COGNITA

Use of Reasonable Force, Restrictive Interventions and/or Restraint Policy

Alleyn's Hampstead Nursery & Junior School

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UK

Registered in England & Wales - Cognita Schools Limited No. 02313425
Registered Office: Seebeck House, One Seebeck Place Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK5 8FR

COGNITA

THRIVE IN A RAPIDLY EVOLVING WORLD

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1. Policy Statement

1.1. This policy ensures that the school complies with all relevant statutory requirements, as amended, from time to time.

1.2. This policy ensures that the principles of 'justification' and 'proportionality' are always used in respect of the use of reasonable physical force, restrictive interventions (including seclusion), restraint, searching, screening, and/or confiscation.

1.3. This policy applies to pupils in the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

1.4. This policy uses 'staff' to describe staff employees of the school, visitors, volunteers, and/or third parties.

1.5. This policy applies to all staff when they have lawful control or charge of pupils, both on and off the school site.

1.6. This policy recognises that creating and maintaining a positive school culture, where all staff and pupils feel safe and secure, is vital to establishing calm and supportive environments that are conducive to learning.

2. Terminology

2.1. Regarding terminology, this policy will use the following definitions below. However, please note that the various descriptions have been defined for completeness, in line with the government guidance, and should not be construed as endorsement or otherwise for their use in our school which will happen rarely, and only in order to keep pupils safe.

2.2. **Reasonable force**
Reasonable force is a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions (see below).

Whilst there is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force, all members of staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances.

To prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

'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 pupils and staff (as described below in section 4). This includes using physical force to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention (see below) and may or may not also involve the use of restraint (see below).

All incidents involving the use of force must be reported to the parents/carers and recorded using Appendix A and sent to the Head of Safeguarding (HOS).

2.3. **Restrictive interventions**

This policy uses the umbrella term of restrictive interventions to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways. A restrictive intervention is a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil.

2.4. **Seclusion**

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving one or more members of staff keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others e.g. a "cool-off" room or a calm space, and/or any corridor isolation, and preventing them from leaving that place, either by:

- physical obstruction
- blocking, and/or
- *'making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave'* (please note the latter is guidance from the government, and the school will refrain from this if possible).

Seclusion must only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing a high level of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful behaviour. Therefore, seclusion is distinct from Removal (see below 2.5). Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

The place to which the pupil is secluded and confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil.

The pupil must be supervised by staff at all times during the period of seclusion.

As soon as risk of immediate harm to themselves or others has reduced, the pupil must be allowed to leave the space and escorted back to their class.

All incidents using Seclusion must be recorded and reported to the pupils' parents/carers in accordance with the procedures outlined within this policy (see section 11 and Appendix A) which are underpinned by regulations (see above). The form must also be sent to the Head of Safeguarding (HOS)

2.5. **Removal (Internal Exclusion)**
Removal is covered in the 'Behaviour in Schools' and is a limited and temporary intervention (for no longer than 2 days or less) to accommodate those pupils who have been 'removed' from a lesson at short notice for serious disciplinary reasons, poor behaviour and/or conduct so that other pupils may continue their learning uninterrupted (which is not so serious as to warrant consideration under the Suspension, Expulsion and Required Removal in Other Circumstances Policy).

The use of Removal should allow for continuation of the individual pupil's education in a supervised setting in the school. It should only be used when necessary and once other behavioural strategies in the classroom have been attempted, unless the behaviour is so extreme as to warrant immediate removal.

Parents/carers should be informed on the same day if their child has been removed from the classroom, and the incident must be recorded by the school using Appendix A in the Use of Reasonable Force, Restrictive Interventions, and/or Restraint, incorporating Searching, Screening, and Confiscation Policy.

The form must also be sent to the Head of Safeguarding (HOS).

2.6. **Restraint**
Restraint is a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, whilst the school will refrain from these methods, the government guidance states that the following actions can legally be used:

- removing a walking aid
- holding or binding the body
- securing the pupil to a fixed object
- depriving them of an auxiliary aid are all caught.

2.7. As noted within the definitions, the above terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories.

For example, but depending on the circumstances, if two members of staff briefly physically separate two pupils who are fighting and causing harm to each other/others using reasonable force and possibly restraint to remove them from the classroom, then allow for a period of seclusion due to their heightened emotional/behavioural dysregulation, several of the above definitions could be relevant.

2.8. **Searching, Screening, and Confiscation** - see below in Section 13.

3. Legislation and Guidance

3.1. 3.1 The principal pieces of legislation to which this policy relates are the:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Coroners and Justice Act 2009
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008
- Education Act 1996
- Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No2) (England) Regulations 2025

3.2. This policy also takes fully into account the most recent Department of Education (DfE) (UK) guidance entitled:

- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (2026)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2022))
- Behaviour in Schools (2024)
- 'Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention (2019)
- Sharing nudes/semi-nudes (2024)
- DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools (2012)
- The Equality Act and advice for schools (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)

3.3. This policy also supports the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (latest version) which applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

4. Introduction

4.1. Our school does not have a 'no contact' policy. 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. As such, our school will not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, including seclusion.

4.2. It is not illegal to touch a pupil, and there are circumstances when physical contact is appropriate and necessary for staff. For example:

- to hold the hands of a younger pupil at the front/back of the line
- to guide/escort pupils when walking in a group
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to help a pupil to a space they have chosen to access in order to self-regulate in class, or before/after a Seclusion intervention
- to congratulate or praise a pupil with a gentle pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate a musical instrument

- to demonstrate exercises or techniques in PE or sports coaching
- to provide intimate care for younger children
- to provide first aid

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, the member of staff must use their professional judgement and have regards to the:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- staff Code of Conduct
- individual pupil's age
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether other staff are present
- any other material factors, including, but not limited to whether:
  - the pupil has SEND or any other vulnerabilities
  - any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used

4.3. Physical contact with pupils via the use of reasonable force, restrictive interventions, and/or restraint, including the requirement to seclude, remove or search a pupil, however, is not usually necessary due to staff knowing of, and utilising a range of alternative behaviour strategies, including those aimed at the prevention and de-escalation of a situation.

4.4. That said, there may be times when the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions (including seclusion, removal, and the requirement to search a pupil), by staff will be required, and in doing so **will** be lawful. However, the above interventions can only be used when there is a need to keep individuals and the wider school community safe i.e. to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, and/or from causing disorder. In addition, searches may also be due, in part of an ongoing investigation.

4.5. It is recognised within this policy that the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including seclusion/removal and/or the requirement to search a pupil, may have a significant impact on the pupil(s), staff, and parents/carers involved, as well as the wider classroom and community.

4.6. This policy, therefore, aims to help the school and its staff proactively minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions, including the requirement to seclude, remove or search a pupil through early support. prevention and de-escalation strategies

4.7. The intention of this policy is to protect every individual against any unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful physical intervention, whilst clarifying the power of teachers and other staff who have lawful control, and/or who are in charge of pupils, should they have to intervene for reasons of safety, whether they are on/off the school site.

4.8. The policy aims, therefore, to ensure that staff feel more confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately, and lawfully.

5. Key Principles

5.1. The school recognises the importance of creating a positive culture that seeks to minimise the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including the requirement to seclude, remove, and/or search a pupil, by developing and utilising a range of alternative prevention strategies aimed at de-escalation.

5.2. School staff have a power to use 'reasonable' force to protect pupils/others from harm. This policy aims to set out the circumstances in which reasonable force can be used and to help staff feel more confident in using this power safely and appropriately.

5.3. Corporal punishment is illegal. Therefore, this policy does not authorise or permit the use of corporal punishment or threat of corporal punishment under any circumstances, whether on or off the school premises. Furthermore, staff must never threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a pupil's emotional well-being.

5.4. The lawful use of reasonable force, other restrictive intervention, including seclusion, removal and the requirement to search a pupil, will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action. Staff will not, therefore, be taken to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence), where action was taken for the purposes of averting immediate danger and risk of harm to any person.

5.5. Suspension will not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been alleged to have used excessive force involving a pupil, and all alternative options to suspension will be considered (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

5.6. The decision as to whether to intervene physically is down to the professional judgement of the staff managing the situation. It must always be proportionate to the context and circumstances, including the potential risk of harm, and will also be dependent on the age/needs of the pupil(s).

5.7. The use of reasonable force, other restrictive intervention, including seclusion, removal and the requirement to search a pupil, must only be done with the knowledge and authorisation of the Headteacher/Principal and there must always be a staff witness (unless in exceptional situations where there is an imminent risk of harm - see below points 13.11 and 13.12).

5.8. The school is fully aware of, and is fully committed to, its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

5.9. Under their obligations, before undertaking any physical intervention, the school will ensure that pupils have a right to respect for their private life in that they expect a reasonable level of personal privacy (Article 8, European Convention on Human Rights). However, this right is not absolute and the school's powers to intervene in the Education Act 1996 are compatible with Article 8; that said, any interference with this right by a school must be 'justified' and 'proportionate'.

5.10. This policy reflects the statutory (legal) requirement to record (using Appendix A) every significant incident of use of force, seclusion, removal, restraint, and search and report these incidents to the parents/carers of the pupil (s) involved including the sharing of their record of intervention with parents/carers (unless to do so would increase risk to the child, in which case the school must send the record to their local authority children's Social Care alongside their referral).

5.11. The school will analyse staff use of reasonable force, and other restrictive interventions, including restraint, seclusion, removal, and the requirement to search a pupil, in post-incident reviews. The school will evaluate the incident to understand why such intervention(s) were used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of such interventions might be avoided in future, for example, by amending or introducing a Behaviour Support Plan / Safeguarding Risk Assessment (Student Safety Plan) for a pupil. This debriefing process, undertaken by a leader not involved in the intervention, is useful to understand what happened and why and facilitate reflection and learning.

5.12. The proprietor, via those in governance roles (in partnership with the school leadership) will use the above school data (5.11) to identify patterns, then implement improvements and training on alternative strategies, as required. This is intended to support schools to minimise the use of such interventions.

6. Pupils with additional needs and vulnerabilities

6.1. When using 'reasonable force' and when considering restrictive interventions, including seclusion, removal, restraint, and/or search, in response to risks presented by incidents involving pupils with additional needs, and/or or specific circumstances, the school must, in considering the risks, carefully recognise the additional vulnerabilities of these groups.

6.2. Vulnerabilities may include, for example, pupils who have:

- experienced any adverse life event(s)
- experienced past trauma, abuse, exploitation, and/ or neglect
- experienced a home environment where domestic abuse is a characteristic
- a different first language to English
- a diagnosed or undiagnosed physical/mental health difficulty/illness
- sensory impairment(s)
- communication difficulties
- any other special educational needs and/or disability
- any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010

6.3. These pupils may find the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions, including restraint, seclusion, removal, and/or the requirement to search them, particularly distressing (and potentially re-traumatising). Staff must be mindful of this when making decisions.

6.4. The UK government guidance ' 'Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention sets out how to support pupils with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions, and mental health difficulties who are at risk of restrictive intervention in special education settings, however all schools may find the information helpful.

6.5. Some pupils with SEND, particularly those who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging, may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and/or others, including staff. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear or anxiety. They may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through their actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of interventions.

Schools must seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide effective support, create an inclusive environment, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used.

Examples of strategies may include:

- 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 a 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.

7. Assessing Risk

7.1. Whilst, as stated above, the use of reasonable force, restrictive interventions, restraint, seclusion, removal, and including the requirement to search a pupil, will be a last consideration by staff, and only used to keep individuals safe from harm, the school will always consider the possibility that the above interventions may be required.

7.2. Risks always depend on the individual context and circumstance of each situation, therefore, all relevant factors cannot ever be pre-empted or prescribed. However, some situations or behaviours may be anticipated and must involve the completion of Behaviour Support Plans and/or Safeguarding Risk Assessments (Student Safety Plan).

7.3. Staff
The school has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of its staff. Therefore, schools should carry out staff risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use

of reasonable force and restrictive interventions, including searching may be required, can do so as safely as possible.

7.4. Pupils
There are a variety of circumstances in which the use of reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions, including seclusion, removal, restraint, and/or the requirement to search, may be needed for a pupil.

7.5. If the above is anticipated (i.e. in situations where a pupil has created a situation previously where harm to self/others/property has already occurred/likely to occur or there have been previous suspicions of concealed and/or prohibited items- see below) appropriate steps must be taken beforehand to plan appropriate and alternative de-escalation strategies to prevent the need for any form of physical intervention.

7.6. Staff must consider the needs and vulnerabilities of the pupil (see section 6), and the need to promote all pupils' welfare when assessing whether the use of an intervention within an incident is likely to reduce the relevant risks.

7.7. A Behaviour Support Plan is needed which must be co-constructed and shared with the pupil's parents/carers. The BSP should detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with the pupil, and parameters around its use clearly stated. The pupil involved should also have their plan explained to them in an age-appropriate way so that they are aware of the support they can receive, behaviour expectations and how to keep themselves/others safe.

7.8. In addition, if the pupil's pattern of behaviour is causing themselves, peers, and/or staff to be physically harmed and/or emotionally affected on a regular basis, a Safeguarding Risk Assessment (Student Safety Plan) for the pupil must also be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), including age-appropriate control measures that are aimed at mitigating, reducing, or eliminating any risk.

7.9. The Safeguarding Risk Assessment must be shared with the pupil's parents/carers and will be reviewed on a regular basis, in parallel with the child's Behaviour Support Plan. The pupil involved should also have their risk assessment explained to them in an age-appropriate way so that they are aware of how to keep themselves/others safe and/or seek support prior to escalation.

7.10. Review
All Behaviour Support Plans and Safeguarding Risk Assessments must be reviewed and updated, as required, following any incident involving the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive intervention, including seclusion, removal, restraint, and/or the requirement to search. This is so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has/has not worked for all involved.

7.11. Schools should evaluate any incident to understand why reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including the requirement to search, were used, the impact

on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including seclusion and/or the requirement to search, might be avoided in future, for example by amending support measures in the pupil's Safeguarding Risk Assessment and/or altering /introducing a Behaviour Support Plan.

8. Training

8.1. Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, including the requirement to seclude, remove and/or search pupils, should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use, and in preventative and alternative de-escalation strategies (see below section 9). They must also be mindful of the language used in the moment of intervention i.e. staff must be clear whether their intervention is removal, seclusion, and/or restraint etc.

8.2. Training should support staff in assessing when the need to utilise the above interventions are lawful, justified, and proportionate.

8.3. When deciding what formal staff training is required, school leaders have autonomy, but should ensure that the chosen training reflects the principles of this policy and the school's

- individual context and circumstances
- pupil individual needs
- staff knowledge, skill set, and individual needs

9. Alternative prevention and de-escalation strategies

9.1. The use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including seclusion, removal, restraint, and/or the requirement to search pupils must be the last resort after all efforts to defuse the situation have been taken, and risk of harm to self/others/property remains.

Whole school measures can include:

- Consideration of how the school and classroom environments can support all pupils to achieve and thrive
- Sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for manging communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as use of appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- Development of staff-pupil relationships and trust
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

Individual approaches for pupils with SEND can include:

- Working closely with parents/carers to support individual pupils

- Strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs (including the use of Behaviour Support Plans and Safeguarding Risk Assessments) noting that those with SEND, there is a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with reasonable adjustments, making sure that they can benefit from what the school offers
- Giving pupils time, space, and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates

9.2. *Before* intervention, staff must have exhausted the full range of behaviour management strategies in the Behaviour Policy which are aimed at preventing any situation from reaching the point at which the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including seclusion, removal, restraint, and/or the requirement to search a pupil becomes necessary.

- Alternative strategies, in addition to those outlined above that can be used by staff initially in situations are, but not limited to:
-
- repeating a verbal instruction until the pupil complies
- using a distractor such to interrupt behaviour long enough for verbal methods to take effect
- withdrawing the attention from the rest of the class/group if they act as an audience
- avoiding confrontation and supervising the pupil from distance (unless immediate risk of harm)
- appropriately using humour until the situation has been alleviated/de-escalated
- seeking another member of staff to give one to one verbal support to the pupil, and/or
- utilising any alternative strategy, as outlined in our Behaviour Policy

10. Considerations prior to the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions including removal, seclusion, restraint, and/or the requirement to search

10.1. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use force and/or other restrictive interventions, including removal, seclusion, restraint, and/or the requirement to search, as defined in the terminology section above, depends on the individual context and circumstances of each situation.

10.2. In assessing whether interventions are justified and proportionate in a situation to reduce risk of harm and keep all individuals safe, the member of staff should use their professional judgement. Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to gain support, and to understand any broader risks.

10.3. The following list of considerations are not definitive, and thought must be given to all other relevant factors prior to any intervention.

10.4. Is it necessary?

Staff should consider whether there are reasonable alternative strategies, as suggested above in section 9, that would manage the situation and achieve the desired outcome.

Staff should assess whether the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including seclusion, removal, restraint, and/or the requirement to search, is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether their use would actually escalate the situation further or cause *more harm than the consequences of the behaviour that it intends to address*.

10.5. Is it proportionate?

Staff must 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 must reconsider their approach in the moment and attempt an alternative strategy.

10.6. Has the pupil's (s) welfare been considered?

Staff must always consider the personal circumstances of the pupil, such as medical conditions, SEND, and/or any other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010 (see section 6 above).

Staff must also consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare (and that of others), balanced against any actions taken, and always seek to maintain respect for a pupil's privacy and dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers, which could further escalate the situation and impact on all parties' emotional wellbeing/safety.

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, including seclusion and/or the requirement to search should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

10.7. Does the pupil have additional needs and/or vulnerabilities?

Staff must consider the personal circumstances, needs, and vulnerabilities, of the pupil as outlined above in section 6.

For pupils with difficulties with speech, language, and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies must be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and is given the adequate time to process information and respond.

10.8. Examples of situations where the use of reasonable force, other restrictive intervention, including removal, seclusion, restraint, and/or including the requirement to search, may be justified and proportionate

Situations that could potentially involve the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, seclusion, removal,restraint, and/or including the requirement to search are, but not limited to:

- To remove children from the classroom if they have persistently refused to follow a verbal instruction which is 'prejudicing the maintenance or good order'
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or on a school trip or visit.
- To prevent a pupil leaving a classroom/other area where, allowing them to leave would risk their/others safety, or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others/makes others unsafe.
- To prevent a pupil from physically harming a member of staff or another pupil.
- To restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical /emotional dysregulation
- If there is a reasonable belief that a pupil has a prohibited item on their person/possession/electronic device that may endanger themselves/others/property or is illegal or is suspected of having been used in an offence.

10.9. Unacceptable use 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.

10.10. Where needed, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible.

10.11. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it must be avoided where possible.

11. Reporting and Recording

11.1. The school will adhere to:

- its duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act (2006)

- the legal requirement to record and report each "significant incident" in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil (2026)
- the legal requirement to record and report each "significant incident" in which a member of staff uses seclusion as a restrictive intervention (2026)
- the school will also record and report should there be any form of restraint or removal of their child

11.2. Significant incidents" are defined as "any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff" as described in 4.2

11.3. In line with the above statutory requirements, and the requirements of Cognita, the school will always make a written record of its use of reasonable force, restrictive interventions, and/or restraint, including the requirement for seclusion, removal, and/or the need to search, as soon a reasonably practical on the same day as the intervention (see Appendix A for the record template). This form must be sent to the HOS.

NOTE: School must supply a copy of that record to the parents/carers of the pupil as soon as practical (unless to do so would cause potential risk of harm to the child, in which case the record should be sent to the local authority Children's Services who would likely already be involved if known risk).

Note:

a. Any interventions involving our pupils, including searches that are undertaken by the Police on the school site must also be recorded by the school.

b. The requirement to record applies even if the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions are agreed with parents/carers as part of a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan/Safeguarding Risk Assessment.

c. Any medical intervention that has occurred, for example, due to emergency cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), or due to a pupil being at risk of choking, where back slaps, abdominal thrusts, and/or chest thrusts were used by staff to prevent harm, should not be recorded using Appendix A. They must be recorded on Medical Tracker/other school medical system in place and the parents/carers notified as per the First Aid Policy.

The above records (11.3) must include, but may not be limited to:

11.4. Basic information

- the time, date, and location of the intervention
- the name of the pupil directly involved- separate records must be made if physical intervention occurred with more than one pupil
- the name and role of the staff member directly involved in the intervention
- the name and role of any staff who witnessed the intervention

- the time, date, and method that the parents/carers were contacted to inform them of the intervention involving their child

11.5. The needs/vulnerabilities of the pupil

- any relevant needs/vulnerabilities or circumstances of the pupil (see above section 6), including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability (including EHCP in the UK)
- whether the pupil has an existing Behaviour Support Plan
- whether the pupil has an existing Safeguarding Risk Assessment

11.6. Alternative prevention strategies utilised prior to the intervention

- a brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, plus identified or potential triggers if known
- any preventative or de-escalation strategies used prior to the intervention

11.7. Risks

- a brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance i.e. what was the potential risk of harm to others/self/property
- if a search was undertaken, why was this i.e. which prohibited item (s) (see below) was believed to be present, what was found, where was it found, if this item was confiscated, and where the item was stored for safety.

11.8. Consent

- if a search was undertaken – was this with consent or without consent from the pupil (see below for more information around consent for searches)

11.9. Details of the intervention

- details of whether reasonable force was used, restrictive interventions, seclusion, and/or a search
- the approximate length of time of the intervention (duration)
- if reasonable force was applied: the degree of force use
- if reasonable force was applied: the physical positioning of the staff member and the pupil

11.10. Health – of staff member/pupil

- details of any further support provided for pupil wellbeing
- details of any further support provided for staff wellbeing
- details of any further support provided for any other person (staff/pupils)
- details of any physical injuries sustained* by pupil and First Aid treatment required
- details of any physical injuries sustained by staff member(s) and First Aid Treatment required

Note: Any injuries that have occurred to pupils as part of the significant incident will also be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures e.g. on Medical

Tracker and, where appropriate, will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive

11.11. Support following the intervention

- if a search was undertaken and a prohibited item was found that could pose a risk – the time of the referral made to the Police, and time that the Police contacted/attended the school site
- whether any referrals required to Social Care as a result of the incident/intervention
- whether any other referrals were made to other organisations as a result of the incident/intervention e.g. early help provision, mental health support etc.

11.12. Parental communication

- time, date, and method of communication with parents/carers to inform them of the incident/intervention, and what follow-up has taken place (see below section 12)
- the date that the parents/carers were provided with the **record** of the intervention (unless to do so will cause increased risk to the child, in which case the record must be shared with the local authority children's Social Care)

Note:

a) The member of staff who completes the written record must sign it, followed by the Headteacher/Principal signing their receipt of the record.

b) *After* seeking the advice of the Cognita Head of Health and Safety and the Cognita Head of Safeguarding, if directed to do so by either, the Headteacher/Principal will subsequently complete a Serious Incident Report Form (SIRF)..

12. Informing Parents/Carers

12.1. The school will always speak to any parent/carers about any incidents that have involved the use of reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, including seclusion, removal, restraint, and/or the requirement to search their child.

This must happen on the same day as the intervention.

Note:

a) Parents/carers will **not** be informed or provided with the record of the intervention only in situations where to do so may place their child or another at risk of harm. In these situations, the decision about whether to inform the parents/carers will be on the advice from external agencies such as Children's Services/Police.

b) Under the regulations, the school will provide the record of intervention to Children's Services, not the parents/carers in these situations (the external agency will likely be involved already if there are known risks around the pupil).

c) The requirement to report any incident (and provide them with the record) to parents/carers applies even if the use of reasonable force/other restrictive intervention, including seclusion, removal, and/or the requirement to search, in certain circumstances has already been agreed with parents/carers as part their child's existing Behaviour Support Plan/Safeguarding Risk Assessment (unless risk is present -see above)

12.2. Unless risk is present (see above), parents/carers should initially be informed of the intervention via phone call, or face to face where possible, and as soon as practically possible. Best practice will include inviting parents/carers into the school to have a discussion about the incident.

The school will use this discussion as an opportunity to review and amend any existing Behaviour Support Plans and Safeguarding Risk Assessments, as needed.

