# Physical Interventions and Restraints Policy

2026 - 2027

**‘Because Children Deserve Better’**

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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to provide a framework for the use of physical interventions, including restraints, required to create a school environment where everyone feels, and is, safe.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and further guidance issued by the DfE in April 2026 (Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools – Guidance for schools in England) enables Pivot staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a learner from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing any offence (or, for a learner under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older learner)
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including themself)
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at Pivot settings or among any learners receiving education at Pivot, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

The statutory power conferred by Section 93 is in addition to the common law power of any citizen in an emergency to use reasonable force in self-defence, to prevent another person from being injured or committing a criminal offence. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force, and each case must be judged on its circumstances and those exercising the power to use force must also take proper account of any particular special educational need and/or disability.

DfE Guidance and The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 state that **schools cannot use force as a punishment.** Also, whilst force can be used to search for and confiscate prohibited items it **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the school rules. (See Screening, Searching and Confiscation policy – 25/26)

**Who can use reasonable force?**

The staff to which this power applies are defined in Section 95 of the Act as:

- All members of Pivot staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of learners such as agency staff (with appropriate training)

**The types of force which are deemed to be reasonable**

- Passive physical contact resulting from standing between two learners or blocking a learner's path;
- Active physical contact such as leading a learner by the hand or arm; ushering a learner away by placing a hand in the centre of their back; or, in more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds.

**Other physical contact with learners**

The Department for Education says that it is not illegal to touch a learner and that there are occasions when physical contact with a learner is 'proper and necessary'.

Examples of where touching a learner might be proper or necessary include:

- Holding the hand of the child
- When comforting a distressed learner
- When congratulating or praising a learner
- When demonstrating physical skills e.g. musical instrument, during PE lessons, handwriting
- When giving first aid

**Minimising the need to use force**

Use of force is only used as a last resort and procedures are in place in Pivot provisions to create a calm and orderly environment within a supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. Effective relationships are developed between staff and learners. Personal, Social, Health Education and Zones of Regulation activities support learners in managing conflict and coping with feelings. Staff are also given guidance and training in how to support learner behaviour.

## 3. Physical interventions

At Pivot we define a physical intervention as any reasonable use of physical support used to help a learner who is building towards crisis. This can be a simple low level prompt touch or a restraint and everything in between. The decision on whether to physically intervene is determined by the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances and the current assessment of risk. This assessment should include the risk to the learner, themselves and others. Staff are trained in using Team Teach techniques to support their practice for this. Within each site there are advanced practitioners in Team Teach who have received specific training on four person holds including ground holds. If there is an incident in school that is escalating to an extent that a four person hold is required to prevent further injury or damage only, an advanced practitioner or a member of senior leadership team can authorise the hold and should be present in the area at all times to monitor and advise.

## 4. Restraints

Restraint means to hold back physically or to support a learner to safety using appropriate physical intervention. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances and is always in response to a safety concern. Staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in some cases, it may not always be possible to avoid injuries.

**What to do in circumstances when the use of physical restraint is needed**

- Staff should not hesitate to act *in a necessary, reasonable and proportionate manner* provided they follow the guidelines in this policy.
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the learner that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- A calm and measured approach to the learner is required by staff.
- In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation.
- Following a restraint, learners should be closely monitored by a member of staff and where applicable, checked by a first aider once the situation is safe to do so.

## 5. Seclusion

At Pivot we work on nurture and relational principles. We do not have seclusion rooms however we do have low arousal areas that learners can access if they are feeling overwhelmed.

Seclusion is defined as - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a learner confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving and should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a learner is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the learner is not acting with intent.

Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which the learner is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the learner. The learner should always be supervised during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the learner should be allowed to leave. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported to parents as detailed in the recording and reporting section of this policy.

## 6. Recording and reporting

Following an incident that required physical intervention, staff should consider what and how this information needs recording and reporting depending on the type of intervention. This should be in accordance with this policy.

**Recording Incidents**

- Minor or everyday use of reasonable force is recorded in every day behaviour logs. For example, supporting and guiding a learner into the building after break to ensure their safety.
- More serious incidents involving the use of physical restraint must be reported to the **Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible after the incident.** These must be recorded on Arbor (Pivot MIS) ensuring staff 'add a physical intervention' to the behaviour incident log and complete a 'Restraint Record Sheet' (Appendix 2) attaching it to the Arbor log.
- Incidents of low arousal areas in provisions being used as seclusion area must be reported to Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible after the incident. These must be recorded on Arbor (Pivot MIS).

