



# PHYSICAL CONTACT & RESTRAINT POLICY



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<b>Next review</b>	Spring Term 2027	

This updated policy reflects the April 2026 Department for Education guidance on restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion. It retains Brackenfield School's ethos while ensuring full compliance with statutory requirements.

## **PURPOSE**

Brackenfield School fully recognises its responsibility under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This policy applies to all pupils, including EYFS, and all staff, volunteers, and contractors. It now incorporates statutory duties introduced in April 2026, including recording and reporting requirements for use of force, seclusion, and restraint.

Key updates:

- Statutory recording and reporting of significant use of force, seclusion, and restraint.
- Inclusion of seclusion procedures.
- Preventative strategies and post-incident support.
- Training and risk assessment requirements.
- Coverage of searches using reasonable force.

## **WHO CAN USE REASONABLE FORCE?**

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances, including preventing injury, damage, crime, or disorder. Staff authorised by the Head may also use reasonable force. Staff likely to need this power must receive appropriate training, and the school must conduct risk assessments to ensure safe practice.

## **WHEN CAN REASONABLE FORCE BE USED?**

Reasonable force may be used to:

- Prevent pupils from harming themselves or others, damaging property, committing an offence, or causing disorder.
- Remove disruptive pupils from classrooms when they refuse to comply.
- Prevent disruption during school events or trips.
- Conduct searches for prohibited items under statutory powers.

## **WHEN CAN REASONABLE FORCE NOT BE USED?**

Reasonable force must never be used as punishment. Restraint must avoid harm, pain, airway restriction, or contact with sensitive areas.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Professional judgment is essential. Minimum force for minimum time must be applied. Staff should act calmly, summon help, and never involve pupils in restraint.

## **METHOD OF RESTRAINT**

Restraint techniques must minimise risk and avoid harm. Examples include guiding, holding, blocking, or shepherding. Locking a pupil in a room is prohibited. Seclusion may only be used as a safety measure, never as punishment, and must be recorded and supervised.

## **RECORDING AND REPORTING**

All significant incidents involving force, seclusion, or restraint must be recorded in detail and reported to parents as soon as practicable, ideally the same day. Records must include names, SEN

status, time/date, triggers, de-escalation steps, type and degree of force, injuries, and post-incident support. Follow-up discussions with parents and staff are required. Governors must review data regularly to identify patterns and ensure compliance.

### **TRAINING, PREVENTION, AND POST-INCIDENT SUPPORT**

The school will provide regular staff training on restrictive interventions, de-escalation, and safeguarding. Risk assessments will be conducted for pupils with identified needs. After any incident, pupils and staff will receive medical checks if needed and wellbeing support, including restorative conversations.

The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND). Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

<b>Name of policy</b> Physical Contact/Restraint Policy	<b>Policy reviewed/amended date</b> October 2022 (V2) November 2023 (V3) November 2024 (V4) November 2025 (V5) January 2026 (V6)
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