



GLASTONBURY THORN SCHOOL

‘Every day getting better in every way’

USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Origin	GTS
Committee	FGB
Date policy adopted	February 2016
Date policy reviewed	April 2026
Date for next review	April 2027

Revision History			
Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1	October 2022	Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher changed to Assistant Headteacher Bound and Numbered book is now located in the Headteacher's office
2	July 2024	Headteacher	Use of restricted physical restraint – role amendments
3	November 25	Headteacher	No changes
4	April 2026	J Cursley	Changes (yellow) in line with new legal guidelines

Procedures for Physical Contact with Children

The IRSC *Guidance for Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings* states that 'There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they do so only in ways appropriate to their professional role.'

In our school, 'appropriate physical contact' is viewed as an action that offers support to the child. This may include administering first aid, offering reassurance or comfort if a child is distressed, or supporting safe participation in activities such as PE.

It is recognised that some children, particularly younger pupils and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), may require more frequent or adapted physical contact to support their learning and wellbeing.

All physical contact must be:

- appropriate to the situation
- in the child's best interests
- respectful of dignity and personal space
- proportionate and for the minimum time necessary

Use of Restrictive Physical Restraint

The staff team at Glastonbury Thorn accept and understand that physical restraint is only used as a last resort to prevent a pupil from:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property (including the pupils' own property)
- engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.

Other strategies and techniques are used before the application of restraint. Please refer to our school's Behaviour policy for further information on our expectations for behaviour and means by which we seek to reduce the likelihood of situations occurring which necessitate the use of physical restraint.

Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allows authorised staff to use reasonable force.

At Glastonbury Thorn School, the Headteacher authorises trained staff to use reasonable force where necessary. Priority is given to staff who have received **Positive Handling / Restrictive Intervention training**.

The school adopts the term **restrictive intervention**, in line with Department for Education guidance "*Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (2026)*".

Restrictive intervention is defined as **any action that limits a pupil's movement or liberty**, including physical restraint and, where necessary, seclusion.

In our school, staff and governors have agreed that the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and Teaching Assistants working with our high-needs children who have received specific Positive Handling training including the use of physical restraint, are authorised to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in the following three broad categories:

- where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
- where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property
- where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

The staff team at Glastonbury Thorn School recognise that:

- Restrictive intervention is **always a last resort**
- A **preventative and de-escalation approach** must be used first
- Any intervention must be:
 - **necessary**
 - **reasonable**
 - **proportionate**
 - **for the shortest time possible**
- Restrictive intervention must **never be used as a punishment**

Staff will be authorised, following specific Positive Handling training.

Some examples of the specific situations that may occur are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- pupils are fighting
- a pupil is engaged in, or on the verge of committing damage or vandalism to property
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which they may have or cause an accident likely to hurt themselves or others
- a pupil absconds or tries to leave school
- a pupil persistently refused to obey an order to leave a classroom
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

This includes situations where there is:

- an **immediate risk of harm**, or
- a **developing risk of harm or serious disruption**

If any of the authorised staff are aware a situation is developing, the following steps should be taken:

- encourage the pupil to stop
- keep calm and do not give the impression that you have lost your temper
- send for assistance
- send the other pupils away if possible
- tell the pupil you are restraining them to avoid them harming themselves, others or property. Try to ensure you have adult witnesses who can see and hear what is taking place
- physical restraint should be an act of care and control
- minimum force should be used and only as necessary
- attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident
- be sensitive of your own strength and body weight
- inform the Headteacher if they have not been involved

- record the incident fully in the Bound and Numbered book stored in the Headteacher's office

The school recognises that pupils with:

- SEND
- communication needs
- social, emotional or mental health needs

may be more vulnerable to restrictive interventions.

Staff will:

- use individualised approaches
- prioritise trauma-informed practice
- seek to reduce the need for intervention over time

Application of Restraint

Physical intervention can take several forms. It may involve staff:

- physically interposing themselves between pupils
- blocking a pupils' path
- holding
- pushing or pulling to separate pupils engaging in acts of aggression
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- in extreme instances and only following training using more restrictive holds.

As part of the response:

- explain that intervention is to **keep them and others safe**
- maintain communication throughout
- use **minimum force for minimum time**
- remain aware of own physical strength
- continuously assess risk and **release as soon as safe to do so**
- ensure the child's **breathing and wellbeing are not compromised**

In all instances the contact must be for the minimum amount of time necessary and the use of trained holds are only where necessary and appropriate

The following must **never be used**:

- any technique that restricts breathing
- pressure on the neck, chest, or abdomen
- any position that could cause harm or distress

Whenever possible staff should seek the support of the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher who will lead with any intervention that may be necessary.

Seclusion

Seclusion (removing a pupil to a space where they cannot leave freely) will:

- only be used for **safety reasons**, not as a sanction
- be **closely supervised at all times**
- last for the **shortest possible duration**
- be recorded and reported as a restrictive intervention

Positive Handling Plans

It is good practice to develop a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) for any child whose behaviour poses a risk of physical intervention. These must:

- reflect **individual risk assessments**
- prioritise **de-escalation and prevention strategies**
- be regularly reviewed with parents and relevant professionals

An example can be found in Appendix 1. The PHP should be shared with and supported by the parents/carers of the child.

Recording Incidents

All incidents of restrictive physical intervention must be reported immediately to the Headteacher, or Assistant Headteacher and recorded in full in the Bound and Numbered book in the Headteacher's Office.

All **significant restrictive interventions** must be:

- recorded **as soon as possible (preferably the same day)**
- reported to the Headteacher/DSL

This should include:

- the name of the pupil(s) involved and when and where the incident took place
- the names of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident
- the reason that restraint was necessary
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to diffuse or calm the situation, the degree of restraint used, how it was applied and for how long
- the pupil's response and the outcome of the incident
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, or a member of staff and of any damage to property
- notifying parents

Staff should also seek advice from a representative of their professional association/union and keep a copy of the report.

Involving Parents

Parents must be informed of an incident involving their child. This will be done by the Headteacher or most senior member of staff available by phone as soon as possible or at the end of the school day. If parents cannot be contacted by phone they will be informed in writing by post. Parents must also receive a copy of the report in the Bound and Numbered book.

Appendix 1

GLASTONBURY THORN SCHOOL POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN (PHP)

Name of child:

Class / Year:

Positives: (What the child is good at / likes doing – eg adult attention, playtime, drawing, ICT etc)

Triggers: (Common situations which have led to problems in the past/behaviours which require action – eg not getting own way, not getting food quick enough, waiting for a turn, being on playground, new experiences, change etc)

Behaviours: (eg screaming, pushing, hitting, trashing equipment/resources etc)

Modifications to environment/routines: (What can we do to prevent problems from arising eg clear structure, preparing child for change, clear boundaries/choices etc)

Preferred de-escalation strategies (What tends to calm things down eg verbal advice, planned ignoring, choices offered, distraction, withdrawal, involve new person, reassurance etc)

Preferred physical techniques: (To be used as a last resort – refer to the School Staff Safety Positive Handling in Schools Handbook)

PTO

This plan has been shared with:

Staff:

Names :	Roles
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External agencies:

Names	Roles
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Parents:

Date:

Review Date: