



Use of Reasonable Force Policy

This policy has been reviewed in light of the DfE's release of **'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools'**, April 2026.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6943dad6501cdd438f4cf5aa/Restrictive_interventions_including_use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools.pdf

Policy Aim

This policy sets out how the school uses restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools* (effective 1 April 2026). It ensures that all staff understand when restrictive interventions may be used, how they must be applied safely, and how incidents must be recorded, reported, and reviewed.

The policy aims to:

- Protect the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Promote preventative and de-escalation approaches.
- Ensure restrictive interventions are used only when absolutely necessary.
- Meet statutory duties to record and report significant incidents.

Principles

Bankside School is committed to:

- Creating a safe, calm, and supportive environment.
- Using preventative strategies and de-escalation as the primary response to challenging behaviour.
- Ensuring restrictive interventions are used only as a last resort.
- Applying any intervention lawfully, proportionately, and for the minimum time required.
- Protecting the dignity and rights of every pupil.

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

School proactively minimises the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and ensure that staff are trained so that they confidently know how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:-

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid.

Staff are aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They therefore take reasonable action to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. This being said, staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Relevant legislation

The principal legislation to which this guidance relates are:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to using no more force than is necessary to prevent harm, applied for the shortest possible time.

Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention is any action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty, or freedom. This includes:

- Physical restraint.
- Holding or guiding a pupil.
- Blocking or removing access to an area.
- Seclusion (supervised, safety-based isolation).

Significant Incident

An incident involving force that meets the criteria for mandatory recording and reporting, including:

- Any use of restraint.
- Any intervention resulting in injury or distress.
- Any intervention involving pupils with SEND where risk is heightened.

When Restrictive Intervention May Be Used

We are committed to using preventative strategies and de-escalation as the primary response to challenging behaviour. However, members of school staff have a legal power to use

reasonable force in certain 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 other-wise

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies (Team Teach). The person/s responsible for ensuring that relevant staff are adequately trained are:

- The Headteacher
- The Deputy Headteacher
- The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion

Training on the use of restrictive interventions should equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It should also help staff understand how to assess whether their response is reasonable under pressure. If an assessment has been made to use restrictive interventions, staff should be supported in their decision making.

Only staff who are trained in safe handling techniques should use restraint, except in emergencies.

Staff should always consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation:

- Is it necessary?

Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself. Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

- Is it proportionate?

Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks. If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy. Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

- Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, 14 Equality Act 2010 11 past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.

Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.

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

Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped. This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Head teachers and staff have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only.

Prohibited Items:

knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property

Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

Unacceptable use of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen.

The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

Whole-school preventative measures and de-escalation strategies

- Considering how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive
- Consistently applying the 'Regulate, Relate, Reason, Repair' neuro-developmental model to support children with regulating their emotions and solving conflict.
- Sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- Development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

Individual preventative approaches

- Working closely with parents to support individual pupils
- Strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of 'Regulate Plans' where necessary
- Where a pupil has a disability, schools have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers
- Giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates
Communicating the school's policy on the use of restrictive interventions to all members of the community is an important way of building and maintaining the school's culture and makes expectations transparent to all.
- Pupils with SEND will have personalised strategies documented in support plans.

Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used:

- As a safety measure when a pupil is highly dysregulated.
- For the shortest time necessary.
- In a supervised, safe, and non-threatening space.

Seclusion must not be used as a disciplinary measure.

Recording and Reporting

The school will meet statutory duties to record and report significant incidents.

- Staff involved must complete a 'Restrictive Physical Intervention Report'
- Staff must complete a CPOMS log further detailing the incident (context, antecedents, triggers, restorative, any other children or adults involved)
- Parents will be informed of a physical intervention as soon as reasonably possible, and a written summary will be provided after the fact.

Post-Incident Support

Following an incident:

- Pupils will be supported to regulate and reflect.
- Staff will receive debrief and support.
- Plans will be reviewed to reduce future risk.
- Individual Pupil Risk Assessments will be written where there have been repeated incidents of restraint

Monitoring and Governance

The governing body will:

- Review incident data regularly.
- Identify patterns or concerns.
- Ensure staff training is appropriate.
- Oversee policy implementation.

Senior leaders will:

- Ensure staff understand the policy.
- Provide ongoing training.
- Review incidents to improve practice.

Staff Training

Training will include:

- De-escalation strategies.
- Safe and lawful use of reasonable force.
- Understanding SEND-related needs.
- Recording and reporting requirements.
- Team Teach where relevant

Communication with Parents

The school will:

- Share this policy with parents.
- Explain the school's approach to safety and behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with families to support pupils.

Complaints and Allegations

A dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under our Complaints procedure. If, following preliminary investigations it is deemed necessary, the Headteacher will contact the LADO in line with our Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

All staff, pupils, parents and governors should be informed and aware of these policies and procedures and the context in which they apply.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:-

- The School Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice guidance for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in School Settings
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Approved by: Governing Body

Review Date: Annually

Next Review: July 2027

Restrictive Intervention Recording Form

*umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.
Examples include physical intervention, mechanical restraint and seclusion.*

Name of child	
SEN status	
Class / year group	
Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Location of incident	
Name(s) of staff who performed the physical intervention	
Name(s) of staff who were present during the incident <i>This includes witnesses, staff who provided verbal reassurance</i>	
Why was the intervention assessed as necessary?	To prevent or stop the continuation of: ☐ A criminal offence ☐ Injury to themselves ☐ Injury to others ☐ Damage to property ☐ Serious disruption to good order and discipline

Details of the incident <i>This section should include a chronological narrative of the incident, including build-up / antecedents, identified or potential triggers, key de-escalation strategies used, names of physical interventions used, the degree of force used, any injuries sustained (if applicable), and post-incident / recovery details.</i>

Name of technique <i>Please delete any techniques for which you/your staff have not been trained</i>	Was this technique used? <i>Tick if yes</i>	How many times within this incident?	Duration of RPI <i>If used multiple times, record individual durations</i>
Help hug	☐		
Single person double elbow	☐		
Small child escort (single person)	☐		
Small child escort (two person)	☐		
Beanbag hold	☐		
Friendly escort (two person only)	☐		
Single elbow (two person only)	☐		
Figure of four (two person only)	☐		
Two-person double elbow	☐		
Seated hold	☐		
Half shield / arm waltz	☐		
OTHER- PLEASE DESCRIBE, SAY REASON WHY AND DURATION			

De-escalation Strategies

If a strategy was effective but is not in the pupil's PBSP, this should be added to the PBSP.

Strategy used <i>e.g. choices, distraction, reassurance, etc.</i>	Is this in the child's PBSP? <i>Yes, No</i>	Was this strategy effective? <i>Yes, Somewhat, Not at all</i>

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) *A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil.*

Other Uses of Force or Restrictive Interventions

This may include guides, escorts, personal safety techniques, and any other use of force which does not meet the definition of an RPI, but was used during a significant incident.

Name of technique <i>Please delete any techniques for which you/your staff have not been trained</i>	Was this technique used? <i>Tick if yes</i>	Duration of this technique <i>If used multiple times, record individual duration.</i>
Arm disengagement	☐	
Bite response	☐	
Body disengagement	☐	
Clothing disengagement	☐	
Hair response	☐	
Neck response	☐	
Shepherd	☐	
Caring C guide	☐	
Item used as weapon response	☐	

Seclusion

School staff seclude a pupil if they detain a pupil in a place apart from any other person, except the member or members of staff. **All incidents of seclusion should be reported to BIST; reporttobist@leeds.gov.uk**

Was seclusion used?	Was a staff member in the room with the child? <i>Tick if yes</i>	How was the child prevented from leaving the space? <i>This may include locking the door, blocking the exit, or through fear of punishment</i>	Duration of seclusion <i>If used multiple times, record total duration.</i>

Injuries *If necessary, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible.*

Name of staff member who checked child for injuries after incident	
Did the child sustain any injuries? <i>If yes, please give details.</i>	
Did the child require any further treatment e.g. First Aid, hospital treatment, etc.? <i>If yes, please give details.</i>	
Did the child suffer any other adverse impacts? <i>Any emotional, behavioural, educational, or social effects experienced by the pupil following the incident</i>	
Did any staff sustain an injury during the incident? <i>If yes, please give details, including any further treatment required.</i>	

A CF50/CF50a should **only** be completed if the injury sustained is notifiable or reportable (as per PG103.) Minor injuries, such as those requiring no more than on-site support (first aid, wellbeing breaks etc.) do **not** require a CF50/CF50a to be completed.

Reporting to Parent/Carer

Has a report been made to parent / carer? <i>Please refer to DfE Guidance for reporting requirements</i>	☐ Yes ☐ No (please explain why):
Method of contact <i>e.g. telephone, email, in person, etc.</i>	
Date of contact	

What post-incident support is specified in student's Positive Behaviour Support Plan?	
How and when was this support provided?	

