



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Physical Restraint (Use of Reasonable Force)

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Surbiton High School: Aims and Ethos

Surbiton High School aims to **inspire, encourage and empower** all its students to discover and embrace their individual talents, within United Learning's core mission to bring out "the best in everyone". We combine an intellectually rigorous academic environment with outstanding pastoral care and outstanding co-curricular opportunities; through this provision, we encourage our students to live out our **School values**, and become compassionate, respectful, courageous, and inquisitive members of the community.

Our Values

We are compassionate:

We are kind and we care, in both thought and action. We consider those less fortunate and strive to support and offer aid. We are mindful of the gentle power of positive actions. We support and encourage those around us, living out the School's motto: *Amor nos semper ducat* (May love always lead us).

We are respectful:

We respect all people equally. We respect ourselves, our learning, our community, our environment, and the planet we all share. We strive to act with respect and integrity in all things. When we disagree, we do so respectfully.

We are courageous:

When challenged by our fears we are determined, not deterred. We call on resilience for strength when in the heat of the struggle. We bravely chase our dreams and fight for what we believe. When we fall, we pick ourselves up and forge forward.

We are inquisitive:

We understand that a thoughtful question is the key to unlock understanding. We believe where answers provide ends, questions pose exciting beginnings. We are eager to explore, we question to discover, we are curious to learn more of the world at large.

We are a community:

We are united - with a common focus. We value belonging to a wider community: our school community, our local community, our global community. We are inclusive of all, no matter our differences. We value and nurture the connections we form.

United Learning and the United Church Schools' Trust

Surbiton High School is part of *United Learning* and the *United Church Schools' Trust*. The School has an Anglican foundation, valuing its Christian heritage whilst welcoming staff and children from all faiths and none. We share with United Learning its core mission statement "to bring out the best in everyone". We are committed to the aims of United Learning, including its *Framework for Excellence*, which can be found at: www.unitedlearning.org.uk



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Policy Statement

Surbiton High School is committed to safeguarding the well-being of pupils and staff and, in line with relevant legislation, only permits physical restraint by reasonable and non-injurious means. Physical restraint is used only when immediately necessary for the minimum time necessary to prevent injury to self or others or very serious damage to property. Any incident involving one of restraint is recorded on CPOMS and notified to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

- Physical restraint will only be used to avert an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, a person (including the student themselves). — Education Act 1996, Section 548(5)
- Surbiton High School does not permit the use or threat of corporal punishment during any activity whether on or off the school premises.

Surbiton High School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

This policy applies to all members of our School community, including those in our EYFS setting.

Surbiton High School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Physical Restraint policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and Common Docs area of the staff landing page, and on request from the Principal's Office, and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Searches and Confiscation of Property

This document has regard to the DfE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools: Draft Guidance for schools in England, February 2025'. The principal legislation to which the aforementioned draft guidance relates is:

- Education Act 1996, Section 548 [No right to give corporal punishment]
- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Equality Act 2010
- KCSIE 2025



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This document is reviewed annually by Matthew Close, Senior Vice-Principal, or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is December 2026.

Key Personnel

Implementation of the Physical Restraint (Use of Reasonable Force) Policy is the responsibility of Matthew Close in the Senior School, Paula McIntyre Girls' Prep School, including EYFS and Byron King in the Boys' Prep School, including EYFS.

Definitions

Reasonable force: Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.

Restrictive interventions: Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include the use of equipment, medication or seclusion. Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

Restraint: A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. Restraint may also include mechanical or chemical restraint. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.

As noted within the definitions, these terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. For example, depending on the circumstances, if two members of staff briefly physically pull apart two pupils who are fighting, all three definitions could be relevant.

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

Although not exhaustive, the following list provides examples of situations where reasonable force can be used to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.



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Understanding when to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use force and/or other restrictive interventions, as defined in the terminology section above, depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. In assessing whether force and/or other restrictive interventions are reasonable in a situation, the member of staff should use their professional judgement.

Factors they should consider include:

- **Is it necessary?**

Staff should consider whether there are reasonable alternative ways to manage a situation and achieve the desired outcome. Staff should assess whether the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the consequences of the behaviour that it intends to address. 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. Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil 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 2010.

- **Have you considered the pupil's welfare?**

Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils 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 reasonable force and other restrictive interventions particularly distressing. Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil'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 pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do. For pupils 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 pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond. Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Pupil and staff support

Following each significant incident involving the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive intervention, we evaluate the incident to understand why reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions were used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions might be avoided in future.



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“Significant incident’ refers to any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in ‘Other physical contact with pupils’ in this document. This includes when physical force is used to implement a restrictive intervention.

If necessary, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Any significant incident in which a member of staff uses reasonable force on a pupil must be recorded as described in ‘Recording the use of force’ in this document. In addition, any injuries should be recorded in accordance with the school’s accident reporting procedures on ARMS and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

Following a significant incident in which reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are used, we hold a follow-up conversation to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation is framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repairing and rebuilding relationships through dialogue. This process should ideally be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident and may also benefit from the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support. By engaging in this process, we can foster a culture of continuous improvement and consider how things might be improved in the future. We continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of reasonable force and/or restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed, can also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Head teachers, and staff that 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.

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. The decision to use reasonable force should be made on a case-by-case basis. Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

Unacceptable uses of force

School staff must never use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be deliberately 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 pupil 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. Where needed, 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.



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Other physical contact with pupils

Surbiton High School does not have a 'no contact' policy. Additionally, we do not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a School can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils. We adopt sensible policies which allow and support staff to make appropriate physical contact. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, e.g. holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, e.g. a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
-

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement, have regard to the School's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy, the applicable circumstances (e.g. whether there are other adults present), the individual pupil's age, and any other material factors, including but not limited to, whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities, or whether any alternative strategies which do not include physical contact can be used.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions.

Surbiton High School seeks to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of School policies on pupils with SEND. For example, we consider how the School culture and environment may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND and seek to support pupils to cope with situations that they may find distressing. We should 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 reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions being used. We also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies may include:



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- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting 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

Where appropriate, School staff should work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans. Behaviour support plans should outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively. Behaviour support plans should detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. This should be discussed in conjunction with the relevant persons, such as teachers, parents, the pupil, pastoral staff or health professionals, and parameters around its use stated clearly in the plan. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, schools must have risk assessments in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through training and prevention strategies.¹⁴ Whether the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan.

Recording Incidents

It is a requirement that a written record is kept on any occasion when physical restraint is used; the member of staff concerned must advise the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately following an incident and provide a written report on CPOMS, using the 'Use of Reasonable Force' lozenge as soon as possible.

The CPOMS report should include:

- name of pupil and staff directly involved
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- details of any physical injuries sustained to either the pupil or staff member, if applicable
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a member of the Senior Leadership Team when writing a report. The record of physical restraint on CPOMS is regularly monitored by Matthew Close, Senior Vice-Principal, to identify whether review or changes in practice are needed.

Informing Parents

Parents must be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and the School should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.



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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 pupil. 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 pupil is ordinarily resident.

The requirement to inform parents applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour plan.

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

The School may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.



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Document Information

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