Parents will be informed and receive via the written record the following details about the intervention as a minimum:

12.3. When? was the time, date, of the incident, and where was the location (in school/off site).

Why? the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance, including who was at risk (due to data protection legislation, names of other pupils should not be shared).

Which? alternative de-escalation strategies were used prior to the intervention and how effective they were, including any details about any behavioural triggers, any warning signs of an impending incident

What? type of reasonable force and degree, other restriction intervention (including seclusion), and/or search took place, and the approximate length of time the intervention was used

In addition, the parents/carers will be provided with:

- details of any physical injuries sustained by their child/others (including staff), if applicable
- how any agreed Behaviour Support Plan/Safeguarding Risk Assessment were followed (if already in place)

What next?

- what might be done differently in the future (including the creation/revision of the above Behaviour Support Plans/Safeguarding Risk Assessments)
- what referrals to external agencies may be required as a result of this incident/intervention.

13. Searching, Screening, and Confiscation

This section of the policy is intended to explain the screening, searching, and/or confiscating powers a school has, ensuring that Headteachers/Principals and members of staff have the confidence to use these powers and schools are a calm, safe and supportive environment to learn and work.

13.1. Why?

Searching, screening, and/or confiscation can play a critical role in ensuring that schools are safe environments for all pupils and staff. They are vital measures to safeguard and promote staff and pupil welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour, through which pupils can learn and thrive.

13.2. Being in possession of/concealing a prohibited item (see below 13.8) - especially knives, weapons, illegal drugs, and/ or stolen items - may mean that the pupil is involved, or at risk of being involved, in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour including gang involvement, and in some cases may be involved in child criminal/sexual exploitation/extortion.

13.3. A search for a prohibited item or any other reason, therefore, may also play a vital role in identifying pupils who may benefit from a referral to the authorities so that they can receive support (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

13.4. When?

Relevant legislation is outlined in section 5 above. The school will not routinely search, screen, and/or confiscate items from pupils using physical contact, or without their consent.

13.5. However, the Headteacher/Principal and the staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Note, this now includes a mobile phone (see below and Behaviour Policy).

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 school rules only, unless the pupil is concealing an illegal item (see 13.7 and Searching, Screening and Confiscation (DfE 2022).

13.6. School staff can consider reviewing CCTV footage when decide whether to conduct a search for an item.

13.7. What is a prohibited item?

Prohibited item specifically means an item listed in section 550ZA(3) of the Education Act 1996.

Additional items which the Headteacher/Principal or authorised staff have prohibited are specified in the school rules contained within the school's Behaviour Policy and must always made clear in communications to staff, parents, and pupils in order to

ensure expectations are transparent. This will include mobile phones (see Behaviour Policy).

13.8. Prohibited items are, but not limited to*;
knives and anything that could be/has been used as a weapon, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco, cigarette papers, e-cigarettes/vapes, oral tobacco products, fireworks, pornographic images, and/or any other article which has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury, and/ or damage to property.

*Schools may include other items which the Headteacher/Principal has decided are detrimental to maintaining high standards of behaviour and a safe environment.

13.9. Who?
The Headteacher/Principal (with support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL) will oversee the school's practice and procedures of searching, screening, and confiscation.

This will ensure that a culture of safe, justified, proportionate, and appropriate searching is maintained, which safeguards both the welfare of all pupils and all staff.

13.10. Only the Headteacher/Principal (or a member of staff authorised by them) can carry out a search. The Headteacher/Principal can authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items, or all items set out in the school's Behaviour Policy.

For example, a member of staff may be authorised by the Headteacher/Principal to search for stolen property and alcohol but not for weapons or drugs.

13.11. The law states the member of staff conducting the search **must** *be of the same sex* as the pupil being searched.

13.12. There **must** be another member of staff present as a witness to the search; they must be a permanent member of staff.

13.13. However, there is a limited exception to the above points 13.11 and 13.12.

This is that a member of staff can search a pupil of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present but only:

if the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency

and

in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is same sex as the pupil, or it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.

13.14. When a member of staff conducts a search without a witness, they must immediately report this to another member of staff. In all circumstances, the Headteacher/Principal must be aware, or be made aware of the search immediately.

13.15. The DSL must be informed of any searching interventions where the member (s) of staff had reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil was in possession of a prohibited item as listed above.

13.16. The staff member(s) must also involve the DSL without delay if they believe that a search has revealed an additional safeguarding risk. There must be no delay.

13.17. If the DSL finds evidence that any child is at risk of harm/potential harm, they must make a referral to the authorities immediately (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy), whilst also assessing the incident against any potential wider safeguarding concerns.

13.18. Where i.e. location?
An appropriate location for the search must be found which is away from other pupils (unless imminent risk of harm).

The search must only take place on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip.

13.19. Extent?
A member of staff may only search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possessions, desks, and/or lockers.

No intimate search must ever take place, and/or no search must take place under clothing.
Therefore, staff member(s) conducting the search must not require the pupil to remove any clothing other than 'outer clothing'.

Outer clothing' means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, as well as hats, shoes, boots or scarves.

13.20. Taking the above, the member of staff's power to search outlined above does **not ever** enable them to conduct a strip search of a pupil; this can only ever be completed by the Police (see sections 35-41 of Searching, Screening and Confiscation (DfE 2022)) for more information about strip searches.

13.21. 'Possessions' means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers, and/or bags.

A member of staff can search lockers and desks or other personal spaces at the school for any item *provided the pupil agrees**. If there is imminent risk, then a search intervention of a pupil's possessions can take place (see below).

*Schools can make it a condition of having the locker or space that the pupil agrees to have these searched.

13.22. **Consent**

Parents/carers

Whilst the school is not required to inform parents/carers before a search takes place or to seek parental consent to search their child (Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2022) parents/carers will always be contacted wherever possible and must be informed when a pupil has been searched that same day as per above section 12.

13.23. Pupils who consent

Under common law, school staff have the power to search a pupil for any prohibited item if the pupil consents.

However, the pupil's individual circumstances, and additional needs/vulnerabilities (see above section 6) must be considered when assessing whether they have provided informed consent.

To ensure that the pupil's consent is informed, before any search can take place, the member of staff conducting the search must explain to the pupil:

- why they are being searched
- what is being searched i.e. their outer clothing or their possessions
- how they will be searched
- who will undertake the search
- where the search is going to take place (location); and
- give them the opportunity to ask any questions

Note: There will be no need for any physical contact with the pupil in these consensual situations.

13.24. *Next steps*: If a prohibited item is found to be on the consenting pupil, the Behaviour Policy will be followed, sanctions may apply, and referrals to authorities may be required, where appropriate (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

13.25. Pupils who are not co-operating

The Headteacher/Principal must ensure that a sufficient number of staff are appropriately trained in how to lawfully and safely search a pupil who is not co-operating, so that these trained staff can undertake the search, and/or support and advise other members of staff if this situation arises.

However, it is vital that all staff understand their own rights and those of the pupil.

13.26. The authorised member of staff undertaking the search should always seek the co-operation of the pupil before conducting a search by following the above process in 13.23.

If the pupil is still not willing to co-operate, the member of staff must consider the reasons why this is prior to going ahead with the intervention.

13.27. Reasons might include that the pupil:

- does not understand the instruction (repeat 13.23)
- is unaware of what a search may involve (repeat 13.23)
- knows that they are in possession of a prohibited item
- has had a previous distressing experience of being searched (in school/community)
- may be fearful of consequences/implications of the search.

13.28. Underlying fear (s) may be due, but not be limited to:

- anxieties around potential behaviour sanctions as a result of the search
- their parental/carer response to the search
- other threats in the community relating to the prohibited item
- financial implications linked to the prohibited item
- criminal implications linked to the prohibited item

13.29. Pupils who do NOT give consent (after all of the above has been considered and discussed)

Lower risk

If the pupil still presents as uncooperative and still does not give consent following a sensitive discussion about the above (13.28) and member of staff still considers a search to be necessary, **but is not required urgently**, they must seek the advice of the Headteacher/Principal and/or DSL and/or pastoral member of staff who may have more information about the pupil's needs and/or circumstances.

13.30. During this discussion time, the pupil must remain supervised and kept away from other pupils. Their possessions should be removed from them during this time and stored securely in a different area. Their parents/carers must be contacted and asked to attend the school to collect their child immediately, unless to do so may increase risk to the pupil (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

13.31. Higher Risk

Staff can only search a pupil without their prior consent where there are reasonable grounds and just cause for suspecting a pupil may have a prohibited item that could involve the

pupil harming themselves or others, damaging property, or from causing disorder.

The member of staff must, in these circumstances, consider whether conducting the search will *prevent* the pupil harming themselves or others, damaging property, and/ or from causing disorder.

13.32. Searching a pupil who does not consent, but where there is clear and high risk of harm if the search does not take place, may (or may not) involve the requirement for the use of reasonable force, restrictive intervention, and/or restraint.

However, it should be noted that the use of reasonable force will differ depending on whether the member of staff is searching within the pupil's possessions or the pupil's outer clothing. The decision to use reasonable force must, therefore, be made on a case-by-case basis

A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for any prohibited items identified above, but **not** to search for items which are identified only in the school rules.

13.33. The above non-consensual intervention **must only** be used when there is an **imminent** risk of harm to self/others/property.

13.34. Staff must still always have the authorisation of the Headteacher/Principal before intervening and searching a pupil *without consent* (unless in delaying could present imminent risk of harm).

13.35. Searching *without* consent can only be used if the member of staff is the same *biological sex* as the pupil being searched. There must always be a witness staff member. See above in 13.11 for exceptions to this.

The Police **must** be called via 999.

The pupil's parents/carers **must** be contacted and asked to attend the school immediately (unless to do so may increase risk to their child/others).

The pupil **must** remain in a safe space and be supervised by two members of staff until the Police arrive (and the pupil's parents/carers).

The pupil's possessions **must** be removed from them during this time and stored securely in a safe area.

13.36. At a suitable time, after the authorities have addressed any risk/concerns, including their own decision as to whether a search can take place (and they have undertaken such a search) the Behaviour Policy will be followed, sanctions may apply, and further referrals to authorities may be required, where appropriate (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

13.37. Searching electronic devices

Electronic devices, including mobile phones, can contain files or data which relate to an offence that has taken place/planned, and/or something else which may cause harm to another person. This includes, but is not limited to, child sexual abuse material, self-generated intimate sexual imagery/videos, including those generated by AI, pornography, abusive messages, images or videos, or evidence relating to suspected/actual criminal behaviour.

13.38. Taking the above into consideration, staff may examine any data or files on a pupil's electronic device they have confiscated as a result of a search, if there is 'good reason' to do so. In determining whether there is a 'good reason' to examine the data or files, the member of staff should reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device has been, or could be used by the pupil/other, to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the school and disrupt teaching, and/or be used to commit an offence.

13.39. The above consent procedures must always be followed prior to undertaking a search of a pupil's electronic devices.

As with all prohibited items, staff should first consider the appropriate safeguarding response if they find, during a search of the pupil's electronic device: images, data or files that they reasonably suspect are likely to put any person at risk, including the pupil involved.

13.40. If the member of staff conducting the search anticipates that they may find an child sexual abuse material OR self-generated intimate imagery/videos, including those that AI generated, they must never intentionally view the image (s), copy, print, share, store or save such images as this is a criminal offence (see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

Instead, they should confiscate the device, avoid looking at the contents, and refer the incident immediately to the DSL as the most appropriate person to advise on the school's response.

13.41. Handling such reports or concerns can be especially complicated and schools should follow the principles as set out in KSCIE. The UK Council for Internet Safety also provides the following guidance to support school staff and designated safeguarding leads: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (see above section 5).

13.42. If a member of staff unintentionally finds or sees any image, data or file that they suspect might constitute a specified criminal offence, then they must report this immediately to the DSL. The device must be immediately confiscated and delivered to the Police as soon as is reasonably practicable by the Headteacher/Principal/DSL (but on the same day).

13.43. In *exceptional circumstances* members of staff may dispose (erase) of the image or data if there is a 'good reason' to do so, but they **must** always first seek the advice of the Police.

13.44. In determining whether there is *a 'good reason' to dispose (erase)* any data or files from the device, the school should consider whether the material found may constitute evidence relating to a suspected/actual offence. In those instances, the data or files must not be deleted, and the device must be handed to the Police as

soon as it is reasonably practicable by the Headteacher/Principal/DSL (but on the same day).