Were any other post-incident actions undertaken? <i>This may include a review of BIPRA/PBSP, referral to external services, fixed-term exclusions etc.</i>	
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Post-Incident Support

Pupil Voice

Please detail views of the student following the incident <i>For pre-verbal students, this may include observations</i>	
How was Pupil Voice collected? <i>eg. Written statement, restorative conversation, observations.</i>	
Date collected	

Sign Off

Name and signature of person completing form	Name and Signature of Headteacher	Date

Please complete CPOMS log and parent letter below.



**Bankside
Primary School**

Putting down strong roots for success

Date:

Dear

.....

.....

Further to our conversation, here are the details of the recent incident involving your child:

Date, time and location of the incident	<i>Insert the date, time and location of the incident</i>

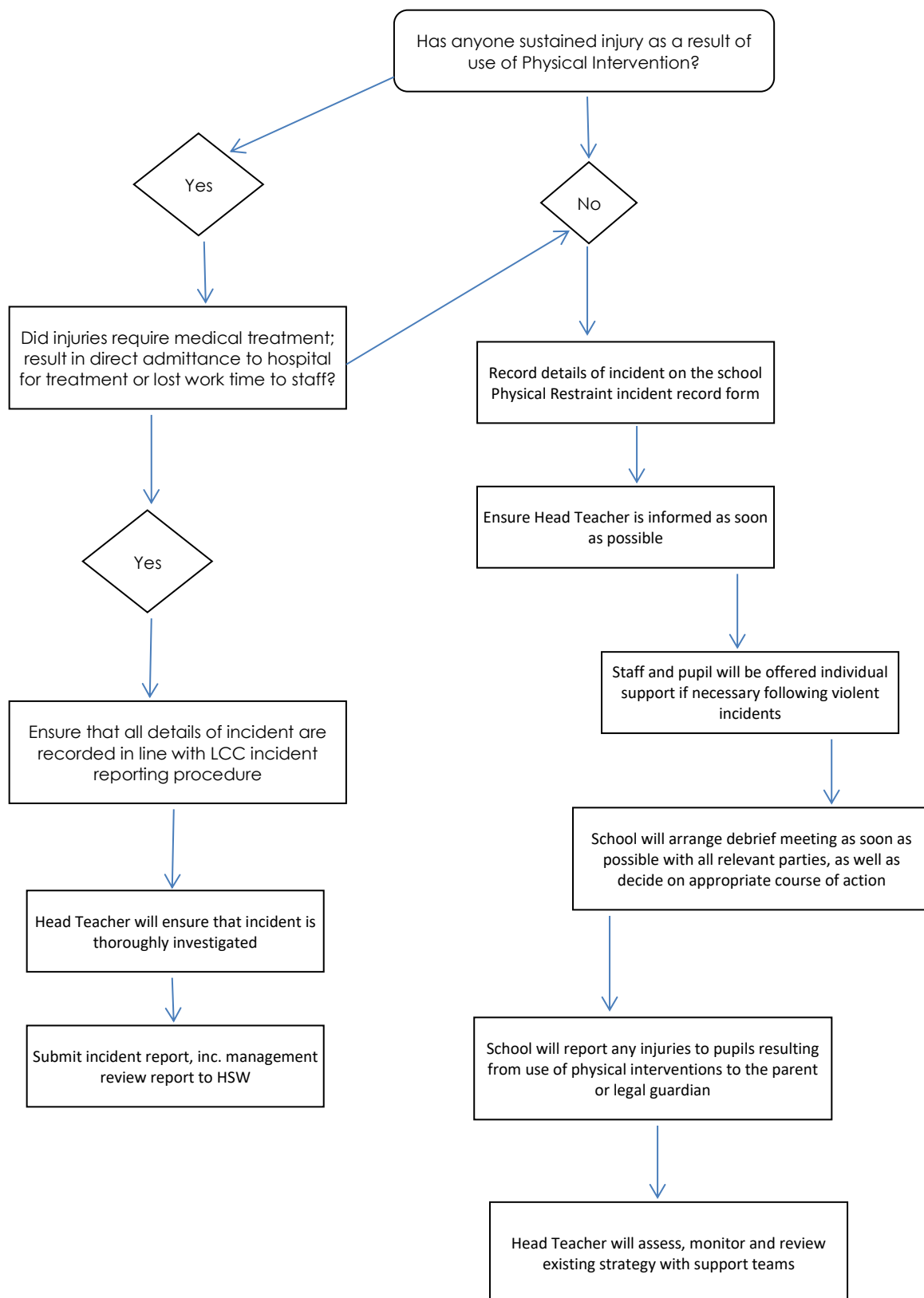
Please be reassured that the safety and wellbeing of your child is always our priority and physical interventions are only used as a last resort in order to keep everyone safe.

