Blackfen School for Girls

Restrictive Intervention including use of Reasonable Force Policy

Headteacher: Ms C Senior
Chair of Governors: Mr W Stone

	Date	Name	Signature
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Review Date	May 2027		
Review Period	Annually		
Lead Person	Deputy Headteacher	Ruth Makepeace	
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Verified by	Headteacher	Carrie Senior	
Approved by	Chair of Governors	William Stone	

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Statutory statement:
Blackfen School provides a written statement of general principles to guide the Headteacher in determining measures to promote good behaviour in the school and reviews it with governors every year. This policy forms part of our Behaviour Policy (July 2025) and is aligned with the Department for Education guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools (April 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), and relevant legislation including the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A), the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and Health and Safety legislation.

Rationale:
The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity on the use of reasonable force and wider restrictive interventions so that staff feel confident using them lawfully, safely and appropriately. The school is committed to minimising the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early support and de-escalation strategies. However, there are occasions when such interventions are necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and others.

Definitions:

- Restrictive intervention: Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues the movement of a pupil.
- Reasonable force: The use of no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time.
- Restraint: Restricting a pupil's movement (with or without physical contact).
- Seclusion: Confining a pupil alone and preventing them from leaving (non-disciplinary, safety-based only).
- Significant incident: Any use of force beyond normal physical contact.

Outcomes:
A positive attitude to learning leads to success. Good behaviour ensures a safe school for all. Staff will prioritise prevention, de-escalation and supportive strategies. Restrictive interventions will only be used as a last resort, when necessary, proportionate and in the best interests of safety.

Procedures:
Reasonable force and restrictive interventions may be used to prevent pupils from:

• hurting themselves or others
• damaging property
• committing a criminal offence
• causing serious disorder

The decision to intervene is based on professional judgement and must consider:

• necessity
• proportionality (least force for shortest time)
• pupil welfare and dignity
• the pupil's age, size, needs and SEND status
• risks to all involved

Staff should, wherever possible:

• use de-escalation strategies first
• communicate clearly and calmly
• allow time and space for the pupil to self-regulate

Unacceptable use of force:

• Force must never be used as punishment
• Techniques that restrict breathing or circulation (e.g. pressure on neck, covering mouth) are prohibited
• Prolonged or unsafe restraint, especially on the ground, must be avoided

Seclusion:
Seclusion may only be used as a safety measure when a pupil is at risk of causing harm due to distress or dysregulation. It must:

• not be used as punishment
• occur in a safe, supervised environment
• end as soon as risk reduces
• always be recorded and reported

SEND considerations:
The school recognises that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable. Staff will:

• identify triggers and plan preventative strategies
• make reasonable adjustments
• use behaviour support plans where appropriate
• work with parents and professionals

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.

The member of staff will use their judgement and consider the student's behaviour and level of risk at the time of the incident, the degree of force used, the effect on the student or member of staff and the student's age.

Reasonable force and wider restrictive interventions can be used:

- To remove disruptive students from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- To prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- To prevent a student leaving a classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- To prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight.
- To restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- To conduct a search for a set list of prohibited items if you are the headteacher or an authorised member of staff (see Screening, Searching and Confiscation Policy for list of prohibited items).

It is not illegal to touch a student. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary. In the context of Blackfen, these may include:

- comforting a distressed student.
- congratulating or praising a student.
- demonstrating the use of a musical instrument.
- demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- giving first aid.

Recording

- All significant incidents of force, restraint (including non-contact) and seclusion must be recorded as soon as is practicable (preferably the same day) by staff involved on the Blackfen School Restraint Form (See Appendix 2).
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure records of the incident are complete.

Reporting

- Any incident where force, restraint (including non-contact) and/or seclusion is used on a student must be reported **immediately** to the line manager of the member of staff involved.
- Any incident where force, restraint (including non-contact) and/or seclusion is used on a student must be reported **immediately** to the school Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead must inform parents as soon as practicable (preferably the same day) unless doing so would risk serious harm to the pupil.

- Reports should include:
  - when and where the incident occurred
  - why intervention was necessary
  - what intervention was used
  - details of any injuries

Key roles

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. Any person who has been put temporarily in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit also have the power to use reasonable force.

Training and risk assessment:

Staff likely to use restrictive interventions will receive appropriate training. Risk assessments will be conducted where needed.

Follow-up and support:

After any incident:

- pupils and staff should receive medical attention if required
- a debrief should take place to support reflection and learning
- relationships should be restored where appropriate
- further support should be provided if needed

Monitoring and governance:

The school will analyse data on restrictive interventions to:

- identify patterns and reduce use

• improve practice and training
• ensure no disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups

Recording and reporting procedures will be regularly reviewed by governors.

Complaints:
Complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be handled in line with the school's Complaints Procedure and Keeping Children Safe in Education. *(See Appendix 1).*

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Appendix 1 – Procedure if a student complains when force is used on them.

The complaint must be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated (see Complaints Procedure).
The investigation must be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the complaint is about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Headteacher should decide on the person who will carry out the investigation.
The onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that the allegations are true.

The school must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved. Suspension must not be an automatic response.
If a person is suspended the school must ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

Governing bodies should always consider whether a member of staff has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action.
As an employer the school has a duty of care towards the employee.

Related documents: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) Behaviour Policy, Home School Agreement, Screening, searching and confiscation policy, Complaints procedure, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Appendix 2 – Blackfen School Restraint Form

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Raising aspirations - releasing potential

Physical Restraint/Restrictive Intervention Incident Form

Staff Name:		Location:	
Student Name:		Time of incident:	
Student Year:		Date of incident:	
Duration of intervention:		Type of intervention (tick all that apply):	☐ Reasonable force (physical) ☐ Restraint (non-contact) ☐ Seclusion

Description of Incident:
(include context, triggers, sequence of events, words spoken by student and restrainer, behaviour displayed)

What led to the incident?
(include known triggers, environmental factors, pupil needs including SEND)

Why was the intervention necessary?

Intervention used:
(mention type, degree of force, how applied, duration)

Was intervention proportionate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Was anyone injured? ☐Yes/ ☐No

If yes, details and action taken:

If yes, was this recorded in the accident book? ☐Yes/ ☐No

Was the student checked for injuries by a member of staff who was not involved in the incident? ☐Yes/ ☐ No

Members of staff involved:	
Adult witnesses to restraint:	
Student witnesses to restraint:	

Parent informed of incident on:

Parent informed by:

Method:

Recorded by:
Date: