

St Annes College Grammar School



Restrictive Interventions Policy

Registered proprietor	St Annes College Ltd
Policy owner	Abigail Welsby, Principal
Designated safeguarding lead	Andrea Burrell
SEND lead	Wendy Cottier-Brown, Lead SENCO
Approved by	St Annes College Ltd, acting through Abigail Welsby as authorised director
Approval date	27 th September 2026
Review date	September 2027, or sooner after a material change or incident
Availability	School website and on request from the school office

1 Purpose and scope

SACGS protects each pupil's dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing. Restrictive intervention can cause physical or psychological harm. Staff prevent distress through relationships, reasonable adjustments, early support and de-escalation. An intervention is used only when lawful, necessary and proportionate, with the least restriction for the shortest possible time.

This policy covers pupils from Nursery to Sixth Form, employees, supply and agency staff and other authorised persons with lawful control or charge of pupils. It applies on site, on educational visits and school transport, and wherever pupils are in the School's charge. Remote provision requires assessment of who has lawful charge and the relevant circumstances. This policy does not prescribe physical techniques; staff act within their training and competence, while unforeseen emergencies may require immediate lawful action.

2 Legal framework and related policies

This policy has regard to sections 93 and 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025; independent school standards 16A and 32A; the DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026); Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; the Equality Act 2010; the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice; the Human Rights Act 1998; health and safety law; and the current EYFS statutory framework. The statutory element of the DfE guidance concerns recording and reporting significant uses of force.

Read with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Exclusions, SEND, Equality, Accessibility, Health and Safety, First Aid, Staff Code of Conduct, Searching, Complaints and Whistleblowing policies.

3 Definitions

- Restrictive intervention: physical or non-physical action intended to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of all or part of a pupil's body.
- Reasonable force: physical force exercised under a limited statutory power, no greater than necessary and for no longer than necessary.
- Restraint: a non-disciplinary action immobilising or limiting movement, whether or not it involves direct contact; removing a mobility aid to prevent movement can be restraint.
- Seclusion: a non-disciplinary action confining one pupil away from others and preventing departure, whether by a locked or blocked exit, physical obstruction, or making the pupil believe that leaving will be punished.
- Significant use of force: force beyond ordinary, appropriate contact between staff and pupils, including force used to implement a non-physical restriction.
- Voluntary calm space: a pupil may use a supervised space and remains free to leave without threatened punishment; this is not seclusion.

4 Principles and prevention

Staff understand what distress or behaviour communicates and use calm language, space, reduced demands, clear choices, processing time, agreed communication methods and sensory or regulation support. They may remove an audience, hazards or other pupils rather than move a distressed pupil, seek a familiar adult and summon emergency services when staff cannot maintain safety. Staff must not put themselves in unreasonable danger.

A dynamic assessment considers the immediate risk, the pupil's age, development, disability, SEND, health, trauma, communication and sensory needs; the environment; staff capability; and whether intervention could increase harm. Staff use the least restrictive effective measure, explain their actions where possible, continuously check wellbeing, and stop as soon as the risk reduces.

5 When reasonable force may be used

School staff may use reasonable force when necessary to prevent or stop a pupil causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder among pupils at school. Whether it is reasonable depends on the specific circumstances. Refusal to work, swearing, disobeying an instruction, sitting down or leaving a classroom does not by itself justify force. A pupil leaving the premises may require intervention where the circumstances create a lawful and immediate risk, such as injury.

No individual support plan or parental agreement gives advance permission to use force. The staff member must judge necessity and proportionality at the time. Emergency reasonable force does not depend on a staff member having completed formal intervention training.

6 Unacceptable practice

- Never use force, restraint or seclusion as punishment, retaliation, humiliation, intimidation or to obtain compliance without a lawful ground. Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Never deliberately impede breathing or circulation, cover the mouth or nose, or apply pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen. Planned floor restraint, pain-inducing techniques, striking, twisting joints beyond their normal range, or holding hair, fingers, ears, genitals or clothing around the neck are prohibited by School policy. If a pupil inadvertently ends up on the ground, release or move to a safer position as quickly as possible.
- Do not use mechanical restraint for behavioural control, administer medicine to restrict movement, lock a pupil alone in a room, use unsupervised seclusion, deprive a pupil of basic needs or mobility aids as control, or ask another pupil to intervene physically. Prescribed safety or therapeutic equipment used for its intended purpose is distinct.

Appropriate physical contact for care, first aid, comfort, instruction and safely guiding a willing pupil remains permitted. SACGS does not adopt a no-contact policy.

7 Seclusion and calm spaces

Seclusion may be used only as an exceptional safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is highly dysregulated and less restrictive measures cannot safely address the immediate risk. It is not a disciplinary sanction, and staff must not threaten punishment to secure it. A safe, non-threatening space, continuous staff supervision and monitoring, communication, and an immediate end once the risk reduces are essential. Doors must not be locked. Call emergency services if safety cannot be maintained.

Removal from class or a regulation break is not seclusion where the pupil is genuinely free to leave. Staff must assess what happens in practice, including physical obstruction or perceived punishment, rather than rely on the name given to a room or intervention.

8 Searching pupils

The Principal and staff authorised by the Principal may, subject to the statutory conditions, use reasonable force to search for legally prohibited items. Force must not be used to search for items banned only by School rules. Follow the School's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy, with regard to dignity, SEND, disability and safeguarding.

9 SEND, medical needs and individual planning

The Lead SENCO coordinates a person-centred risk assessment and support plan where risk is foreseeable, with the pupil and parents and, where appropriate, health professionals and the placing local authority. The plan records communication and medical needs; triggers and early signs; reasonable adjustments; preventative and co-regulation strategies; approaches to avoid; any anticipated response to serious risk; assistance arrangements; recovery and review. Staff distinguish distress or unmet need from deliberate misconduct.

Plans are reviewed at agreed intervals and after each significant incident. Increasing or repeated interventions prompt multidisciplinary review and, where appropriate, an urgent EHCP review. A plan does not make any intervention automatically lawful.

10 Early Years

EYFS practitioners prioritise co-regulation and developmentally appropriate support. Any necessary physical intervention must be lawful, proportionate and as brief as possible. The School records every occasion on which physical intervention is used and its reason. Parents or carers are informed the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable, subject to the significant-harm safeguarding exception in section 13. Wider recording and reporting duties in that section also apply.

11 Training and staff arrangements

All staff receive policy awareness and training in prevention, de-escalation and safeguarding. The Principal determines which staff need enhanced, current, needs-led training in lawful and safe intervention after risk assessment; records of competence and refresher dates are maintained. Training must address medical risk, communication and post-incident care. Supply and agency staff receive relevant pupil plans and instructions. The statutory definition of staff for standards 16A and 32A includes supply staff and volunteers; the section 93 power extends to other persons authorised by the Principal to have lawful control or charge of pupils. Volunteers and contractors must not be assumed to have authority merely from their presence.

12 Immediate response after an incident

- End the intervention once immediate risk reduces, check pupil and staff welfare, arrange first aid or medical assessment, and call emergency services where necessary.
- Notify the Principal or designated senior leader and the DSL promptly. Preserve relevant evidence and obtain separate factual accounts without coaching.
- Offer the pupil and witnesses support, communication help and time to recover; support staff involved. A restorative conversation must be voluntary and appropriate.
- Make the written incident record as soon as practicable, aiming for the same day; send required written information to parents as soon as practicable, aiming for the same day, subject to section 13.
- Consider safeguarding referral, LADO consultation, police, children's social care, local authority, insurer and applicable health and safety reporting.

13 Recording and written reporting to parents

The registered proprietor requires a written record of every significant use of force by a member of staff and every incident of seclusion or restraint, including restraint without physical contact. Staff directly involved record the incident

as soon as practicable and endeavour to do so on the same day. These duties apply even if the intervention was anticipated in a support plan. One complete record can satisfy overlapping duties.

The record identifies the pupil and staff; relevant SEND, disability, SEN status code and other needs; date, time, place and approximate duration; what occurred and possible triggers; preventative steps; the type and degree of force or restriction; why it was necessary; injuries or adverse effects; medical and other support; notification; pupil and witness accounts where available; and senior review and resulting actions.

The School provides information in writing to each parent as soon as practicable after a significant use of force or any seclusion or restraint, endeavouring to do so on the same day. The information states when and where it happened, approximate duration, why intervention was necessary, the type and degree of force or restriction, injuries, and relevant post-incident support. A follow-up discussion is offered where appropriate. There is no need to duplicate a report where one incident falls under both duties.

The duty to provide information to a parent does not apply where the pupil is aged 20 years of age or over. Information must not be provided to a particular parent if it appears to the person responsible for reporting that doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil. The DSL must be consulted promptly. Inform each parent to whom information can safely be provided; if there is no such parent, provide the information to the local authority in whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident. Record the reason, decision, recipient and time. Anticipated embarrassment, disagreement or complaint does not establish significant harm.

For these reporting duties, parent includes a local authority accommodating the pupil under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or section 76 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The reporting procedure applies to each parent within the statutory meaning.

14 Safeguarding, allegations and complaints

Report any potentially excessive, punitive, unsafe or discriminatory restriction promptly to the DSL or Principal. Adult allegations are handled under KCSIE 2026 and the School's allegations procedure, including LADO consultation where the harm threshold may be met; low-level concerns follow the low-level concerns procedure. Staff may raise unsafe practice through whistleblowing. Complaints follow the School's Complaints Policy, while a safeguarding allegation must not be investigated solely as a complaint. Preserve records and support all involved.

15 Review and proprietor oversight

A senior leader who was not directly involved should review each incident promptly, including lawful purpose, alternatives, proportionality, safety, duration, injuries, safeguarding, pupil and staff views, reasonable adjustments and changes to plans. The Principal will provide the registered proprietor with a confidential termly review of incident frequency, duration, seclusion, repeated patterns, injury, reporting timeliness, SEND and protected-characteristic patterns, complaints, training and reduction measures. The proprietor will take reasonable steps to ensure the procedures are followed and will review this policy at least annually and sooner after a serious incident, recurring concern or legal change.

16 Responsibilities

- St Annes College Ltd: approve the policy, ensure compliant procedures and oversee implementation and patterns.
- Principal: implement the policy, determine training and authorisation, ensure records and written reports, review incidents and report to the proprietor.
- DSL: lead safeguarding decisions, significant-harm reporting exceptions and referrals.
- Lead SENCO: coordinate adjustments, individual plans and EHCP liaison.
- All staff: prevent escalation, intervene only lawfully, protect dignity, seek support, record incidents promptly and report concerns.

17 Staff incident checklist

- Identify the immediate lawful risk; attempt a safer, less restrictive response.
- Consider the pupil's age, SEND, disability, health, communication and environment.
- Explain, protect breathing and circulation, monitor continuously, and end intervention promptly.
- Check welfare, seek medical care, notify the senior leader and DSL.
- Record significant force and all seclusion or restraint; ensure written information reaches each parent unless the statutory exception applies.
- Take part in a supported review and update the pupil's plan.