If you have any concerns about your child's physical, emotional or mental wellbeing as a result of this incident, or want to ask any questions, please do get in contact. If you are worried about your child's health, especially in relation to any physical symptoms, please contact your doctor immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs V Broughton
Headteacher

Flowchart following use of Physical Intervention in School



Details of the incident:

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Form of physical control

One person techniques			Two person techniques		
T-wrap	Standing	☐	T-wrap (Level2)	Seated	☐
	Seated	☐		Floor	☐
	Floor	☐			
Cradle		☐	Single elbow		☐
Double elbow		☐	Figure of Four		☐
Half-shield		☐	Two person double elbow		☐
Other (specify)			Other (Specify)		

Injuries/damage caused

Child checked by:					Injury Suffered by Child	Yes		No						
					Treatment Required	Yes		No						
Referred to First Aider		Yes		No	Specify:									
Referred to GP		Hospital												
Parent/Carer informed by		Phone		Letter										
Injury suffered by staff	Yes		No		Damage to Property	Yes		No						
Specify					Details									

Action Taken

Follow up talk		Phone call to parent/guardian		Letter to parent/guardian	
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Complete work missed		Referred to Police		Exclusion	
Returned to Class		Other Sanction			
Child's view of incident and use of restraint					
Staff signature					Date

Appendix 3:

WHAT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES WERE USED PRIOR TO PHYSICAL CONTROLS? (tick below):

WHAT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES WERE USED PRIOR TO PHYSICAL CONTROLS? (tick below):		
verbal advice and support ☐ [] reassurance ☐ [] calm talking/stance ☐ [] time out directed ☐ [] time out	choices/limits/consequences ☐ [] distraction ☐ [] planned ignoring ☐ [] take up time ☐ [] negotiation ☐ []	humour ☐ [] contingent touch ☐ [] transfer adult success reminder ☐ [] other (pls specify)

WHY WAS THE DECISION MADE TO USE RESTRAINT?

To prevent child / young person from causing injury to him/herself? ☐ [] To prevent child / young person from causing injury to others? ☐ [] To prevent child / young person from causing damage to property? ☐ [] To prevent child / young person from causing serious disruption? ☐ [] To prevent child / young person from running away? ☐ []
 Other? (Please specify) ☐ []

DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT HOLDS USED: (Please include approx. time span of any holds)

CHILD'S VIEWS

Report read and discussed with child Yes ☐ [] No

☐ [] Child / young person agrees with content

Yes ☐ [] No ☐ []

If no, what is the child's/young person's view? / If yes, does the pupil have any comment?

Did the child / young person suffer any injuries as a result of this incident? Injury location and description:

Did staff or others suffer any injuries as a result of this incident? Injury location and description:

POST-INCIDENT INFORMATION

Was any post-incident support offered and given to the child / young person? <i>a)</i> De-brief with adult [] <i>b)</i> Other (please specify) [] <i>c)</i> Offer declined by child / young person []	Was any post-incident support requested by and given to member of staff / other adult? <i>a)</i> De-brief with colleague [] <i>b)</i> De-brief with Headteacher [] <i>c)</i> Occupational Health Counselling [] <i>d)</i> Not requested []
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Appendix 4: sample letter to parents

Dear

I would like to inform you that was involved in an incident today and needed physical intervention to manage the situation.

I would like to invite you into school to discuss the incident. This might include writing / revising an IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan) in case further intervention is needed in the future.

Please get in touch with me as soon as possible so that this may be arranged.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix 5 – Frequently Asked Questions :

Q: I'm worried that if I use force a pupil or parent could make a complaint against me. Am I protected?

A: Yes, if you have acted lawfully. If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations.

Q: How do I know whether using a physical intervention is 'reasonable'?

A: The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. School staff should expect the full backing of their senior leadership team when they have used force.

Q: What about school trips?

A: The power may be used where the member of staff is lawfully in charge of the pupils, and this includes while on school trips.

Q: Can force be used on pupils with SEN or disabilities?

A: Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil concerned.

Q: I'm a female teacher with a Year 10 class - there's no way I'd want to restrain or try to control my pupils. Am I expected to do so?

A: There is a power, not a duty, to use force so members of staff have discretion whether or not to use it. However, teachers and other school staff have a duty of care towards their pupils and it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty.

Q: Are there any circumstances in which a teacher can use physical force to punish a pupil?

A: No. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, which is illegal.

