



*Nourishing the fitrah of each unique child*

## Physical Restraints Policy

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:  
***“Verily, Allaah is gentle and he loves gentleness.  
He gives for it what is not given for harshness.”***  
(Sunan Abī Daʿwūd)

Adopted: January 2026	Review date: January 2027	Physical Restraints Coordinator: Sanaa Arshad
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Adopted: January 2026

Review: January 2027

## Physical Restraint Policy

The Education Act, 1997, added a section to the 1996 Act to clarify when teachers may use physical force to restrain a pupil. Restraint occurs when a member of staff uses physical force to restrict a pupil's movement if they are about to cause harm to themselves or others. At Unique Academy, restrictive interventions, including physical restraint and seclusion, are used only to prevent harm, only as a last resort, and always with the least force for the shortest time.

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”, so it is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force; or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case. At Unique Academy, physical restraint will be used:

- Rarely
- As a last resort
- Where another course of action would be likely to fail

When staff have good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary Physical Restraint must not be used to:

- Punish
- Gain pupil compliance with staff instructions
- Cause or threaten hurt
- Oppress, threaten, intimidate or bully

### Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out:

- when restrictive interventions may be used
- how they must be applied safely and lawfully
- the statutory duties for recording and reporting
- expectations for staff training and prevention
- the rights and welfare of pupils and staff

This policy complies with the DfE Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (April 2026) guidance, including statutory duties under:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 & 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

### Key Definitions

**Restrictive Intervention:** Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil’s movement (physical or non-physical).

**Reasonable Force:** Using no more force than necessary, for the least amount of time, to prevent harm.

**Restraint:** A non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises or limits movement (e.g., holding arms to sides).

**Significant Incident:** Any use of force beyond normal physical contact (statutory recording and reporting required).

**Seclusion:** Confining a pupil alone in a space and preventing them from leaving. This is not a disciplinary measure and may only be used to prevent immediate harm.

## When May Pupils Be Restrained?

The main reason for the use of restraint is to keep people safe. Restraint is unlikely to be appropriate in the case of some older children and it may also increase the risk of injury to both staff and pupils. The main grounds for restraint (Criminal Law Act, 1967; The Children Act 1989) are only when necessary to prevent a pupil from:

1. Causing injury to themselves or others
2. Committing a criminal offence
3. Causing serious damage to property
4. Causing serious disorder
5. Leaving a space where doing so would create a safety risk
6. Disrupting a school event, trip or visit

Restrictive interventions must be:

- rare
- a last resort
- proportionate
- time-limited
- in the best interests of the pupil's welfare

Restrictive interventions must never be used to:

- punish
- force compliance
- intimidate, threaten or bully
- cause pain or humiliation

When it is known in advance that restraint may be necessary, an individual strategy will be devised following consultation with parents. Where it is known that a pupil is particularly sensitive about physical contact, staff will be informed in advance through the Special Needs Register.

## Prevention, Early Intervention and De-escalation

Unique Academy prioritises prevention through:

- strong relationships and trust
- predictable routines and calm environments
- staff training in communication, tone, empathy and de-escalation
- environmental adjustments to reduce sensory overload
- early identification of triggers
- behaviour support plans for pupils with additional needs

Staff must always consider:

- whether a less restrictive option is available
- whether intervention may escalate the situation
- the pupil's age, size, SEND, trauma history and vulnerabilities

## How Pupils Are Restrained

Restraint may be used reasonably and in proportion to the circumstances. Warning of intended restraint should be given, when practicable, in a non-threatening manner. Restraint should never be used as a substitute for normal disciplinary measures. Normal disciplinary measures do not include physical contact. Restraint however, might involve holding, separating, pushing or pulling individuals. It should not involve the more restrictive or percussive forms of force.

## Prohibited Techniques

The following are strictly forbidden:

- prone (face-down) restraint
- supine (face-up) restraint
- pressure on the neck, chest, abdomen or joints
- covering the pupil's mouth or nose
- any technique affecting breathing or circulation
- seated holds that compress the torso
- forcing a pupil to the ground
- pain-inducing techniques

If a pupil ends up on the ground unintentionally, staff must immediately reposition to a safer stance.

## Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used:

- to prevent immediate harm
- when a pupil is highly dysregulated and unable to regulate safely
- for the shortest possible time
- with continuous supervision

Seclusion **must not**:

- be used as punishment
- be threatened as a consequence
- be used for non-harmful behaviour

The space must be:

- safe
- non-threatening
- appropriate for the pupil's needs

All seclusion incidents must be:

- **recorded** (statutory)
- **reported to parents the same day** (statutory)

## Types Of Physical Restraints

Obstructing is when a staff member may use their physical presence to obstruct a situation. Obstructing must be used in the general context of trying to engage the pupil in distraction about his/her behaviour, its implications and discontinued if the pupil physically challenges it (when a decision needs to be made as to whether some other form of permitted intervention is still justified).

Holding is to be used to discourage unwanted behaviour. This should involve no more than a hand placed on an arm or shoulder of a pupil by one or both hands and/or possibly the flat of the hand against a pupil's back in order to guide him/her to some other place. This may be necessary to avoid external danger e.g. holding a pupil's hand when crossing a road, to divert a pupil from destructive or disruptive behaviour or to discourage destructive or disruptive behaviour. *"Holding" is distinguished from "physical restraint" largely by the manageable degree of force applied. Holding is intended to discourage. Physical restraint is intended to prevent.*



## Actions To Be Taken After Incident

After any restrictive intervention:

### Immediate

- SLT informed verbally
- Pupil and staff checked for injuries
- Medical assessment provided where needed

### Recording

Our **Physical Restraints Form** (Appendix Two) must be completed the same day.

### Reporting to Parents

Parents must be notified as soon as practicable and no later than the same day, in writing.

### Debrief & Support

Our **Physical Restraints Form** also ensures that the following information is recorded.

- pupil voice
- staff reflection
- wellbeing checks
- support for witnesses
- review of behaviour plan and risk assessment

## Using Reasonable Force

Unique Academy will use reasonable force to:-

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

The school will never use force as a punishment.

## Considerations for Pupils with SEND

Pupils with SEND may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions.

Staff must:

- understand individual triggers
- use reasonable adjustments
- co-produce behaviour support plans with parents
- use visual, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies
- review plans after any significant incident
- complete risk assessments where needed

## Staff Training

The Headteacher ensures staff receive training in:

- de-escalation
- safe and lawful use of force
- SEND-informed practice
- trauma-informed approaches
- recording and reporting duties

Staff who work closely with high-risk pupils receive additional training.

## Telling Parents When Force Has Been Used On Their Child

After reporting to the relevant SLT, class teachers will speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force, whilst taking the following into consideration:

- Pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- degree of force used
- effect on the pupil or member of staff
- the child's age

## What Happens If A Pupil Complains When Force Is Used On Them?

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated, by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law and they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder, this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension will not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Unique Academy will refer to the "Allegations of Abuse against staff" policy where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful investigation.
- Unique Academy will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, Unique Academy will ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- Unique Academy Trustees will consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether to take disciplinary action against the teacher.
- As employers, schools have a duty of care towards their employees. Therefore, we will provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

## What About Other Physical Contact With Pupils

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:-

- When comforting a distressed pupil
- Guide or escort pupils safely
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid

## Further Sources Of Information

Other departmental advice and guidance you may be interested in is detailed below:-

- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders (2002)
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (2003)
- Screening, searching and confiscation – advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies.
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff – guidance for local authorities, headteachers, school staff, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools.

