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RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN SCHOOL POLICY

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1. Introduction

At Kingdom Christian School we believe that pupils need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of pupils will the use of physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, only acceptable forms of intervention are used.

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

All school staff need to feel that they can manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating.

They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, 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.

2. Definition of "Restrictive Physical Intervention"

"Restrictive Physical Intervention" (RPI) is the term used to describe interventions where the use of force to control a person's behaviour is employed using bodily contact. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use "reasonable force" to control or restrain pupils in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria.

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence *(this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility)*
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property *(including the child's own property)*

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force"; however, there are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a RPI.

Legal defense for the use of force is based on evidence that the action taken was:

- Reasonable, proportionate and necessary
- In the best interest of the young person

This document takes into account DfE Guidance on Use of Reasonable Force July 2013 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools)

Other Definitions

Restrictive Interventions: any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement (or part of the body), including physical and non-physical measures, used to reduce immediate risk of harm.

Reasonable Force: the minimum degree of physical force necessary, used for the least time, to prevent immediate risk of harm or to conduct a lawful search for a statutory prohibited item.

Restraint: a form of restrictive intervention involving the use of force to hold back, physically prevent, or otherwise restrict a pupil's movement; this includes non-physical restraint (e.g. removal of a mobility aid).

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary, time-limited safety measure in which a pupil is supervised away from others to reduce immediate risk of harm; it must never be used or threatened as punishment.

Significant incident: any use of force that goes beyond appropriate physical contact, including where the degree, duration or context of force is more than minimal.

3. When the Use of RPI May Be Appropriate in Kingdom Christian School

RPIs will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. All staff should focus on de-escalation and preventative strategies rather than focusing solely on reactive strategies. However, there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief RPI that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

4. Who May Use RPI in Kingdom Christian School

All staff are authorised by the headteacher to have control of pupils and **must** be aware of this policy and its implications. If the headteacher has lawfully placed an adult in charge of children, then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other pupils and themselves from risky situations 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.

5. De-escalation and Prevention

Kingdom Christian School is committed to reducing the use of restrictive practices wherever possible. RPI will only be used as a last resort when all reasonable preventative and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted, unless there is an immediate risk of harm.

Staff recognise that behaviour may be a form of communication. Responses will be informed by an understanding of children's developmental, emotional, SEND and trauma-related needs.

- Staff will seek to prevent behaviour escalating wherever possible.
- Positive relationships are central to behaviour management.
- Early intervention is preferred to reactive intervention.
- Restrictive physical intervention will only be considered after de-escalation strategies have been attempted unless immediate danger exists.

Examples of de-escalation:

- Calm verbal reassurance
- Active listening
- Offering choices
- Diversion and distraction
- Time and space
- Reduced audience
- Change of environment
- Use of trusted adults
- Restorative approaches
- Sensory regulation strategies where appropriate

6. Planning for the Use of RPI in Kingdom Christian School

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour. When considering the use of restrictive physical intervention there are only 3 components that can be judged as wrong:

i. A negative impact on the process of breathing
ii. Pain as a direct result of the technique
iii. A sense of violation

Elevated Risks

The following can result in a sense of violation, pain or restricted breathing:

- the use of clothing or belts to restrict movement;
- holding a person lying on their chest or back;
- pushing on the neck, chest or abdomen;
- hyperflexion or basket type holds;
- extending or flexing of joints (pulling and dragging);

The following can result in significant injury:

- forcing a child up or down stairs;
- dragging a child from a confined space
- lifting and carrying
- seclusion, where a person is forced to spend time alone against their will (requires a court order except in an emergency).

The principles relating to RPI are as follows:

- RPI is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- RPI will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met.
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupils' best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for RPI through dialogue and diversion. The pupil will be warned, at their level of understanding, that RPI will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour.
- Staff will use the minimum force necessary to ensure safe outcomes.
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident.
- Every effort will 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 RPI will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control.
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy.
- Escalation will 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 will always be taken into account.
- In developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance.
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of RPI, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

7. Acceptable Forms of Physical Intervention in Kingdom Christian School

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical intervention (PI) 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 gently direct a pupil;
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama, etc);
- First aid and medical treatment
- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils;
- in rare circumstances, when RPI 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).

8. Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a learner confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that learner and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the learner believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a learner into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

We only use seclusion as a safety measure when a learner is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

Seclusion is not used as a threat or punishment. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or willful mis-behaviour. Please see our **Behaviour Policy** for information on our response to mis-behaviour.

During seclusion:

- The pupil will be secluded in a safe place that does not feel threatening or intimidating to them;
- The pupil will be supervised at all times, by at least 1 member of staff or 2 if identified on their EHCP;
- As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave;
- Any incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported using the template forms in the appendix.

9. Considerations for Pupils with SEND and Individual Support Needs

The school recognises the risk that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions. The school also recognises that some pupils without SEND, including those who have experienced past trauma, may require individual support.

The school understands the importance of identifying and understanding underlying triggers of challenging behaviour in order to provide proactive, individualised support and create an inclusive environment.

Where possible, the school will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk, including recognising trigger points where challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and developing proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used.

The school will work with the pupil, parents and relevant professionals to agree preventative and de-escalation strategies to reduce distress and escalation.

Where appropriate, a behaviour support plan will be agreed which outlines necessary adjustments, communication preferences and any agreed parameters for increased physical contact. Such a plan will be reviewed regularly and after any significant incident to ensure it remains effective.

10. Developing a Positive Handling Plan in Kingdom Christian School

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that RPI may be a likely result, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan 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.

The plan 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;
- a record to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used;
- techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a RPI may 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;

The school may also need to take medical advice about the safest way to hold a child with specific medical needs.

See **Appendix A** for a **Physical Handling Plan Pro-forma**.

11. De-brief

Following an incident:

- the pupil will be supported to understand what happened;
- staff will participate in a reflective review;
- triggers and preventative strategies will be identified;
- behaviour support plans will be updated if required;
- parents/carers will be informed.

12. Recording the Use of Force

The process below outlines the procedure in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil.

Incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable after the event, no later than the same day by the staff member(s) involved. 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.

The school will record the following details on the **Restrictive Intervention Record (Appendix B):**

- names of pupil and staff directly involved;
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability;
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained;
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts;
- additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. (For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.)

13. Reporting Incidents to Parents

A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention;

- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance;
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force;
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

In addition to any verbal discussion, schools should communicate this information to parents in writing (for example, via email).

Parents should be invited to a follow-up discussion of the incident to include;

- any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident;
- whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed;
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were;
- what might be done differently in the future.

The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

14. Guidance and Training for Staff

Guidance and training are essential in this area as we need to adopt the best possible practice. At Kingdom Christian school this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:

- awareness of issues for governors, staff and parents;
- behaviour management techniques for all staff;
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff

Training in practical techniques of RPI may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the pupil (or pupils) that they are working with.

Where there is an identified need for such training, staff will be trained by an approved instructor.

(NB there is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques so staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training. However, they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).

15. Complaints

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

Version Control Table

Version	Date	Changes	Approval
1	2026	Re-branded to KCS and updated references in text. Formatting.	SO
2	Nov 2026	Added Contents Table and sections on Seclusion, Consideration for Pupils with SEND and Individual Support Needs, Recording the Use of Force and Reporting Incidents to Parents.	SO

APPENDIX A

POSTIVE HANDLING PLAN

For assessing and managing foreseeable risks for children who are likely to need Restrictive Physical Intervention

School: **……**

Name of child: **……**

Class group: **……**

Name of teacher: **……**

Name of parents/Carers:**……**

Name of Support Service Member/s: **……**

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: ……

Agreed Positive Handling Plan and School Risk Management Strategy		
Focus of measures	**Measures to be employed**	**Level of risk**
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early interventions to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

Agreed by: **Date:**

…….. ……

(Parent/carer)

……..

(Child - if appropriate)

……

(Headteacher)

……

(Class teacher)

……

(Support Service Member/s)

Communication of Positive Handling Plan and School Risk Management Strategy		
Plans and strategies shared with:	**Communication Method**	**Date Actioned**

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

Evaluation of Positive Handling Plan and School Risk Management Strategy		
Measures set out	**Effectiveness in supporting the child**	**Impact on risk**
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early interventions to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		
ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE:		

Plans and strategies evaluated by: **Title:**

…… ……

Date:

……

APPENDIX B

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION RECORD

Pupil Name:			
Pupil Needs: **SEND Status**			
Staff Involved:			
Date	**Time**	**Location**	**Approx Duration of the Intervention**

Brief Account, including:

- **what led up to the incident**
- **identified or potential triggers if known**
- **any preventative or de-escalation strategies used**
- **what type of reasonable force was applied and the degree of force**
- **details of any physical injuries sustained**

Brief Account of why the use of force was necessary in that instant

Techniques used:

Technique	Used	Duration
Turning	☐	
Guiding	☐	
Secure Comfort Hold	☐	
Turn, Gather, Guide	☐	
Single Elbow Hold	☐	
Single Person Double Elbow	☐	
Two-person Figure Four	☐	
Two Person Double Elbow	☐	
Half Shield	☐	

Post-Incident Support Such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impact	
Parents Notified When and how	
Any Actions for Follow-Up	

PLEASE PLACE THIS FORM IN THE PUPIL'S FILE.

This form was created in line with the guidance in 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6943dad6501cdd438f4cf5aa/Restrictive_interventions_including_use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools.pdf