

## Restrictive Interventions Policy Guidance (Including the Use of Reasonable Force)

This document, which applies to the whole College inclusive of boarding is publicly available on the college website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the College office.

**Scope:** All who work, volunteer or supply services to our college have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal college hours, including activities away from college. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents and confirm this by signing the Policies Register.

This policy operates alongside the College Behaviour Policy and should be read in conjunction with it.

**Statement of Purpose:** David Game College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity and rights of all students. This Policy sets out the College's approach to the lawful, proportionate and safe use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force.

The College recognises that restrictive intervention is a safeguarding measure of last resort and must only be used where absolutely necessary to prevent harm. It must never be used as a punishment or as a routine behaviour management strategy.

This Policy applies to all staff, including teaching staff, support staff, boarding staff, volunteers and any authorised adults acting on behalf of the College, including during off-site activities and within boarding provision.

**Legal and Regulatory Framework:** This Policy is prepared in accordance with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, particularly:
  - Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils)
  - Part 8 (Quality of Leadership and Management)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Department for Education statutory guidance (April 2026): Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force

The College recognises that any use of restrictive intervention engages safeguarding responsibilities and equality duties. Misuse may constitute a safeguarding breach or unlawful discrimination.

Reviewed: February 2026

Next Review: February 2027

Signed

David Game  
Founder and Proprietor

John Dalton  
Principal

## Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

### 3.1 Restrictive Intervention (RI)

Restrictive Intervention refers to any deliberate act by an adult which restricts a student's movement, liberty or freedom of action in order to prevent harm. This includes physical and non-physical interventions that limit a student's ability to move freely.

Restrictive intervention includes restraint and seclusion. It does not include low-level physical contact such as guiding a pupil by the arm, provided such contact does not restrict liberty.

#### Restraint

Restraint is a form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact where force is used intentionally to restrict a pupil's movement or freedom of action.

Restraint includes:

- Holding a pupil to prevent them from harming themselves or others
- Blocking a pupil's movement in a way that restricts their liberty
- Physically preventing a pupil from leaving a location where there is immediate risk

Restraint must:

- Be necessary to prevent imminent harm
- Be proportionate to the risk
- Use the minimum force required
- Last only as long as absolutely necessary
- Not restrict breathing, circulation, or cause pain

Restraint must never be used as a punishment.

#### Seclusion

Seclusion is the supervised confinement of a pupil in a room or space from which they are prevented from leaving, for the purpose of preventing serious harm.

Seclusion is a safeguarding measure, not a disciplinary sanction. It may only be justified where there is an immediate and serious risk of harm to the pupil or others, and where de-escalation strategies have failed or are inappropriate due to the urgency of the situation. It may be used, for example, where a pupil is engaging in violent behaviour, attempting serious self-harm, or trying to access an unsafe environment.

Seclusion must be necessary, proportionate, actively supervised, and used for the shortest possible time. It must never be used as punishment, for non-compliance alone, or as part of routine behaviour management. All incidents must be formally recorded, reviewed by senior leadership, and communicated to parents in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Seclusion must:

- Only be used where there is immediate risk of serious harm
- Be actively supervised
- Not be used as a behavioural sanction
- Be recorded as a significant incident

Isolation used as part of behaviour management (where a pupil can leave and is not physically prevented) does not constitute seclusion. However, if a pupil is prevented from leaving, it becomes seclusion and must meet the legal tests above.

## Reasonable Force

### Who Can Use Reasonable Force?

All members of College staff have the legal authority to use reasonable force in specific circumstances. This power may be used to prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. Injuring themselves or others
2. Committing a criminal offence
3. Damaging property
4. Disrupting good order and discipline within the school, whether during lessons or at other times

Staff members who may need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions should receive appropriate training in safe, lawful practice and in preventative approaches. School leaders are trusted to determine training needs based on their school's individual context. When selecting formal training, leaders must ensure it aligns with the principles set out in this guidance.

