and Kindness, The Crypt School is committed to ensuring that each child has the right to be educated in a safe environment and that staff should expect to work in a safe environment.

Our procedures on physical intervention/use of reasonable force comply with the non-statutory guidance set out in the DfE publications *Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools (February 2025)* and *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England (April 2026)*.

. Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents/carers have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs and welfare by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies and with kindness, integrity and respect;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will ensure that parents/carers and pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school. In turn parents/carers will have committed themselves through the 'Home School Agreement' to promote the good

behaviour of their child and that efforts have been made by them to ensure that they understand and follow the school's Behaviour Policy.

1. What is reasonable force

Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Restraint is an 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.

School staff should always avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil to reduce the risk of greater harm.

Parental consent is not required to use reasonable force on a pupil.

Restraint

Section 550(A) of the Education Act 1996 – The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils – allows teachers, and other persons who are authorised by the Headmaster to have control or charge of children and young people, to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- injuring themselves or others;
- causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property);
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

The provision applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on the school premises, and when he or she has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere e.g. on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

2. Minimising the need to use reasonable force

Staff should have good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent:

- A pupil from significantly injuring himself or others,
- Serious damage to property,
- A serious breach of school discipline.

If the School becomes aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will draw up an individual risk assessment and plan measures that may be taken.

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others - in these cases their triggers and support will be detailed on their Student Support Plan (SSP). 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. School will also work with the pupil, parents/ carers and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Staff should take steps in advance to avoid the need for physical restraint, e.g. through dialogue and diversion, allowing space, talking, listening and humouring, cajoling and reasoning, diversion and distraction, and the pupil should be warned orally that physical restraint will be used unless he/she desists.

Only the reasonable force necessary to prevent physical injury or damage should be applied. Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants and witnesses. As soon as it is safe, restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control. Restraint should take place calmly but firmly. Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment. Physical restraint should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk to people or property. Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken.

3. Staff authorised to use reasonable force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Headmaster has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

Permanent authorisation: All permanent staff have been authorised to use force to restrain a pupil although they may choose not to do so. They may be used in a supportive role.

Temporary authorisation: Any adult working with children in the school, whether on a supervisory, e.g. supply teacher or voluntary basis, e.g. parent helper/student, may need to use force to restrain a pupil and will be given the statutory power to do so.

The Headmaster is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Headmaster will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those whom the Headmaster has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control or restraint is needed. External support services will have their own policies for Care and Control of pupils. When working within school it is the Headmaster's responsibility to

ensure that colleagues from support services are aware of school policy and practice. The Headmaster in the school will be accountable for their actions while in the school.

In any incident where restraint is used the incident must be immediately reported to the Headmaster or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) so that it can be recorded.

This policy is evidence of the use of temporary or permanent authorisation to use force to restrain a pupil. We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a pupil may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

4. Use of reasonable force to search pupils

The Headmaster and staff they authorise have a 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. The decision to use reasonable force should be made on a case-by-case basis.

5. Using reasonable force

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use force and/or other restrictive interventions, depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. In assessing whether force and/or other restrictive interventions are reasonable in a situation, the member of staff should use their professional judgement and assess whether force or restraint is necessary, and proportionate, in addition to considering the potential impact on the child's welfare.

The school can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

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 should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped. Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity throughout.

It is important to only use the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result.

Reasonable force may involve staff:

- physically interposing between pupils (blocking);
- physically moving a pupil from a situation;
- leading a pupil by the arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of their back;
- retaining a pupil in a confined area (for example a classroom) to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation;
- in order to actively prevent a child from causing significant injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property, restraint may be used;
- using distraction techniques.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff. This response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

Staff will only use reasonable force as a last resort. Staff will never:

- hold a pupil around the neck in a way that is likely to restrict breathing;
- hit a pupil;
- hold a pupil face down on the ground.

6. Operational procedural points relating to the use of physical restraint

The circumstances and justification for using physical restraint must be recorded immediately and this report presented to Headmaster and DSL at the earliest opportunity.

The following details should be recorded 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 and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
- 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, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- 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.

The requirement to report applies even if the use of reasonable force in certain circumstances is agreed with parents/carers, for example as part of a SSP. A proforma is attached at Annex A which can be used.

Action after an incident:

A member of staff, separate to the incident and trained in first aid, will check for any injuries, as a result of the incident. Pupil(s) who witnessed the event will be asked to make a statement and supported as appropriate by the pastoral team.

Staff must make a written record of any occasion on which reasonable force (including details outlined above) is used to restrain a pupil. It is the responsibility of the intervening member of staff to submit a record form on the day that the intervention took place. Where it is clear that the teacher / member of staff concerned needs further advice/support/training, the Headmaster should take prompt action to see that it is provided.

Following a significant incident in which reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are used, schools should hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. The Headmaster, or senior member of staff authorised to act for the Headmaster, should discuss the incident with the teacher/person using force on the same day. This conversation should be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved; as well as to repairing and rebuilding relationships through dialogue. This process should ideally be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident and may also benefit from the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support. By engaging in this process, The Crypt School fosters a culture of continuous improvement and considers how things might be improved in the future.

School will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of reasonable force and/or restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed, should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary, and an opportunity to discuss their thoughts on the incident.

Parents/ carers will be informed of each significant use of force on their child involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and then invited to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This could involve a discussion about any behavioural triggers, any warning signs of an impending incident, whether any agreed behaviour support plans or SSPs were followed, what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were, and what might be done differently in the future.

The DSL will inform any necessary agencies/authorities of the physical intervention in accordance with DfE and LA guidance.

7. Other physical contact

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- To give first aid;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised (e.g. 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.

8. Staff Training and Support

Staff will be given the opportunity to discuss incidents where physical restraint was employed and, in particular, to identify whether any alternative strategy might have been equally effective using non-physical intervention strategies.

This policy recognises an ongoing staff training need, with respect to management of behaviour and use of physical restraint and the Headmaster and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) lead on continuing professional development (CPD) will ensure that behaviour management occupies a proportion of the annual training programme as well as on staff meeting agendas.

The Headmaster and the SLT CPD lead will also ensure all newly appointed staff are introduced to this policy and given appropriate induction training. The whole staff will be updated about current information and strategies - teachers, teaching assistants, midday supervisors and other support staff, as appropriate.

Teachers of pupils who may have specific restraint plans in place will be briefed fully about the plan and strategies via SSPs and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo).

9. Complaints

Any complaints regarding the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure.

10. Review

This policy will be discussed as appropriate at staff meetings, by the Senior Leadership Team and the governing body. The policy will be changed, as appropriate, in the light of new legislation and behaviour management techniques. It will be reviewed triennially.

Reviewed: February 2026

Approved by the Head: February 2026

Review cycle: 3 years

Next review: February 2029

Annex A: RECORD OF REASONABLE FORCE OR RESTRAINT

Member(s) of staff involved, and their roles:	Pupils(s) involved, and their year groups and any SEN or disability:
Date of intervention: Time of intervention: Duration:	Location of 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, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable). Continue on a separate sheet of paper or overleaf if required.	
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:	
Sign and print name:	Date:

