



Godalming Junior School

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. If you have any concerns you should contact our Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL), Adam Samson, or Deputy Designated Safeguard Leads (DDSL) Erin Coleman, Kate Wilkinson, Andrea Crook and Louise Munz

RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

This policy was reviewed: Autumn 2025

This policy was reviewed by: The Resources Committee

This policy will be reviewed: Autumn 2026

Introduction

At Godalming Junior School we believe that pupils need to be safe, know how to behave with taught strategies and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of pupils the use of restrictive physical intervention may be needed, and, on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention will be used.

The majority of pupils behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have responsibility to operate an inclusive and effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual pupils.

All the school staff need to feel able to manage risk and behaviour, and to have an understanding of what and how challenging behaviours may occur or be communicated. They need to know what the options open to them are, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act (2011)
- Children Act (1989)
- Equality Act (2010)
- DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' (2025)
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023)
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' (2025)
- HM Government 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The school governing body is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Notifying the headteacher that the Behaviour Policy should include the power to use reasonable force.
- Evaluating, on an annual basis, instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Allegations Against Staff Policy.
- Maintaining the records of the use of reasonable force and evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the Physical Intervention Report Form.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy sets out the circumstances in which force might be used.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The SENCo is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual risk assessments for pupils with SEND or medical conditions that are agreed with the pupil's parents, and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the headteacher.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Providing staff with reasonable force training where the headteacher deems it necessary.
- Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the headteacher and governing board.

Definition of 'physical intervention'

For the purposes of this policy, 'physical intervention' is used to refer to any situation in which physical contact with a pupil is necessary - this includes reasonable force, e.g. to defuse a situation

in which a pupil is at risk of harming themselves or others, and safe touch, e.g. comforting a pupil in emotional distress.

For the purposes of this policy, '**positive handling**' is defined as the overall, graduated approach of responding to pupils' behaviour and emotions with the intention of protecting pupils and staff, and limiting damage to others and property. Positive handling adapts the least intrusive intervention techniques in response to situations, before using gentle physical intervention and reasonable force as a last resort.

For the purposes of this policy, '**reasonable force**' is considered to refer to a broad range of actions that may be used to control or restrain a pupil to prevent that pupil from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Reasonable force covers force that is necessary and proportionate to the circumstances.

Positive Handling

The principle of positive handling means that the school expects staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention.

Where possible, the school implements an approach of prevention, where staff will recognise warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour, communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli.

Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class, and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs.

Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first questioning whether there is a need to use physical intervention. Staff will question whether:

- Verbal de-escalation can be attempted.
- There are actions that can be taken to remove triggers from pupils, e.g. dimming the lights and encouraging quiet where a pupil is having a meltdown in response to sensory overstimulation.
- The pupil can be removed from the situation without physical intervention, e.g. if they will follow a member of teaching staff out of the classroom.
- The pupil has a condition or support needs that mean physical intervention would be inherently more dangerous, e.g. asthma which may be made worse by restrictive holds or sensory issues where physical touch would contribute to sensory overload and may provoke aggressive behaviour.
- They have the ability, training and adequate support to physically intervene safely without causing unnecessary harm to the pupil or themselves.

Where there is no immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, destruction of property or serious disruption, reasonable force will not be used on the pupil. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating.

The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are forced to pull the pupils apart. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.

Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline - only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

Reasonable Force

Staff members will use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances. Physical restraint will never be used routinely. Where reasonable force is required, the degree and type of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. their age or SEND.

The following list is not exhaustive, but provides examples of situations where the school may decide to use reasonable force where other methods of defusing a situation have been exhausted or are not appropriate:

- Members of staff need to control pupils risking the safety of themselves or others outside of school premises where the same range of support options are not available, e.g. on school trips.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving an area, e.g. the classroom or school grounds, where doing so would risk their safety or the safety of others.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.
- The headteacher or authorised staff are conducting a search for items prohibited under the Education Act 1996, e.g. knives and weapons, alcohol, and illegal drugs.

All members of staff will be permitted to use reasonable force where they believe it to be appropriate in line with their training, as long as all necessary precautions are taken. The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances and the pupil's individual needs.

The power to use reasonable force also applies to any individual whom the headteacher has identified as temporarily in charge, such as volunteers.

In many cases where physical intervention or reasonable force is required, minimal and non-restrictive force will be appropriate, e.g. holding a pupil's arm to escort them from a classroom. Reasonable force techniques that involve restraint will only be used where the staff member in charge feels it is necessary to prevent serious harm. In general, restraint will only be used briefly and prolonged restraint will not be used, i.e. restraint beyond that which is necessary to remove the immediate threat a pupil is posing to themselves or others.

Where staff determine physical intervention is necessary, they will calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it is necessary in a non-threatening manner. In most cases, staff will communicate this to pupils before making physical contact to minimise distress and/or further aggressive behaviour from the pupil; however, the school recognises that this is not possible in some emergency situations.

Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the pupil. Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, the school understands that accidental injury may occur in emergency situations where there is not sufficient time for a considered response, e.g. bruising on a child's wrist where a staff member has grabbed them to prevent them running onto a busy road.

Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, e.g. where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without the help and assistance of another staff member.

Reasonable force techniques which present an **unacceptable** risk and will not be used under any circumstances include:

- The 'seated double embrace' where two staff members force a pupil into a sitting position and lean them forward whilst a third staff member monitors their breathing.
- The 'double basket-hold' in which a pupil's arms are held across their chest.
- The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the pupil's nose.

Staff will also be aware that, in some instances, it will cause more distress to a pupil, and may increase the risk of harm to their peers, if they are prevented from leaving an area, e.g. their classroom, using physical intervention. Where it is not dangerous to allow them to leave, the staff member in charge of the situation should use their judgement in allowing a pupil to remove themselves from the area, as environmental factors in the area specifically may be provoking their behaviour.

Following the incidents where reasonable force is used, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.

Pupils with SEND

The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of physical intervention and reasonable force.

The SENCo will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

The school is aware that pupils with SEND may sometimes experience meltdowns, which can sometimes manifest in behaviour which may be aggressive or seem uncontrollable. Where it is known that a pupil is prone to meltdowns, the SENCO and headteacher will draft a risk assessment to determine planned strategies for managing the pupil's meltdowns that are tailored to the pupil's specific needs, to avoid the use of reasonable force. These risk assessments will be conducted in collaboration with the pupil and their parents, where appropriate.

Some pupils with SEND may require physical intervention when they feel overwhelmed or stressed, e.g. a tight hug; however, this will be discussed as part of relevant risk assessments.

Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil with SEND will be applicable to other pupils with SEND.

Staff will also be aware that pupils with SEND may engage in frequent, repetitive self-stimulatory behaviour, known as 'stimming', and that some pupils may engage in self-injurious stimming, e.g. repeatedly hitting or scratching themselves. While this can be alarming, staff will be aware that stimming is often carried out as a means of emotional regulation or self-soothing in response to stressful or overwhelming stimuli.

Staff members will aim to remove distressing stimuli from the environment, where possible, or will support pupils to engage in less harmful stimming methods, e.g. by providing them with something to play with or demonstrating a less harmful stim, such as hand flapping.

Staff will be aware that restraining a pupil in a way that prevents them from stimming entirely can cause extreme distress and lead to further aggressive behaviour. Self-injurious stimming and tactics to support a pupil to engage in safer stims will be included as part of the pupil's risk assessment.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. In general, the focus is on the welfare of the pupil subjected to a restrictive physical intervention. But the safety and well being of other pupils, and of staff and visitors are important considerations and under certain conditions must be the over-riding factor.

Who may use restrictive physical intervention in Godalming Junior School

The Headteacher has responsibility for authorising staff to use restrictive physical intervention as part of structured and planned intervention under any individual pupil strategies. Only those trained in appropriate techniques. The person responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided and kept up to date is the Headteacher.

The following staff (as well as the teachers employed at the school) are authorised to use restrictive physical intervention in circumstances of urgency, and **must** be aware of this Policy and its implications: the headteacher, SENCo and specific personnel deemed appropriate based on their role within the school working with identified children.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing pupils and themselves may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils.

Principles for the use of restrictive physical interventions

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows: -

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- staff must only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and in the pupil's and/or other pupil's best interests
- staff must take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child or young person
- the intervention and any degree of force used must be the minimum necessary to prevent distress, injury, or damage
- the intervention used must be proportionate to the incident
- every effort must be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- as soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention must be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control
- escalation must be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- the age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil must always be taken into account
- there will be procedures, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as an essential safeguard for the emotional well-being of all involved

Acceptable forms of intervention

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age)
- to give gentle direction
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc)
- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil, other pupils, staff or other adults, or property damage
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the pupil's age and level of understanding
- the pupil's individual characteristics and history
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil.

Reporting and recording in relation to Restrictive Physical Interventions

Every use of restrictive physical intervention is to be reported the same day to the Headteacher or the deputy in charge if the Headteacher is off-site. The Headteacher or deputy will ensure that a parent of the child who has had force used against them is notified that day.

