

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

(formally Physical Restraint)

This policy sets out the legal position and School policy concerning any use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, physical restraint and seclusion, by a member of staff to a boy.

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the boys, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider School. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider School community safe.

Situations involving decisions about whether to use restrictive interventions, can occur in any School. Both using restrictive interventions, and, conversely, deciding not to can entail significant risks for boys and staff. Establishing a clear School policy on the use of restrictive interventions, by staff is an important part of minimising these risks.

Reference to Other School Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies and documents listed below:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Rewards and Sanctions Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Alcohol and Smoking (Boys) Policy;
- Drugs Policy;
- Self-Harm Policy;
- Searching and Confiscations Policy;
- Memoranda;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Teaching and Learning Policy;
- Trips and Educational Visits Policy;
- Staff Trips Handbook;
- Emergency Procedures Policy;
- Fire Safety Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Medical Policy;
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Philosophy of Care;
- Pastoral Handbook;
- Privacy Notice for Boys;
- Statement of Boarding Principles;
- Complaints Procedure for Parents Policy;
- Bounds Safety Hazards and Risk Assessments for Pupils.

AIMS

The aims of the Restrictive Interventions, Policy are to maintain the safety and welfare of all staff and boys at Tonbridge School, to prevent serious breaches of School discipline and to prevent serious damage to property.

THE LEGAL POSITION

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

Established by the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This policy takes note of section 45 of the Violent Crime Reduction act and also non-statutory guidance from the DfE entitled 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England'. April 2026 as well as Section 550ZB5) of the Education Act 1996. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables School staff to use such force or physical restraint as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent boys from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing any offence (or, for a boy under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older boy).
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the boy himself).
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the School or among boys receiving education at the School, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

This applies when the member of the staff and the boy are on the School premises, or they are elsewhere and the member of the staff has lawful control or charge of the boy concerned.

TERMINOLOGY

For clarity, this policy will use the following definitions:

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

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. 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 boys and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a boy 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 boy or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a boy's arms to their sides or removing a boy's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

KEY POINTS

The key features of this policy are:

- School staff have a legal power to use restrictive interventions, and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action;
- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force or physical restraint;
- School leaders should support their staff when they use this power appropriately;
- Schools cannot use force or physical restraint as a punishment;
- It is not illegal to touch a boy. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force or physical restraint is proper and necessary (e.g. comforting a distressed boy, demonstrating a musical instrument or coaching technique, congratulating a boy, giving First Aid, or to guide or escort boys). Tonbridge School does not have a 'no contact' policy, and does not normally grant any requests by parents or staff not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

Head teachers 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 (knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property. 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 not set out in the Searching and Confiscations Policy.

What is 'reasonable force'?

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with boys. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a boy to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a boy needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force or physical restraint than is needed for the least amount of time.

Boys 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 boy 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.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the boy. 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.

As far as possible, staff should not use restrictive interventions unless another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

MINIMISING THE NEED TO USE FORCE OR PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Tonbridge has put in place a number of measures to minimise the likelihood of situations arising where the use of restrictive interventions may be required. These measures include a Safeguarding Policy, a Philosophy of Care, a Staff Code of Conduct, the Memoranda, a

Behaviour Rewards and Sanctions Policy, an Anti-Bullying Policy, a Searching and Confiscations Policy, a Problems and Complaints Procedure for Boys and engagement with the student body through the student voice agenda. Issues of conflict resolution and classroom management are dealt with during Induction for new staff and through ongoing CPD for the Common Room.

Colleagues are always advised to de-escalate incidents if they do arise and must only use restrictive interventions when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in NOT using restrictive interventions. However, where practicable, a warning should be given to a boy that restrictive interventions may have to be used, before using it.

Where there are specific educational and emotional needs of boys that should be taken into account, it is good practice to carry out regular assessments of the risks posed to the boy and to colleagues.

For a member of staff who experiences persistent provocation, support and advice is available which may assist him or her in dealing with the situation. In those circumstances, the member of staff is strongly encouraged to discuss the difficulty at an early stage with the relevant Housemaster(s), their Head of Department, other senior colleagues, the Deputy Head Pastoral, the Second Master, or the Headmaster.

STAFF AUTHORISED TO USE FORCE OR PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

The use of reasonable force or physical restraint is a power delegated by the Headmaster to all staff who have control or charge of boys, including unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying boys on a School organised trip. This is a permanent authorisation. Colleagues are reminded in their induction process of their statutory powers to use restrictive interventions and are explicitly informed of their responsibilities in relation to the School policy on the use of restrictive interventions.

Deciding whether to use Force or physical restraint

The judgement on whether to use restrictive interventions and what restrictive interventions to use should always depend on the circumstance of each case and information about the individual concerned. Often, such decisions have to be made quickly, with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, in general terms it would be appropriate for staff to consider the following:

Is it necessary?

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

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should 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, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.

- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the boy such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the boy's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, boys 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.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a boy'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, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the boy what is happening, why, and explain what the boy needs to do.
- For boys 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 boy understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the boy is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations. There may be occasions when a member of staff should not intervene physically without assistance, particularly if a boy appears likely to resist.

Using restrictive interventions

Staff should only use the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result. Before using restrictive interventions staff should, wherever practicable, tell the boy to stop misbehaving and communicate in a calm and measured manner. Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger.

A verbal warning should always precede any use of restrictive interventions.

SECLUSION

Seclusion, a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a boy confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving, should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a boy is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the boy is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which the boy is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the boy. The boy should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the boy should be allowed to leave. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour though there are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom.

RECORDING INCIDENTS

Any member of staff who uses a restrictive intervention against any boy that is a Significant Incident, whatever the circumstances, even if the use of restrictive

interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a boy's behaviour support plan, must inform the Headmaster, DSL or Second Master immediately.

The same applies to any staff who use seclusion and non-force related restraint against any boy, whatever the circumstances. As above the member of staff must inform the Headmaster, DSL or Second Master.

Any use of restrictive intervention, seclusion or non-force related restraint must be recorded on CPOMS by the member of staff and they must ensure that they alert the Headmaster to this incident. The account should include:

- name(s) of boy(s) and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the boy, including whether the boy 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
- names of witnesses
- the boy's response and the outcome

Parents must be informed of any recordable incident by a boy's Housemaster or, in more serious cases, by the Headmaster, Second Master or DSL, who should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. This and any follow-up actions should also be recorded. Exceptions to the requirement to report are where it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the boy. 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 the local authority within whose area the boy is ordinarily resident.

A report of the incident made to parents in writing should 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 in that instance
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

Best practice would include inviting parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This could involve a discussion about:

- any 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

In circumstances where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, staff only need to follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force incidents as outlined above. The same information does not need to be reported twice. However, if a restraint incident does not constitute a significant incident of use of force, for example, the removal of a walking aid, this must be reported under the procedures outlined in this section.

The DSL, Second Master and Headmaster will record all such incidents and review all occasions where the use of restrictive interventions is used. They will take appropriate action to prevent the inappropriate use of restrictive interventions and will take effective action when inappropriate restrictive interventions has been used. This might take the form of:

- additional training and support to enable staff to de-escalate potential confrontations between boys, or potentially violent behaviour, to minimise the need for restraint. It can also involve a disciplinary procedure against the member of staff.
- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability

COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Parents and boys have a right to complain about actions taken by School staff. Where there is unsatisfactory resolution of an incident requiring the use of restrictive interventions, the Complaints Procedure is available to parents and boys.