**Informing others**

After a restraint or a seclusion, the following people **must** be informed within **24 hours** of the incident, leaders should prioritise these conversations and we would strive for them to happen on the same day:

- Parent/carers by phone call and email via the schools MIS system (Arbor)
- If the learner has a social worker, they should be informed by phone call and email via the schools MIS system (Arbor)
- If the learner is a Looked After Child, the social worker, the corporate parent (children's social care) will be notified as well as the Head of the Virtual School by phone call and email via the schools MIS system (Arbor)

**Post incident support**

Care is taken after an incident to ensure both staff and learners are supported including meeting immediate medical needs, rebuilding relationships and reflecting on the incident so that lessons can be learned. These restorative conversations should be documented in an appropriate way and included as part of the incident report on Arbor for learners. Staff should have a separate conversation with a senior member of staff using the form in appendix 1 and these should be forwarded to HR and filed in their personnel files. Headteachers notify the Directors of incidents, and Directors monitor incidents where physical restraint has been used and consider the implications, agreeing any necessary actions required.

**Complaints and allegations**

If a complaint is made, it is considered in relation to Pivot's complaints procedure and guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse by staff. Further guidance is available in 'Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, Governing Bodies and Staff' - DfE document.

## 7. Staff training

All staff working with learners are expected to be trained in Team Teach Positive Behaviour Training: Level 2 as a minimum and each academy will have staff who are trained in Advanced Modules or hold Intermediate or Advanced trainer certificates. It is an expectation that new staff complete this training during their probation period if they do not hold a valid certificate.

Staff also receive further targeted training throughout their employment to support them to work effectively with our learners in line with the Pivot Training and Development Statement.

## 8. Linked policies

This behaviour policy is linked to the following policies:

- Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Screening, Searching and Confiscation Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Training and Development Statement

## 9. Appendix 1: Staff follow up meeting RPE form

| | |
|---|---|
| **Staff name:** | **Date:** |
| **Incident date:** | **SLT initials:** |
| How are you feeling following the incident? | |
| Have you been injured? Yes / No (please circle)<br><br>If yes, how did the injury occur?<br><br>If yes, have you recorded it? (please highlight) On Arbor On the RPI Form | |
| What do you think could be implemented to avoid this happening again in the future? | |
| How would you rate the effectiveness of the support offered during the incident?<br><br>Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Poor ☐ | |
| Do you need any further support after this incident? | |
| SLT notes from meeting: | |
| Staff signature: | Full name: |
| SLT signature: | Full name: |

Once completed please return to HR.

## 10. Appendix 2: Restraint record sheet

| Restraint record sheet | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Please complete all sections of the form following a restraint. Once complete attach to the relevant Arbor incident entry. If you need help with completing it, please see the Pastoral and Welfare Lead in your setting. | | | | | |
| Seen by Headteacher (initials): | | Date: | | | |
| Learner's name: | | Class: | | Date: | |
| | | Time: | | Length of restraint: | |
| Place/activity: | | | | | |
| Staff involved: | | | | | |
| Witnesses: | | | | | |
| **Describe the lead up to the incident, include all de-escalation techniques you have used.** | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **What did you try to do to avoid the restraint?** De-escalation (tick any strategies you used) | | | | | |
| Verbal advice and support | | Diversion | | Time out - offered | |
| Firm clear directions | | Reassurance | | Time out - directed | |
| Zones of Regulation toolbox | | Tactical ignoring | | Reminder of consequences | |
| Limited choices | | Prompt touch | | Reminders of success | |
| Distraction | | Take-up time | | Others: | |
| **Reason for restraint**: to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do | | | | | |
| Committing a criminal offense | | | Damage to property (including their own) | | |
| Injury to self or others | | | Prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline | | |
| **What happened following de-escalation:** (include your dynamic risk assessment) | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| **Physical intervention strategies**:(Tick any strategies which you used) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shepherd/steering | | Friendly escort (Two person) | |
| Help hug/sideways hug | | Single elbow (Two person) | |
| Beanbag | | Figure of four (Two person) | |
| Double-elbow | | Double-elbow (Two person) | |
| Half shield | | Sitting friendly escort (Two person) | |
| Full shield | | Ground Hold (Four Person) | |

| **Injuries:** (the first questions in each column must be completed) | |
|---|---|
| Learner checked for injuries by a member of staff? Yes No | Injury to staff?<br>Yes No |
| Any injuries noted?<br>Yes No | Name of staff injured: |
| Description of injury: | Type of injury: |
| Referred to first aider? | Name of staff injured: |
| Name of first aider: | Type of injury: |
| Treatment given (if applicable) | Treatment given (if applicable) |

| **Follow up to incident**: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Access to low arousal space | Returned to class | Completed missed work |
| SENCO informed | Debrief with child | Other: |
| **Parents/carers informed by:** | | |
| Phone call by (name): | Letter sent by (name): | Face to face by (name): |
| Email sent via Arbor by (name): | Electronic Message sent by: | Other, please specify: |

| **Other relevant paperwork completed/updated** (tick all applicable): | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arbor Entry | Positive Handling Plan | Behaviour Monitoring Sheet | Other: |
| First Aid Log | Individual Pupil Risk Assessment | Restorative conversations record | |
| Staff signature: | | Date: | |