



St Mary's Priory Catholic Infant and Junior Schools

Love one another
Always do our best
Take care of ourselves and the world around us

Physical Intervention policy

Approved: April 2026

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Statement of intent

St Mary's Priory Infant and Junior School believe it is essential to establish a safe, secure and stable environment in which all pupils can grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain limited circumstances, physical intervention - including safe touch and the use of reasonable force - may be necessary to keep pupils and others safe.

The school understands that behaviour is often a form of communication, signalling that a pupil may be experiencing distress or unmet needs and may not yet have the skills to express these appropriately. Therefore, the school takes a proactive and preventative approach, seeking to anticipate, manage and minimise potential triggers of distressed behaviour that could cause harm.

We aim to create a calm, predictable environment in which incidents requiring physical intervention are minimised. Where incidents do arise, staff prioritise de-escalation and relational approaches. Physical intervention is used only when all reasonable de-escalation strategies have been unsuccessful and when the risks of intervening are outweighed by the risks of not intervening.

De-escalation strategies include early, relational interventions guided by the Anchor Approach. Staff follow a graduated response model, using low-, medium- and high-level interventions depending on the level and persistence of behaviour (see Appendix 1), with the aim of supporting pupils to regulate and return to learning as quickly as possible.

This policy acknowledges that there may be occasions when staff are required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, to manage behaviour that presents a risk of harm to the pupil or others when other strategies have failed.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any physical intervention is used lawfully, proportionately and safely, in accordance with relevant legislation and national guidance.

1. 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'
- 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
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. 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 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 a log on MyConcern.
- 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 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 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.

3. 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.

4. Avoiding physical intervention and reducing risk

The school will expect staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention.

All staff are trained in the ANCHOR approach and will always follow the steps of emotion coaching in order to prevent escalation. (see appendix 1)

Where possible, the school implements an approach of prevention, where staff will be trained in recognising warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour, communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli.

Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class, and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs.

Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first questioning whether there is a need to use physical intervention. Staff will question whether:

- **It is necessary:**

- Staff will consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff will 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.
- Where possible, staff will communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

- **It is proportionate:**

- Staff will use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff will reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.

- Staff will consider the personal circumstances of the pupil, e.g. medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics, e.g. age and size, and relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

- **The pupil's welfare:**

- Staff will consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken.
- Staff will maintain respect for a pupil's dignity.
- Where possible, staff will clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with communication difficulties or EAL, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies will be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff will seek to understand the pupil's feelings and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Reasonable force will only be used in situations where it is needed to stop a pupil from causing harm to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder among pupils. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating.

The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are forced to pull the pupils apart. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.

Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline – only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

5. 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.

6. Pupils with SEND

The school will have due consideration to how pupils with SEND 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.

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 adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

7. 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.

8. Recording and reporting incidents

The governing board will ensure that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each significant event in which a staff member uses force on a pupil.

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 SENDCO where physical intervention was used on a pupil with SEND, on a regular 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 sent to the governing board annually 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.

All incidents are recorded on MyConcern, which is the school's central safeguarding, behaviour and positive handling recording system. MyConcern serves as the school's positive handling log.

Staff are required to record incidents as soon as is reasonably practicable following the event, ensuring that records are factual, proportionate and reflective. Records must include the context and antecedents of the incident, de-escalation strategies attempted, the rationale for any physical intervention used, the nature and duration of the intervention, staff involved, outcomes for the pupil, and any follow-up actions taken.

MyConcern records are monitored by senior leaders to ensure that physical intervention is used lawfully, proportionately and as a last resort, and to identify patterns, emerging risks, training needs and necessary adjustments to behaviour support plans or risk assessments. Where required, parents/carers are informed in line with the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

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.

9. Complaints

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

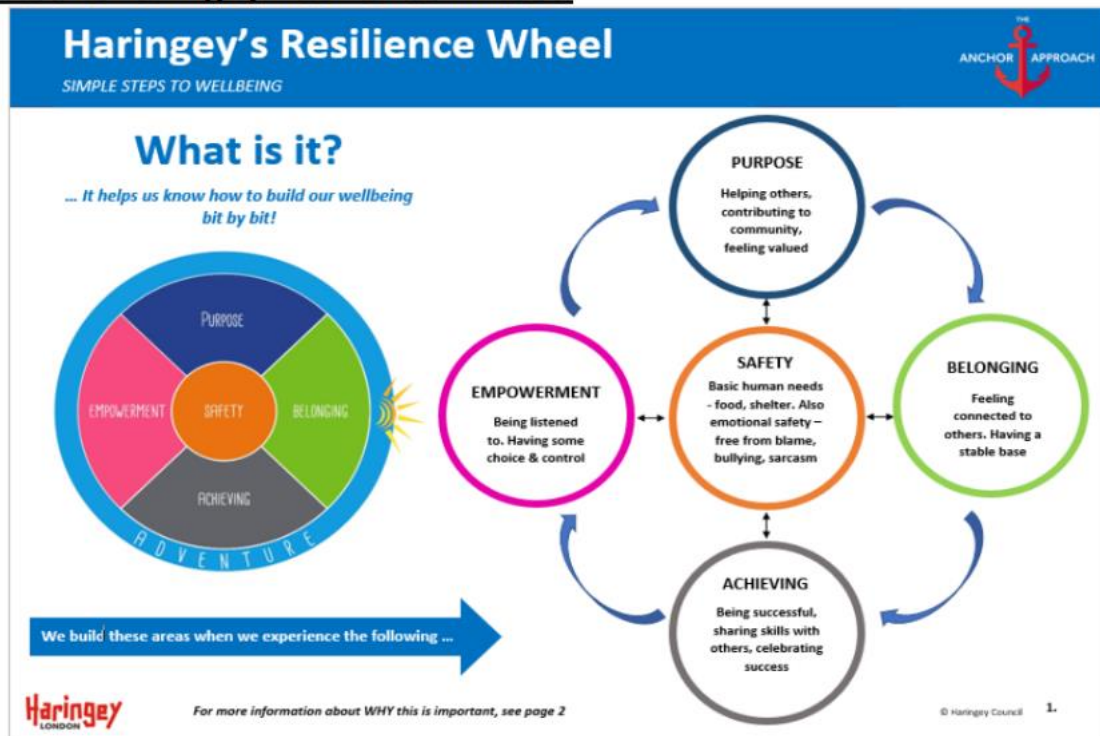
If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force or other restrictive interventions is made against a staff member, the procedures in Keeping children safe in education will be followed, including the provisions regarding suspension of staff.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual 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 2027.

What is the Haringey Resilience Wheel?



Haringey Resilience Wheel

Meeting developmental needs:

The Haringey Resilience Wheel is based on the work of Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Brokern. The Haringey Resilience Wheel has been adapted with agreement from the authors. The work of the Haringey Resilience Wheel fits within the work of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943). For all of us to thrive and reach our potential, developmental needs must be met. When the four bio-social needs below are met children generally do well and are able to manage difficulties and build resilience to persist and have good mental health.

The areas of the wheel:

Belonging

children have relationships based on trust and respect. The human need for attachment is met

Achieving

children are given opportunities so that their thirst for mastery and learning is met. They are able to solve problems, develop skills and knowledge and celebrate success

Empowerment

children and young people are empowered to be inter-dependent, to make decisions, develop a sense of agency in their lives and take responsibility

Purpose

children's sense of altruism and generosity is nurtured. They recognise when others help them and when positive things happen. They have a sense of purpose.

In addition, the Haringey Resilience Wheel recognises adventure and safety as bio-social drivers.

They apply across all of the bio-social needs as above and support the building of resilience. **Safety** - builds the child and provides an opportunity for feedback and learning
Adventure – provides appropriate opportunities for new experiences and challenges

EMOTION COACHING - High Empathy/High Guidance

Emotion coaching was developed by John Gottman. It works with the anatomy and physiology of the brain to support the development of emotion regulation.

It assists pupils to be better able to control their emotions, delay gratification, self soothe when upset and pay attention. Emotion coached pupils will be better able to achieve academically and make positive social connections. They will have fewer behaviour problems, fewer infectious diseases and be more emotionally stable and more resilient.

Step 1 – Empathise – name the emotion. Recognising the pupil's feelings and empathising with them, to sooth and to calm. This time can teach the pupils about the world of emotions 'in the moment' and support the building of trusting and respectful relationships with pupils

Step 2 – Validating the feelings and labelling them. Accepting negative emotion as normal, providing some language for emotions and wondering what they may be

Step 3 – Setting limits on the behaviour (if needed) Using moments of negative behaviour as opportunities for teaching. Offer guidance, reflecting on what happened

Step 4 – Problem-solve with the child. Helping the child to find solutions to deal with ups and downs, what they could do to change the outcome

The steps can be cyclical in nature and may require repeating.

Whole school culture to support the wellbeing of pupils

As a school community we recognise that we all need to build the culture of the school. As school staff we work together to support the following aspects of our school culture focused on wellbeing for attainment.

Regulate physical state

- We create a space where children feel safe to talk about how they feel
- We enable all our children to feel safe to express their cultural identities
- We enable all pupils to feel safe, aspirational and accepted for who they are
- We put in place additional support for children depending on need (e.g. key adult)
- We understand that change and transitions can be difficult for children
- We provide a quiet safe space to support children to regulate if needed

→ We have plans in place for children who have specific needs

Communication style

→ We use Emotionally Friendly Communication (EFC)

→ We welcome pupils on their arrival in the playground and classroom, ensuring it is inclusive

→ We communicate respectfully avoiding confrontation, understanding that how we interpret and perceive situations does have an impact on outcomes

→ We repeat and reinforce instructions and provide prompts e.g. visual

→ We reframe feedback positively

→ We praise pupils or find ways to acknowledge contributions by using clear and explanatory statements

→ We view mistakes as part of the learning process

Developing a 'sense of self'

→ We think about children and young people when we are not with them and let them know by asking them how they got on at an activity we've talked about previously

→ We make sure we acknowledge them at the start of the day/the lesson

→ We say goodbye and wish them well at an activity or event we've talked about previously

→ We support pupils to feel they have some control by giving them some choice

→ We listen to pupil's ideas

→ We acknowledge all pupils', understanding that some may require more acknowledgment than others

→ We are aware of and respect the different cultural needs of our pupils

→ We help pupils to think about and understand their behaviour – 'wondering aloud'

→ We remember pupils - activities and achievements are talked about

Our classrooms are supportive for learning, including engaging lessons

→ We are aware of the sensory needs of pupils - noise, light, smell, colour, tactile experiences - as some pupils have more acute body responses to these

→ We work as a team and ask for support and help, particularly when dealing with pupils' who reject support and assistance

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