## Monitoring and Governance

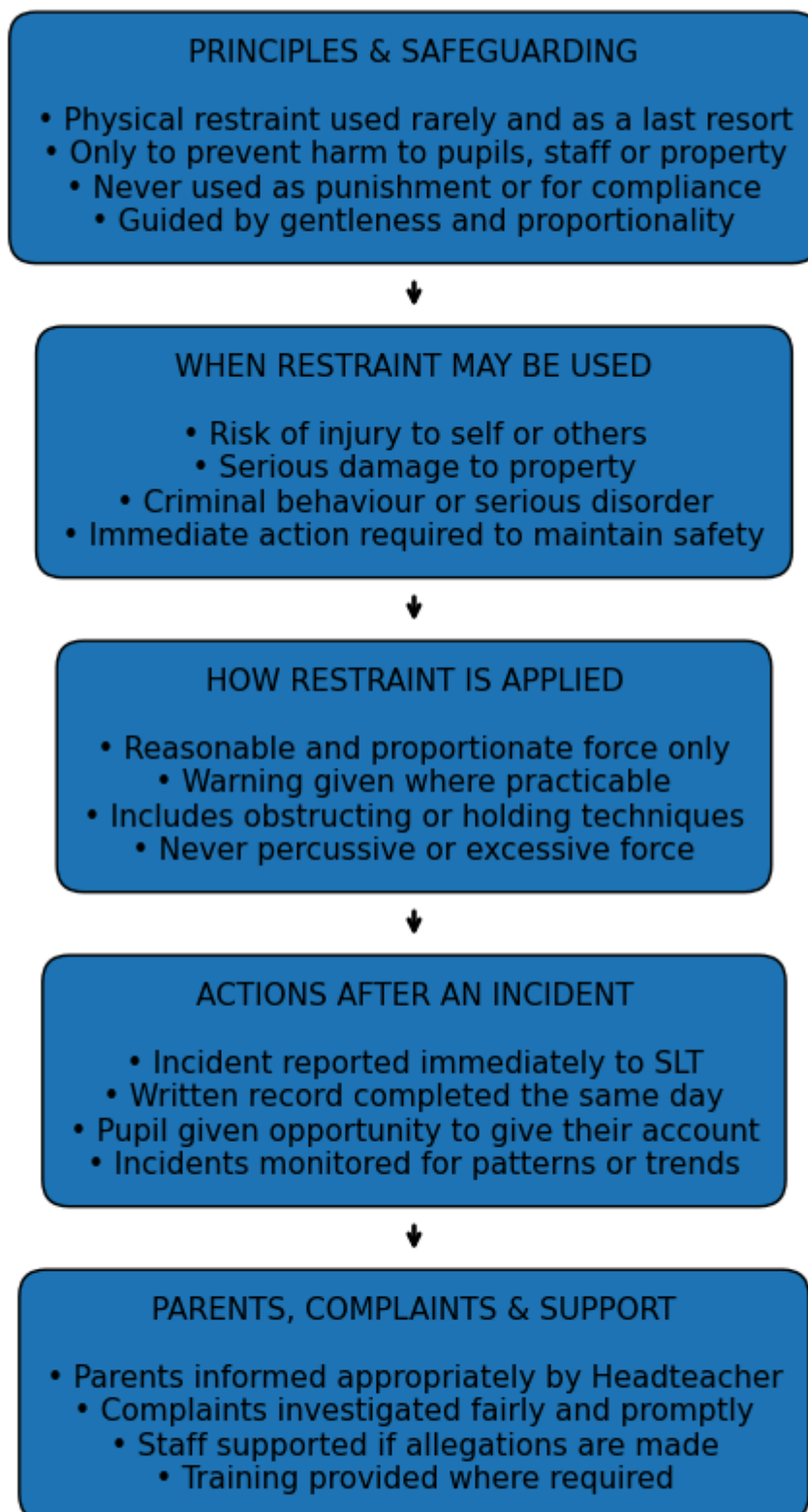
The SLT and Trustees monitor:

- frequency and patterns of incidents
- SEND disproportionality
- environmental triggers
- training needs
- safeguarding implications

Data is used to improve practice and reduce the need for restrictive interventions.



