



# **Physical Contact and Intervention Policy**

**Policy updated: May 2026**

**Policy to be reviewed: May 2027**

## Introduction

Compass School is the only provision in Southampton providing education and behavioural support for pupils who have been permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school. All pupils have been referred to Compass School for their extremely challenging behaviour and Social Emotional Mental Health needs. This policy outlines the principles and practices regarding the use of restrictive interventions at Compass School, in accordance with the statutory guidance provided in 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England April 2026'. The aim is to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff while adhering to legal requirements and best practices.

## Aims

- To ensure that Compass School provides a safe and secure environment where all pupils can achieve their full potential
- To ensure that staff remain safe and feel confident to effectively support the needs of every pupil, both academically and behaviourally
- To recognise that we all have a responsibility for our own actions

## Rationale

At Compass School our curriculum is based on a nurture and trauma informed approach in order to meet the needs of every pupil, so that they can access the school curriculum. All of our pupils have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and require support to develop their social and emotional skills. These may include:

- A medical diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism Spectrum Condition, Oppositional Defiance Disorder and/ or other Conduct Disorders
- Mental health issues and others may have social disorders
- An inability to control their behaviour
- Learned behaviours that can be perceived to be threatening, aggressive, intimidating or violent
- An inability to regulate their emotions
- The experience of trauma which can manifest in extreme fear and anxiety
- Failure to develop appropriate adult-child or peer-peer relationships

Compass School recognises that appropriate touch is an important developmental stage for all pupils and that some may not have experienced positive early bonding with parents/carers.

The school also recognises the importance of developing emotional resilience and literacy, which are taught throughout our practice, particularly during PSHE, SPICE and small group/1:1 mentoring sessions and/or interventions. We believe pupils need to recognise and understand why they need to take responsibility of their own actions. At Compass School pupils learn how their actions affect others through non-structured and structured 'Restorative Practice' sessions after an incident.

Some pupils will require physical intervention to prevent them from causing harm or danger to others and/or themselves. All physical interventions will be delivered within the SecuriCare approach and endeavour to keep staff and pupils safe whilst continuing to support the learning of others to ensure they develop strategies to better manage their emotions and behaviour.

## Definition of Terms

- **Restrictive intervention:** a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways
- **Reasonable force:** a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. 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 in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this

document. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention

- **Seclusion:** a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave
- **Restraint:** 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, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint

### Who can use reasonable force?

In accordance with the statutory guidance (April 2026), Compass School acknowledges that all members of school staff are legally empowered to use reasonable force in certain situations. This is specifically 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

Staff members who are likely to require the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions must receive adequate training in its safe and lawful application, as well as in preventative strategies.

In an emergency or a case of self-defence everyone has the right to use 'reasonable force' to defend themselves or others against attack. Under Section 93 (Education and Inspections Act 2006) it is made clear that force should only be used if the situation warrants it, and that such force must be in proportion to the circumstances and consistent with the age, gender and understanding of the young person.

### Minimising the Need for Force

Compass School aims to minimise the risk of incidents necessitating the use of reasonable force through de-escalation. As all of our pupils can demonstrate challenging behaviour, staff members collaborate to develop pupil plans and risk management plans, where appropriate. These plans incorporate bespoke strategies aimed at and de-escalating key behaviours and reducing the necessity for the application of reasonable force. These are reviewed as and when appropriate.

### Key Principles Guiding Restrictive Intervention

Compass School has, in conjunction with other special schools adopted the SecuriCare training package. Staff receive annual training in de-escalation skills and positive handling techniques. Refresher sessions may be delivered throughout the year where appropriate for individual hubs or staff members. Time is set aside in reviewing the effectiveness of any de-escalation strategies and handling techniques identified in Pupil Plans during daily staff de-brief sessions or on a 1:1 basis with a pupil.

We endeavour to work closely with the LA, Educational Psychology Service and Social Care in ensuring that pupils' needs are addressed and advice is considered/implemented.

- Physical Intervention and Restraint should be used as a last resort to support children and young people in times of crisis. Restraint should be avoided wherever possible
- Staff will continuously seek opportunities to communicate, assess the situation, look and listen and divert/de-escalate
- Any physical intervention will be **REASONABLE, PROPORTIONATE AND NECESSARY** – in the pupil's and staff's best interest but only as a last resort until the immediate threat has subsided
- Physical interventions will be administered in a calm and rational manner and should aim to de-escalate a potentially dangerous situation and to support a pupil to maintain self-control
- Following a physical intervention, a structured or unstructured 'Restorative Practice' should take place if appropriate
- Where there is an element of foreseeable risk this will be assessed and, where possible recorded
- Staff that are trained and not physically involved in the intervention will be expected to act as advocates for the pupil and members of staff

- It is the duty of all staff to offer appropriate support during or after a physical intervention or serious incident
- All staff will be trained in SecuriCare to the basic level and this is refreshed every year as a minimum
- Compass School has members of staff also trained in School 'First Aid' and hold the relevant certificates
- SecuriCare techniques seek to avoid injury and will not be used as punishment; however, it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally to either a pupil or member of staff supporting them. These are not necessarily as a failure of professional techniques, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of attempts to keep people safe. There will always be a verbal check of injury after physical intervention and any injury will be treated and recorded on a skin map, HS1 and/or HS2. These documents will be sent to the LA via a secure portal

### Recording and Reporting

- All staff are responsible for completing an RPI form following an incident. Lead trainers' quality assure RPI forms and are responsible for completing the Bound Physical Intervention Book (kept in the Head teacher's office) they should endeavour this to be done on the same day as the incident where possible. An RPI number will then be recorded on the comments section on SIMS with the form attached
- Parents/carers will be contacted by the school when their child has been involved in physical intervention. This will be by telephone or direct contact on the day the incident occurred. The contact will be followed up by a written notification to parents via email or an online messaging system
- The school will keep records of any physical intervention in the Bound Physical Intervention Book and RPI Folder. These are checked every time a physical intervention occurs by the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher and SecuriCare Lead Trainer. The SecuriCare Lead Trainer will ensure the RPI form is scanned and attached to the relevant SIMS entry
- **Compass School will monitor its own records**, and complete a PI Review and Actions report every half term. This is shared with the Management Committee and other relevant colleagues as required as per outcome of the actions each half term

## Guidelines for Staff

Physical Intervention is any method of physically intervening to resolve a difficult or dangerous situation, and is not necessarily physical restraint. Physical restraint is defined as when a member of staff uses force with the intention of restricting a young person's movement against their will.

Physical Intervention and Restraint should be used as a last resort to support children and young people in times of crisis. Restraint should be avoided wherever possible. It is never a substitute for good behaviour management. Other methods of de-escalation to manage the situation should always be tried first, unless this is impractical.

All pupils will have a pupil plan which details the most appropriate de-escalation strategies to be used. The pupil plan will be regularly reviewed and updated with staff, pupil and where appropriate their parent/carer. These plans should be used by all staff to inform decision making. They will contain information regarding bespoke reasonable adjustments as well as risk management plans where appropriate (equality act 2010). A Positive Handling Plan will be completed and signed by parents/carers upon primary pupil inductions and only following an incident requiring physical intervention for secondary pupils.

It is the responsibility of the school, specifically the Headteacher and Management Committee, to ensure that the policy in place on the use of physical intervention should be communicated to the school community, updated and reviewed on an annual basis. Governing bodies of maintained schools and the proprietors of other schools must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, as part of the school's duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Teachers have a duty of care to maintain good order and safeguard young people's health and safety. However, teachers are not under a duty to run risk of serious personal injury by intervening when it is not safe to do so.

### **Physical restraint must:**

- Never be entered into lightly
- Involve the minimum force necessary
- Be used to de-escalate a potentially dangerous situation
- Be applied only until the immediate threat is passed
- Support the child/young person to maintain self-control
- Not be used offensively as a threat or a punishment (aversive consequence)
- Not inflict pain
- Be administered calmly and rationally, not in response to anger or frustration
- Be the result of a professional judgement about the young person's safety, taking account of the age and abilities of the young person
- Be in the child/young person's best interests and not for convenience of staff
- Not be a substitute for a positive intervention/behaviour management programme
- Be planned; an emergency response is only justified on the first occasion
- Always be the last resort (i.e. means other than force were attempted and found to be insufficient)

### **Physical restraint should only be considered as an option if:**

- Calming and de-escalation strategies have failed to de-escalate the situation
- The response is in the paramount interests of the young person and/or those around them
- Not intervening is likely to result in more dangerous consequences than intervening

### **Holding techniques should take account of the following:**

- Airway – no obstruction of airway
- Breathing – no restriction of chest area
- Circulation – no pressure on arterial pressure points
- Good body alignment
- Avoid pressure on joints

**We do not use any ground holds under any circumstances.**

Children and young people should always be monitored for health and safety during physical restraint. Holds should stop immediately if the following signs are noted:

- Difficulties in breathing
- Sudden change in colour of skin
- Vomiting

Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

The procedure must require that a record of any such incident is made in writing as soon as practicable after the incident. The requirement to record applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan (Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England, April 2026).

When a young person has been restrained it should be reported to the Headteacher and the parents/carers. In Southampton, incidents should be recorded using the Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) Record Form within 24 hours of the incident, in order to:

- Ensure policy guidelines are followed
- Parent/carers are informed
- Inform future planning as part of school requirement processes
- Prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident
- Provide a record for any future enquiry