In addition, the details of each use of physical intervention must be recorded on a Physical Intervention Report Form shown in Appendix 4 to this Policy. The completed Report will be held in the Headteacher's office. The person leading the planned or unplanned intervention must complete the Report. The Headteacher will review every use of physical intervention.

Copies of all risk individual pupil risk assessments and individual pupil positive handling strategies (see below) shall be held in the Headteacher's office.

Training records are held in the Bursar's office.

Individual pupil positive handling strategies

If a pupil is identified, for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely to be required, then it will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to create a Positive Handling Strategy for that pupil, using the Form set out in Appendix 2 to this Policy. This Strategy will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.

Each Strategy will be reviewed termly and after every use of force, using the Form set out in Appendix 3 to this Policy. Each Strategy must be developed with consideration for approaches appropriate to each pupil's individual circumstances and will include:

- involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why

- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens, using the Form in Appendix 1 to this Policy
- recording risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- managing the pupil, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention is to be used
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil
- ensuring a system to summon additional support
- identifying training needs

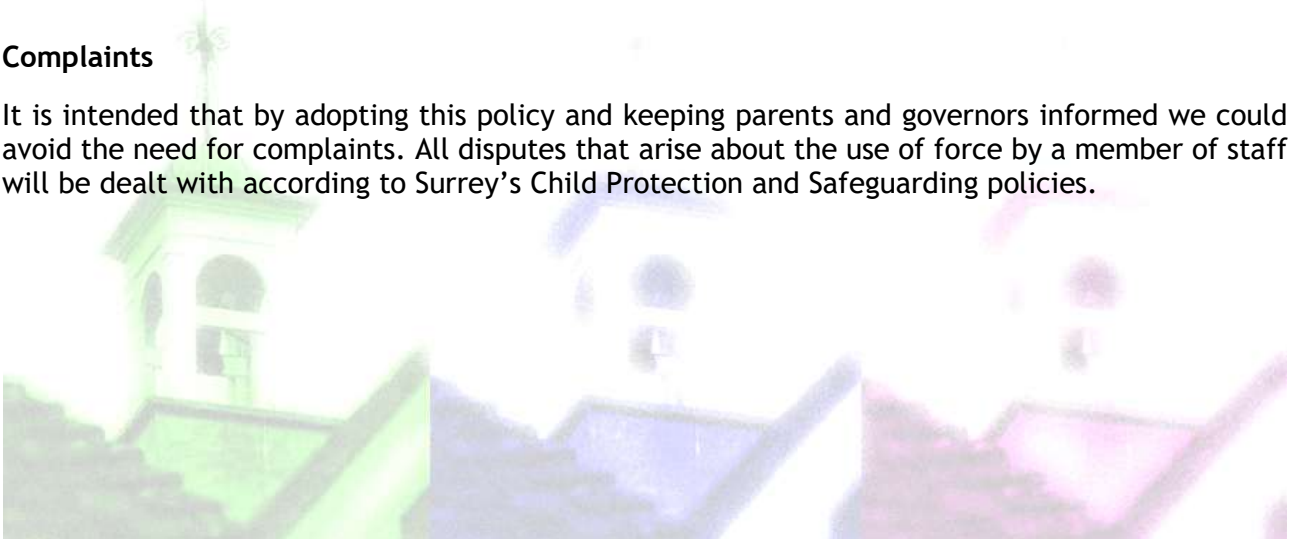
Guidance and training for staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We endeavour to adopt the best possible practice. In Godalming Junior School this is arranged at a number of levels including:

- awareness for governors, staff and parents
- behaviour management for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff
- specific training on Restrictive Physical Intervention techniques - Identified Staff

Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we could avoid the need for complaints. All disputes that arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Surrey's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.



Appendix 1

Individual pupil risk assessment form

School:

.....

Name of Child:

Class group:

Name of teacher:

Name of parents/Carers:

Name of Support Service

Identification of Risk	
Describe the foreseeable risk (i.e. what specific behaviours have occurred)	
Is the risk potential or actual? (i.e. has this happened before)	
List who is affected by the risk	

Assessment of Risk	
In which situations does the risk occur?	
How likely it is that the risk will arise? (i.e. how often has it happened before)	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?	
What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?	
How serious are the adverse outcomes?	

Assessment completed by:

Signature: Date:.....

Appendix 2

Proactive Plan

This plan should be shared with family and all staff involved with the pupil. The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated in light of new information.