**Physical Restraints Protocols**  
Coordinator: Sanaa Arshad



This diagram summarises the Physical Restraints Policy and shows how restraint is used lawfully, safely and as a last resort.



## Physical Intervention Record

*This form must be completed by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable, and no later than the same day, in line with statutory guidance (DfE, April 2026).*

Pupil's Name:	Class:
Date, time and place the physical intervention occurred:	SEN status code:
Identified SEND / vulnerabilities:	Degree of force:
Duration:	Post-incident medical checks:
Behaviour Support Plan in place?	Yes / No (attach if relevant)

### Antecedents & Triggers

What led up to the incident? Include known or suspected triggers, environmental factors, sensory overload, peer conflict, pain, anxiety, etc.

### Prevention & De-escalation Attempts

The strategy used to defuse the situation. **Record all strategies attempted BEFORE physical intervention was used**, such as:

- verbal de-escalation
- change of adult
- change of environment
- sensory support
- distraction
- offering time/space
- use of behaviour support plan strategies

What exactly happened? (a brief factual account)

Was the pupil warned before any physical intervention?

### Reason for Physical Intervention (Legal Grounds)

Why was physical intervention necessary?

Tick all that apply:

- Preventing injury to the pupil
- Preventing injury to others
- Preventing serious damage to property
- Preventing a criminal offence
- Preventing serious disorder
- Preventing a pupil from leaving where this would risk safety
- Preventing behaviour that disrupts a school event or visit

Explain why physical intervention was necessary and proportionate:

### Description of the Physical Intervention

How was physical intervention carried out? Provide a **brief, factual account**, including:

- what exactly happened
- type of force used
- degree of force
- staff positioning
- whether a warning was given
- how long the intervention lasted
- how the intervention ended

<b>Type of Physical Intervention Used</b>	
<b>Tick all that apply:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding / holding by the arm <input type="checkbox"/> Blocking / obstructing <input type="checkbox"/> Escorting hold <input type="checkbox"/> Standing restraint <input type="checkbox"/> Seated restraint <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe): _____	
<b>Prohibited techniques (for clarity):</b> No prone restraint, no supine restraint, no pressure on neck/chest/abdomen, no covering mouth/nose, no techniques affecting breathing or circulation.	
Who physically intervened?	
How long did the physical intervention last?	
Who was present during the period of physical intervention?	
Please note any marks or injuries noted on the child or member of staff as a result of the incident and how they occurred:	
Pupil's breathing/circulation monitored	Yes / No
Intervention stopped if escalation occurred	Yes / No
Adjustments made for SEND / communication needs	Yes / No
Dignity maintained	Yes / No
Environment safe and appropriate	Yes / No
<b>Injuries &amp; Medical Checks</b>	
Any injuries to pupil?	Yes / No (describe)
Any injuries to staff?	Yes / No (describe)
Medical assessment completed?	Yes / No
Treatment provided	
Please state the Child's response and the outcome of the incident. <b>Record the pupil's account of the incident, using their own words where possible.</b>	
Please state the details of any damage to property and how it occurred.	
<b>Follow-Up Support</b>	
Pupil wellbeing check	
Staff wellbeing check	
Support for witnesses (if applicable)	

Counselling / pastoral referral			
Behaviour Support Plan reviewed?		Yes / No	
Risk assessment updated?		Yes / No	
<b>Parent Notification</b>			
Parents must be informed <b>as soon as practicable and no later than the same day.</b>			
Date & Time Parents Notified			
Method (email/phone/online system)			
Summary of information shared			
Follow-up meeting offered?		Yes / No	
<b>Staff Reflection</b>			
<b>What happened and why?</b>			
<b>What could help prevent recurrence? (To be completed by staff involved.)</b>			
<b>Senior Leader Review</b>			
<b>(To be completed by SLT member not involved in the incident.)</b>			
SLT Reviewer Name			
Review Date			
Was the intervention lawful, necessary and proportionate?		Yes / No	
Any concerns about practice?			
Required actions (training, environment changes, plan updates)			
<b>Signatures</b>			
<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Staff Completing Form</b>			
<b>Witnessing Staff</b>			
<b>SLT Reviewer</b>			
<i>On completion please immediately hand this form to the Head for the phase that the child is in. This must be completed before the end of the school day.</i>			



## Seclusion Incident Record

<b>Pupil's Name:</b>	<b>Class:</b>
<b>SEN Status Code:</b>	
<b>Identified SEND / vulnerabilities:</b>	
<b>Behaviour Support Plan in place?</b>	<b>Yes / No (attach if relevant)</b>
<b>Date of Incident:</b>	
<b>Start Time:</b>	<b>End Time:</b>
<b>Total Duration:</b>	<b>Location of Seclusion:</b>
<b>Staff Member(s) Involved:</b>	
<b>Staff Member Supervising Seclusion:</b>	
<b>Reason for Seclusion</b> <b>Describe the immediate risk of harm that required seclusion.</b> (Seclusion may only be used as a <i>safety measure</i> when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation)	
What risk was present? Why was seclusion necessary? Why were less restrictive options not sufficient?	
<b>Antecedents &amp; Triggers</b> <b>What led up to the incident?</b> Include known or suspected triggers, environmental factors, sensory overload, peer conflict, pain, anxiety, etc.	
<b>Prevention &amp; De-escalation Attempts</b> <b>Record all strategies attempted BEFORE seclusion was used, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● verbal de-escalation</li> <li>● change of adult</li> <li>● change of environment</li> <li>● sensory support</li> <li>● distraction</li> <li>● offering time/space</li> <li>● use of behaviour support plan strategies</li> </ul>	
Which strategies were used? Why were they not sufficient to reduce risk?	
<b>Description of the Seclusion</b> Provide a brief, factual account including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how the pupil was guided to the space</li> <li>● whether they entered voluntarily or with support</li> <li>● how they were prevented from leaving (e.g., staff presence, blocking exit)</li> <li>● pupil's presentation during seclusion</li> </ul>	

<b>Safety &amp; Welfare During Seclusion</b>	
Pupil supervised at all times	Yes / No
Environment safe, non-threatening	Yes / No
Communication used to explain what was happening	Yes / No
Adjustments made for SEND / communication needs	Yes / No
Was the pupil's breathing, circulation, or dignity at any point compromised?	Yes / No (if yes, explain)
<b>Ending the Seclusion</b> Describe how the risk reduced and how the pupil was supported to leave the space.	
<b>Injuries &amp; Medical Checks</b>	
Any injuries to pupil?	Yes / No (describe)
Any injuries to staff?	Yes / No (describe)
Medical assessment completed?	Yes / No
Treatment provided	
<b>Pupil Voice</b> Record the pupil's account of the incident, using their own words where possible.	
<b>Staff Reflection</b> What happened and why? What could help prevent recurrence? (To be completed by staff involved.)	
<b>Follow-Up Support</b>	
Pupil wellbeing check	
Staff wellbeing check	
Support for witnesses (if applicable)	
Counselling / pastoral referral	
Behaviour Support Plan reviewed?	Yes / No
Risk assessment updated?	Yes / No
<b>Parent Notification</b> Parents must be informed as soon as practicable and no later than the same day.	
Date & Time Parents Notified	
Method (email/phone/online system)	
Summary of information shared	
Follow-up meeting offered?	Yes / No

**Senior Leader Review**  
 (To be completed by SLT member not involved in the incident.)

<b>SLT Reviewer Name</b>	
Review Date	
Was seclusion used lawfully and proportionately?	Yes / No
Any concerns about practice?	
Required actions (training, environment changes, plan updates)	

**Signatures**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Staff Completing Form</b>			
<b>Supervising Staff</b>			
<b>SLT Reviewer</b>			

