



Restrictive Intervention

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Role:	Deputy Head and DSL
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1. Statement of Intent

Frewen College is committed to creating a safe, respectful and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive. Safeguarding is the golden thread that underpins all aspects of school life.

This policy sets out Frewen College's approach to restrictive interventions, including the lawful use of reasonable force. It ensures that any intervention involving physical contact or restriction of liberty is:

- lawful, necessary and proportionate;
- used only when other strategies are ineffective or inappropriate;
- the minimum required for the shortest time possible;
- recorded, reported, reviewed and learned from; and
- consistent with the school's restorative approach, clear boundaries and consistent escalation.

Restrictive interventions are never used as punishment, to enforce compliance, or because of staff frustration, anger or convenience.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and adults working on behalf of Frewen College and covers all school contexts, including lessons, boarding, social time, transport, trips and off-site activities.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy (including escalation stages and restorative practice)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including MyConcern recording and reporting routes)
- SEND Policy and any pupil risk assessments / support plans
- Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)
- Health and Safety Policy

3. Legal and Statutory Framework (England)

The legal power for school staff to use reasonable force derives from the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 90–93).

Statutory guidance: From 1 April 2026, the Department for Education statutory guidance "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools" applies. This replaces earlier "Use of reasonable force in schools" guidance and strengthens expectations for prevention, recording and reporting.

Other relevant guidance and duties include:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current version)
- Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments
- Independent School Standards Regulations (where applicable)

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

Reasonable force

Actions involving a degree of physical contact used by staff to control or restrain a pupil.

“Reasonable” means no more force than is needed, for the shortest time possible, to achieve a legitimate aim.

Restrictive intervention

Any intervention that restricts a pupil’s movement, liberty or access to their own body. This includes, but is not limited to, physical restraint, the use of reasonable force, and seclusion.

Physical restraint

The use of physical contact to restrict a pupil’s movement, for the purpose of preventing harm or serious disruption. Restraint is a form of restrictive intervention.

Passive/defensive physical contact

Non-restrictive contact such as guiding, escorting, or blocking a pupil’s path to prevent danger or harm.

Seclusion

The supervised and time-limited confinement of a pupil in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving, used only to prevent harm. Seclusion is not a punishment. Frewen College does not use locked-door seclusion.

Note: The terms above can be used differently across settings; this policy adopts the meanings used in current DfE statutory guidance (effective 1 April 2026).

5. Core Principles

Frewen College’s approach is underpinned by:

- Safeguarding first: the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Prevention and de-escalation: relational approaches, restorative practice and de-escalation are the default.
- Proportionality: use the minimum intervention for the shortest time.
- Dignity and respect: preserve pupil dignity, privacy and emotional safety.
- Individualised support: recognise SEND, SEMH, trauma and contextual factors; make reasonable adjustments.
- Accountability and learning: record, report, review and reduce recurrence.

6. Prevention, De-escalation and Planning

Restrictive interventions should be rare. To minimise the need for them, staff will:

- use restorative and relational approaches (consistent with the Behaviour Policy);
- use proactive classroom and boarding routines and clear boundaries;
- use agreed de-escalation strategies (tone, distance, options, time, safe space, change of staff);
- identify triggers and early warning signs;
- use reasonable adjustments and personalised strategies for pupils with SEND/SEMH needs.

Where a pupil is known to be at increased risk of incidents that could require restrictive intervention, the school will use a proactive plan (e.g., risk assessment / behaviour support

plan). Plans should include:

- triggers and early indicators;
- effective de-escalation strategies;
- agreed safe spaces and staffing responses;
- communication needs (including sensory/processing needs);
- any medical considerations; and
- how incidents will be recorded and communicated with parents/carers.

7. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force / restrictive interventions only when necessary to:

- prevent a pupil from harming themselves or others;
- prevent serious damage to property;
- prevent serious disruption that puts safety at risk; and/or
- remove a pupil from a dangerous situation.

De-escalation and less intrusive options should be attempted first unless doing so would increase risk. The decision to intervene must be based on professional judgement in the moment, considering:

- immediacy and seriousness of risk;
- age, size and understanding of the pupil;
- any disability, SEN or medical considerations;
- the environment (space, objects, bystanders);
- availability of additional staff support.

8. Reasonable Force Is Not Used For

Reasonable force / restrictive interventions must never be used:

- as a punishment or consequence;
- to enforce compliance with instructions where there is no immediate risk;
- to make a pupil do work or remain in a lesson as a matter of discipline;
- to prevent a pupil leaving a classroom or site unless leaving creates a significant risk of harm;
- because of staff frustration, anger or convenience.

9. Who May Use Reasonable Force

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. At Frewen College:

- staff are expected to act within their training, role and competence;
- staff are not required to use force and should only do so if they believe it is necessary and they can do so safely;
- staff should summon assistance where possible and safe to do so;
- any planned approaches must be authorised through appropriate leadership oversight and risk assessment.

10. Safe Practice Requirements

Where restrictive intervention is necessary, staff should (where practicable):

- give a clear, calm instruction and warning that intervention may be used to keep people

safe;

- call for support (e.g., nearby staff / duty staff / leadership);
- use the least intrusive option that will keep people safe;
- continuously monitor the pupil's breathing, distress and physical wellbeing;
- stop as soon as the risk has reduced and the pupil can regain self-control;
- ensure privacy and dignity; and
- seek first aid and medical support immediately if needed.

Staff should avoid:

- actions that restrict breathing or place pressure on the chest/torso;
- holds around the neck, head or face;
- prone restraint (face down) except in extreme emergency where unavoidable to prevent serious harm, and only for the shortest time possible, with immediate leadership oversight and medical checks;
- any technique that risks pain compliance or deliberate discomfort.

11. Prohibited Practices

The following are never permitted at Frewen College:

- corporal punishment or the threat of corporal punishment;
- deliberate infliction of pain or any form of degrading treatment;
- restraint as punishment or for staff convenience;
- holding a pupil around the neck/head/face or restricting breathing/circulation;
- use of mechanical restraint (e.g., belts, straps) by staff;
- seclusion behind locked doors or where a pupil is prevented from leaving without appropriate safeguards;
- any intervention that humiliates or intimidates a pupil.

12. Safeguarding, SEND and Equality

Staff must consider the heightened vulnerability of some pupils, including those with SEND, SEMH needs, trauma histories, communication difficulties, or sensory differences.

Reasonable adjustments must be considered and implemented where appropriate.

Behaviour that may be linked to unmet needs should be addressed through support planning and safeguarding processes, not discipline alone.

Any intervention that results in injury, significant distress, repeated incidents, or concerns about staff conduct must be treated as a safeguarding matter and managed through safeguarding procedures.

13. Recording and Reporting (Statutory from 1 April 2026)

Frewen College will comply with statutory expectations to record and report significant restrictive interventions.

13.1 Recording

Any significant use of reasonable force or other restrictive intervention must be recorded as

soon as practicable (normally the same day) on the school's recording system (MyConcern and/or behaviour system), and must include:

- date, time and location;
- staff and pupils involved (and witnesses);
- what happened immediately before (antecedents/triggers);
- de-escalation strategies attempted and their impact;
- the reason force was necessary (risk being prevented);
- the type of intervention used and duration;
- any injuries (pupil or staff) and first aid/medical actions taken;
- how the incident ended and what happened immediately after;
- follow-up actions, including restorative work and support planning;
- whether parents/carers were informed, when and how.

13.2 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers must be informed in writing as soon as practicable (normally the same day) following a significant incident, unless doing so would place the pupil at increased risk of harm or compromise safeguarding actions.

13.3 Leadership oversight

All incidents must be notified to the DSL as soon as possible (and certainly on the same day as the incident occurred), who will also inform the Headmaster. Incidents are reviewed for safeguarding, patterns, and prevention planning.

14. Post-Incident Support and Review

Following any restrictive intervention:

- the pupil will be supported and, where appropriate, engaged in restorative repair and reintegration;
- staff involved will be offered a debrief and support;
- risk assessments/support plans will be updated where needed;
- the Deputy Head/ DSL will review incidents for trends, triggers and preventative learning; and
- where relevant, parents/carers will be invited to review and agree preventative strategies.

15. Complaints, Allegations and Low-Level Concerns

Any complaint or concern that force was used inappropriately will be managed in line with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including LADO referral routes where threshold is met)
- Low-level concerns procedures
- Staff Behaviour Policy and HR procedures

The welfare of the child is paramount. Staff must report concerns immediately to the Headmaster and/or DSL (or the Chair of Governors if the allegation concerns the Headmaster) as per our policies and procedures

16. Training and Competence

All staff receive safeguarding and behaviour training, which includes prevention, de-escalation and the lawful use of reasonable force. Additional training (e.g. through TeamTeach) will be provided where appropriate based on pupil needs, role and risk assessment.

Training records are maintained and reviewed annually. Staff should not use techniques they have not been trained to use (except in an unforeseeable emergency where necessary to prevent serious harm).

17. Monitoring and Review

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) / DSL reports patterns and learning to senior leaders and governors as part of safeguarding monitoring. The governing body reviews this policy annually or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or school context changes.

Appendix A – One-Page Staff Quick Guide

DO	DO NOT
• Try de-escalation first • Use the least force necessary • Keep duration as short as possible • Call for support where safe • Protect dignity and privacy • Stop as soon as risk reduces • Record the incident the same day • Notify Deputy Head (Pastoral) / DSL immediately • Inform parents/carers in writing the same day (where practicable)	• Use force as punishment • Act in anger or frustration • Restrict breathing or apply pressure to chest/torso • Hold around neck/head/face • Use pain compliance techniques • Lock a pupil in a room • Delay recording/reporting

When can I use reasonable force?

Only to prevent harm to self/others, serious damage, serious safety-threatening disruption, or to remove from danger. If there is no immediate risk, do not use force.

What must be recorded? (Significant incidents)

Date/time/location; who was involved; triggers; de-escalation attempted; why intervention was necessary; what was done and for how long; injuries/first aid; how it ended; follow-up actions; parent notification details.

Who do I inform?

Immediately: Deputy Head (Pastoral) / DSL. Parents/carers: written notification the same day where practicable (unless safeguarding risk).

Appendix B – Incident Record Fields (Template to be used)

This appendix lists the fields staff must complete when recording a significant restrictive intervention. These headings can be used directly in MyConcern or incident forms.

1. 1. Date / time / location
2. 2. Pupil(s) involved and staff involved (plus witnesses)
3. 3. Antecedents/triggers and early warning signs observed
4. 4. De-escalation strategies used and impact
5. 5. Reason intervention was necessary (risk prevented)
6. 6. Description of intervention (what, how, duration)
7. 7. Any injuries/distress and first aid/medical actions
8. 8. How the incident ended (release/return to regulation)
9. 9. Immediate actions taken after (supervision, safe space, check-in)
10. 10. Parent/carer notification (time/method/content)
11. 11. Leadership/DSL review notes
12. 12. Follow-up actions (restorative work, support plan update, referrals)

Appendix C – Parent/Carer Notification (Model Wording)

Use as a guide for same-day written notification (email or letter). Adjust as appropriate to context and safeguarding.

Today at [time] in [location], staff intervened to keep people safe following an incident where [brief factual description]. De-escalation strategies attempted included [examples]. Because there was a risk of [harm/damage], staff used the minimum necessary physical intervention for approximately [duration]. The incident ended when [end point]. [Pupil name] was checked by staff and [first aid/medical checks if applicable].

We will review the incident to reduce the likelihood of recurrence and will update support strategies as needed. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Deputy Head.