Name:		
Class:		
Key adults:		
Medical details:		
Triggers:		
Expressive Continuum	Child's affective and behavioural changes	Agreed Intervention Strategies
Calm Control	What does the child look and behave like when at his/her most calm?	What strategies are effective in helping keep behaviour calm?
Minor Motor and Verbal Changes	What does the child look like now? How do they behave?	What strategies may prevent further escalation and/or assist a return to 'calm control'?
Major Motor and Verbal Changes	What does the child look like now? How do they behave?	What strategies may prevent a further escalation and/or assist a return to earlier stages?
Critical Moment	Is there an indicator that pro-active strategies are no longer practicable or safe?	How will risky behaviour be managed once pro-active interventions have been exhausted?
Post-Incident Debrief and Repair		How can relationships be repaired and child returned safely to a learning environment?

Agreed by: Date:

.....

(Parent/carer)

.....

(Child - if appropriate)

.....

(Headteacher)

.....

(Class teacher)

.....

(Support Service Member/s)

Communication of Individual Pupil Positive Handling Strategy		
Strategy shared with:	Communication Method	Date Actioned

Staff Training Issues		
Identified training needs	Training provided to meet needs	Date training completed

Appendix 3

Evaluation of Individual Pupil Positive Handling Strategy

Evaluation of Individual Pupil Positive Handling Strategy		
Measures set out	Effectiveness in supporting the child	Impact on risk
<i>Proactive interventions to prevent risks</i>		
<i>Early interventions to manage risks</i>		
<i>Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes</i>		
ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE 		

Plans and strategies evaluated by:

Title:
.....

Date:

Appendix 4

Physical Intervention Report Form

PART A (to be completed for all incidents involving incidents requiring Physical Intervention)

Name of School:	
Pupil name:	
Staff name and status:	
Incident date:	
Time:	
Location:	
Staff Eye Witness:	
Informed Parties (parents, social workers, police)	

Nature of incident (tick boxes as appropriate)	Vandalism			Physical Control	
	Bullying			Absconding	
	Assault (child on child)			Substance abuse	
	Assault (child on adult)			Non-compliance	
	Diversion			Serious disruption	
	Isolation			Other (please state)	
	Time Out				
Was it a planned intervention e.g. in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils? (please circle)				Yes/No	

ANTECEDENTS: (events leading up to incident)
DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT: (how did the pupil respond, describe what actually happened)
DETAILS OF ANY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OTHER PUPILS:

DETAILS OF THE INTERVENTION:	
CONSEQUENCES: (how did the staff intervene, how did the child respond, and how was the situation resolved)	
ANY ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN:	
DAMAGE REPORT (If any to any property)	
FIRST AIDER ACCOUNT: (are there any injuries to staff members or pupils involved)	
BODY MAP ATTACHED (If required, please circle)	Yes/No
FIRST AIDER SIGNATURE:	
RECOMMENDATION(S) (To avoid future incidents)	
SIGNATURE OF REPORT COMPILER:	

PART B (to be completed if the use of restrictive physical intervention has occurred)



WHAT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES WERE USED PRIOR TO PHYSICAL CONTROLS:

(tick the appropriate box below)

Defusing	☐	Time out offer	☐
Deflection	☐	Time out directed	☐
Distraction take up time	☐	Changes of task	☐
Appropriate Humour	☐	Choices	☐
Proximity control	☐	Limits	☐
Verbal advice/support	☐	Consequences	☐
Rule reminder	☐	Another member of staff	☐
Hurdle help	☐		☐
Planned ignoring	☐	Other (please state)	☐

JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF PHYSICAL CONTROLS:

(tick the appropriate box below)

To prevent/interrupt;	A criminal offence	☐
	Injury to pupil/staff/others	☐
	Serious damage to property	☐
	Disruptive behaviour	☐
	Pupil absconding	☐
	Other (please state)	☐

NATURE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION USED: (Insert language relevant to training received and include estimate of duration of use of physical intervention)

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

NAME OF SENIOR PERSON NOTIFIED:

TIME/DATE

HEADTEACHER'S COMMENTS:

SIGNATURE OF HEADTEACHER:

DATE:

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION LOG

We believe that reasonable force must only be used when absolutely necessary. Reasonable force will always to be used in accordance with the Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy. All incidents of this nature must be recorded in this log. Details of the individual incident will be recorded using the Physical Intervention Report Form.

Date and Time	Pupil	Staff	Witness/es	Injuries (if any)	Damage (if any)	Intervention	Was Headteacher Notified?	Signed