Employers have a legal duty, as far as reasonably practicable, to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. Schools should therefore carry out risk assessments to help ensure that staff who regularly work with pupils—where the use of reasonable force or restrictive interventions may be necessary—can do so as safely as possible.

### Use of Reasonable Force When Searching Pupils

Headteachers, and staff authorised by them, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if there are reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil is carrying a prohibited item. Staff may use reasonable force to search for items that are legally prohibited. However, force cannot be used to search for items that are banned only under school rules. For detailed guidance, staff should consult the *Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools* guidance document.

### Unacceptable Uses of Force

It is unlawful to use force as a form of punishment.

Pupils must never be restrained in a way that restricts their airway, breathing, or circulation. This includes actions such as covering the mouth or nose, or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen. The use of force carries inherent risks, particularly if it involves holding a pupil on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally restrained on the ground, staff should release or reposition them into a safer or standing position as quickly as possible. Where necessary, the pupil should receive a prompt medical assessment and treatment for any injuries. All forms of restraint—whether seated or standing—carry risks of physical and psychological harm. For this reason, restraint should always be avoided wherever possible.

### Significant Incident

A Significant Incident is any episode involving restraint or seclusion that goes beyond ordinary physical contact and restricts a pupil's liberty.

A significant incident requires:

- Written recording
- Senior leadership review
- Parental notification
- Safeguarding consideration

Low-level guiding or protective contact does not constitute a significant incident unless it escalates to restriction of liberty.

### Core Safeguarding Principles

Restrictive intervention must:

- Only be used where necessary to prevent immediate harm

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- Be proportionate to the seriousness of the risk
- Be the least restrictive option available
- Be applied for the shortest possible duration
- Be consistent with safeguarding and equality duties

The College prioritises prevention, de-escalation and positive behaviour support.

### **Determining When Restrictive Intervention is Appropriate**

Before using restrictive intervention, staff must consider:

- Is there an immediate risk of significant harm?
- Have de-escalation strategies been attempted where possible?
- Is this the least restrictive option?
- Is the intervention proportionate?
- Is it safe to implement?

Restrictive intervention may be appropriate where necessary to:

- Prevent injury
- Prevent serious disorder
- Prevent serious property damage
- Prevent criminal activity

Staff must consider:

- The pupil's age and maturity
- SEND status
- Trauma history
- Behaviour support plans
- Individual risk assessments
- Boarding context (if applicable)

Restrictive intervention must cease immediately once the risk reduces.

### **Unacceptable Practices**

The following are prohibited:

- Using force as punishment
- Restraining in a way that restricts breathing
- Forcing a pupil to the floor and applying pressure
- Applying pain-compliance techniques
- Using seclusion for non-safety reasons
- Prolonged isolation without review

### **Recording and Reporting**

Every Significant Incident must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable and normally on the same day.

The record must include:

- Pupil name
- Date, time and location

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- Names of staff involved
- Antecedent events
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type of restraint or seclusion used
- Duration
- Why necessary
- Why proportionate
- Injuries (if any)
- Medical checks offered
- Safeguarding concerns
- Parent notification details
- Senior leader review outcome

Parents must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, normally on the same day.

### **Post-Incident Review**

After any restrictive intervention:

- The pupil must be supported and debriefed
- Staff must be debriefed
- The incident must be reviewed by a senior leader
- Patterns must be analysed
- Behaviour plans must be amended if necessary
- Safeguarding referrals considered where appropriate

### **Training**

The College will ensure:

- Staff receive appropriate induction
- Regular refresher training
- De-escalation training
- SEND-informed practice
- Recording and reporting training

Training records will be maintained and reviewed.

### **Governance Oversight**

The Proprietor/Advisory Board will receive anonymised termly reports including:

- Number of incidents
- SEND breakdown
- Patterns or trends
- Training compliance
- Serious safeguarding concerns

This ensures compliance with ISSR Part 8.

### **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.