13.45. If the data or files are not suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, the DSL/DDSL may delete the data or files **if** the continued existence of the data or file is likely to continue to cause harm to any person and the pupil and/or the parents/carers refuse to delete the data or files themselves. The rationale for the deletion must always be recorded. Those disposing of data must be the Headteacher/Principal or a member of the safeguarding team. Their name and role must be on any recording.

If there is any doubt about whether data or files can be disposed of, the school must contact the HOS.

13.46. Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)
Section 62 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 defines prohibited images of children.

The possession by a pupil (or staff) of CSAM constitutes a specified criminal offence and must be referred to the Police **immediately** by a member of the safeguarding team. The pupil's phone must be confiscated and kept safe until the Police respond to the referral, as evidence may be needed to support their enquiries. The parents/carers must always be informed of the safeguarding concerns and the referral to the Police, unless they are implicated in the offence/the pupil may be at increased risk if the parent/carers are informed.

It is a mandatory duty for staff to report child sexual abuse should they become aware of it (see the Code of Conduct/ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

The school must inform the HOS of the above situations involving CSAM.

13.47. Material found that are self-generated intimate imagery/videos, including those are AI generated, are also a criminal offence but may be managed in school, *according to the situation* if the pupil knows the other pupil in the image, or for example, is/has been in a consensual relationship with them (see the Safeguarding Policy, and government advice for managing such incidents). These situations will be managed on a case by case basis.

The school must seek the advice of the HOS in the above situations, where required.

13.48. **Screening**
Screening is the use of a walk-through or hand-held metal detector (arch or wand) to scan all pupils for weapons before they enter the school premises.

Currently the school does not operate screening measures.

13.49. **Confiscation**

Confiscation means the taking away of someone's possession.

An authorised staff member carrying out a search can confiscate any item from a pupil that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that it:

- poses a risk to staff and/ or any pupil
- is prohibited, or identified in the school rules for which a search can be made (see above) or
- is evidence in relation to an offence (actual or suspected)

The law protects members of staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss of, or damage to, any item they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully.

13.50. **What to do with items that have been confiscated**

Following confiscation, the Headteacher/Principal, in collaboration with the DSL, must make a decision about what to do with the item(s) that have been confiscated from the pupil. Below is a suggested list of items that may potentially be confiscated and what must be done.

The school should seek the advice from the HOS as needed.

13.51. Weapons or items which are evidence of a suspected offence

Any weapons or items which are evidence of a suspected offence must be delivered to the Police immediately; this should be by a member of the safeguarding team.

Items that have been (or are likely to be) used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury or damage to property must also be delivered to the Police.

13.52. Drugs

Controlled drugs must be delivered to the Police as soon as possible (but on the same day). Legally, schools do not have to give the name of the pupil from whom drugs have been taken to the Police.

However, schools should consider this on a case-by-case basis, as this may form part of an overall safeguarding scenario.

Please see the DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools for more information.

13.53. Other substances

Other substances which are not believed to be controlled drugs should also be delivered to the Police if the member of staff believes they could be harmful. Schools should seek advice from the Police if in any doubt.

Where staff find alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes/vapes, cigarette papers, and/ or fireworks during a search, they (or the parents/carers) may retain or dispose of them safely as they think appropriate, but they must not be returned to the pupil.

Staff must have a witness of handover to parents/carers and/or safe disposal.

13.54. Stolen items

Where a member of staff finds known stolen items during a search, these must be confiscated and delivered to the Police as soon as reasonably practicable (but on the same day).

However, if there is good reason to do so, the member of staff may also return the item to the owner or retain or dispose of it if returning them to their owner is not practicable. Staff must make this decision with the DSL/Headteacher/Principal who should take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether they can safely dispose of the confiscated item.

In considering the relevant circumstances, they should consider the following:

- the value of the item
- whether the item is prohibited in school
- whether retaining or returning the item to the owner may place any person at risk of harm
- whether the item can be disposed of safely.
-

13.55. Pornography

Section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Immigrations Act 2008 defines extreme pornographic images.

If a member of staff finds a pornographic image on a pupil device, they may dispose of the image unless they have reasonable grounds to suspect that its possession constitutes a specified offence i.e. it is extreme or an indecent image of a child, not an adult, in which case this is CSAM and the device must be delivered to the Police as soon as reasonably practicable that same day by a member of the safeguarding team after making a referral (see above 13.34)

13.56. Any other items banned in the school rules

Members of staff should use their judgement to decide to return, retain, or dispose of any other items banned under the school rules. The member of staff should take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether they can safely dispose of the seized item.

They should seek the advice and authorisation of the Headteacher/Principal.
The parents/carers must be informed (see section 12).

In taking into account all relevant circumstances, the member of staff should consider:

- • the value of the item
- • whether it is appropriate to return the item to the pupil or parent/carer and
- • whether the item is likely to continue to disrupt learning or the calm, safe and supportive environment of the school

Any incident involving searching and/or confiscation must be recorded by the school using Appendix A in this policy.

The form must also be sent to the Head of Safeguarding (HOS).

14. Complaints

All parental complaints about staff use of reasonable force, restrictive intervention, seclusion removal and/or restraint, including the requirement to search, involving their child will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with our Complaints Procedure.

15. Allegations

Should the school receive an allegation about a member of staff (from a parent/carer or staff member) in relation to a staff member's use of reasonable force, restrictive intervention, seclusion, removal, and/or restraint, including the requirement to search, the Headteacher/Principal will follow the relevant section of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including informing the authorities, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version).

16. Data Analysis

Proprietors, via those in governance roles, in partnership with the school, should regularly review and interrogate data on the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions, including section, removal and/or restraint, and in addition the number of searches undertaken*.

Schools who conduct a high number of interventions should consider whether the interventions fall disproportionately on any particular groups of pupils. In such cases where interventions are being undertaken is falling disproportionately on any group or groups, they should consider whether any regional actions should be taken to prevent this with the aim to:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures and alternative strategies, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them- and their parents/carers, to establish a Behaviour Support Plan (or revise an existing plan).
- identify any disproportionate use of interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEND, or other types of need/vulnerability

*Proprietors, via those in governance roles, and school leaders, should consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis should be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of peopleThe School maintains an Admissions Register in line with regulatory requirements.

17. Policy Summary

In undertaking any of the above interventions described within this policy, staff must:

- first use alternative strategies to prevent and/or de-escalate the situation
- consider the pupil's additional needs/vulnerabilities
- ensure that the pupil understands what is happening and why
- ensure that the pupil's consent to be searched is informed
- respect pupils' dignity, right to respect, privacy, and confidentiality
- never involve other pupils in any intervention
- have at least one staff witness
- ensure that any actions are justified and proportionate
- assess the risk of harm, and whether the intervention will prevent risk or escalate the situation
- gain the Headteacher/Principal's authorisation
- only use reasonable force, restrictive interventions including seclusion, removal and/or restraint, as a last resort after all other strategies have been exhausted and risk of harm remains high or is imminent (or for behaviour – removal)
- use the least amount of force needed, for the shortest duration
- inform the parents/carers of any intervention involving their child on the same day
- contact the authorities as soon as possible on the same day, as required
- pass on any weapons, drugs, and/or CSAM above to the Police
- make a record of the intervention as soon as possible after the event using Appendix A and send this to the HOS
- share the record of intervention with the parents/carers as soon as practical (if no known risk)
- share the record with the local authority Children's Services (if there is known risk to the pupil if the record be shared with parents/carers)

18. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by Cognita centrally, and our Senior Leadership Team and revised in accordance with changing national requirements for independent schools.

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Ownership and consultation	
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Document Author / Reviewer	Head of Safeguarding - Europe and USA (HOS) Updated: March 2026 (HOS) Reviewed: June 2026 (HOS)
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Related documentation	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Behaviour Policy Suspension, Exclusion, and Required Removal Policy SEND Policy Complaints Procedure Educational Visits Policy

	Health and Safety Policy First Aid Policy Code of Conduct Drug and Alcohol Policy IT Policy

Mrs Sarah Cartwright-Styles

Headteacher

Appendix A

Record of intervention for:

Use of Reasonable Force, Restrictive Intervention (including restraint, seclusion and /or removal), incorporating searching, screening, and/or confiscation.

- This record must be completed on the same day as the intervention and sent to the Headteacher/Principal and the HOS.
- Parents/carers must be informed of the intervention on the same day of the incident *(therefore points 6 and 33 below must be recorded as the same date).*
- Parents/carers must be given a copy of this record as soon after the intervention as reasonably practical (unless to do so would cause serious harm to the pupil).
- If more than one pupil is involved, a separate record must be competed for each pupil.

1	**Pupil -** name	
2	**Pupil -** Year/Stage/Grade	
3	**Pupil -** additional needs/vulnerabilities/circumstances (include SEN status code)	
4	**Pupil -**Behaviour Support Plan in place (prior to intervention)	YES or NO
5	**Pupil-** Safeguarding Risk Assessment in place (prior to intervention)	YES or NO
6	**Date** of intervention	
7	**Time** of intervention	
8	**Location** of intervention	
9	**Name of staff member** (completing intervention)	
10	**Role of staff member** (completing intervention)	
11	**Name of any staff witness** (of intervention)	
12	**Role of any staff witness** (of intervention)	
13	**Headteacher authorisation** *prior* to intervention	YES or NO (if no give reason)
14	**HT authorisation** *prior* to intervention	TIME: DATE:

15	**Method of HT authorisation** *prior* to intervention	E.G.: EMAIL, VERBAL, OTHER
16	**Context/situation** prior to intervention	
17	**Alternative prevention/de-escalation strategies used** (prior to intervention)	
18	**Reason for intervention** (the assessed risk to self/others/property)	
19	**Type of intervention used:** • Restrictive intervention • Restraint • Removal- conduct related only • Seclusion- non-physical • Seclusion- physical • Search • Other	
19B	**Location of Seclusion/Removal**	
19C	**Time spent in Seclusion/Removal location**	From x time to x time
20	**Search only -** informed consent from pupil	YES or NO or NA if not a search
21	**Search only-** prohibited item found and description	YES or NO or NA if not a search Description of item:
22	**Search only –** location where the prohibited item was found	Location: NA if not a search
23	**Search only –** item confiscated and stored safely (include current location of item)	Confiscation: YES or NO or NA if not a search Safely stored -*add location*
24	**Search only-** electronic data *deleted* and rationale for deletion	YES or NO or NA if not a search of electronic Rationale for deletion: Deleted by: Deletion witnessed by:
25	**Search only-** electronic data retained and rationale	YES or NO or NA if not a search of electronic Rationale for being kept:

26	**Search only-** items passed to Police and description	YES or NO or NA if not a search Descriptions of any items passed to Police:
27	**Reasonable Force** used during intervention	YES or NO
28	**Detailed description of Reasonable Force** used • positioning of staff member • positioning of pupil • extent of force used • duration of force used	
29	**Physical injuries as a result of the intervention-** PUPIL (ensure to also record any treatment to the pupil on Medical Tracker/other system used)	
30	**Physical injuries as a result of the intervention-**STAFF	
31	**Emotional wellbeing impact –** PUPIL	
32	**Emotional wellbeing impact –** STAFF	
33	**Parents/carers informed of the intervention involving their child** Method of communication:	TIME: DATE: E.G Telephone call, in person meeting, email.
34	**Parents/carers provided with this record** (unless known risk to pupil of sharing)	DATE: via email/hand
35	**Parental/carer meeting held**	TIME: DATE:
36	**Referrals to external agencies following the incident –** Police /Social Care/mental health etc	DATE: Agency/Organisation: REASON:
37	**Staff debrief meeting held (must be led by staff member not involved in the intervention)**	TIME: DATE: Attendees:

38	**Any further actions needed as a result of this incident by school, parents/carers**	
37	**Date that the Headteacher informed the Cognita:** Head of Safeguarding (HOS) Head of Health and Safety (H of HS) **of this intervention**	DATE:
38	**SIRF directed by:** HOS/H of HS	YES or NO

Signatures:

Staff member completing this record	Date:	
Headteacher receipt	Date:	