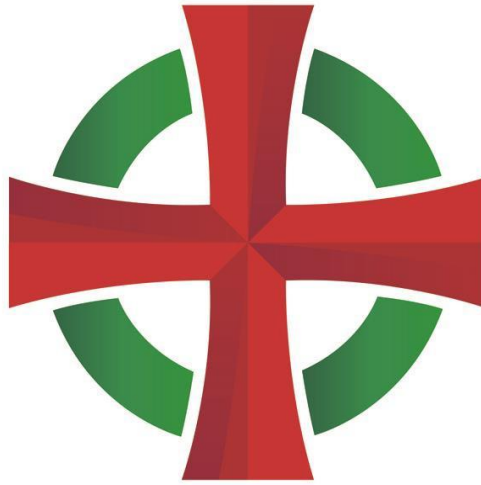




Holy Cross

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Restrictive Interventions and the Use of Reasonable Force

'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Safeguard pupils and staff by setting clear expectations for the safe use of restrictive interventions
- Ensure that any use of reasonable force is lawful, proportionate, necessary, and in the best interests of the pupil
- Promote a culture of de-escalation, positive behaviour support, and preventative practice
- Provide staff with clarity on their responsibilities, training requirements, reporting duties, and accountability

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE guidance: *Use of Reasonable Force and Behaviour in Schools*
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Staff must act within these frameworks at all times.

3. Definitions

3.1 Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention is any action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty, or freedom to act. This includes:

- **Physical restraint:** direct physical contact to prevent movement
- **Mechanical restraint:** not used in Holy Cross
- **Seclusion:** forcing a pupil to spend time alone in a locked room (not permitted)
- **Time-out:** supervised removal from a situation to support regulation (permitted when used appropriately)

3.2 Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to using **the minimum physical force necessary** to prevent harm, stop dangerous behaviour, or protect property. It must be:

- **Proportionate** to the risk
- **Necessary** to achieve a legitimate aim
- **Time-limited**, ending as soon as the risk reduces

4. When Reasonable Force may be used

Staff may use reasonable force **only when absolutely necessary**, for example to:

- Prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others
- Stop a pupil from seriously damaging property
- Prevent a pupil from leaving a supervised area when doing so would place them at significant risk
- Break up a physical fight
- Remove a pupil from a situation where their behaviour poses immediate danger

Reasonable force **must never** be used:

- As a punishment
- To cause pain, humiliation, or fear
- When a safer alternative is available

5. Principles Governing all Restrictive Interventions

5.1 Last Resort

Restrictive interventions are used only when:

- All appropriate de-escalation strategies have been attempted or are clearly unsafe
- There is an immediate risk of harm

5.2 Minimal Force

Staff must use the **least restrictive** intervention for the **shortest possible time**.

5.3 Duty of Care

Staff have a duty to act when a pupil is at risk, but also a duty to avoid unnecessary harm

5.4 Respect and Dignity

At all times, staff must:

- Preserve the pupil's dignity
- Use calm, reassuring communication
- Avoid positions or holds that restrict breathing or increase distress

5.5 Trauma-Informed Practice

Staff should consider:

- The pupil's known needs, triggers, and history
- The potential emotional impact of physical intervention

6. Staff Training

- Staff receive accredited behaviour support and physical intervention training
- All staff receive annual training in de-escalation, conflict management, and positive behaviour support
- Training records are maintained by the school

7. Reporting and Recording

7.1 Immediate Actions

After any restrictive intervention:

- The pupil must be checked for injury
- Staff involved must report the incident to the Headteacher or designated senior leader

7.2 Written Record

A written report must be completed **on the same day**, including:

- Description of the incident and triggers
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Reason for using force
- Type of intervention used
- Duration of intervention
- Names of staff and pupils involved
- Any injuries or damage
- Follow-up actions

7.3 Informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers must be informed **as soon as reasonably possible**, ideally on the same day

8. Post-Incident Support

The school will:

- Provide emotional support to the pupil
- Offer a debrief for staff involved
- Review the pupil's behaviour plan or risk assessment if one is in place
- Consider whether additional support or adjustments are needed

9. Risk Assessments and Behaviour Plans

For pupils with known behavioural risks:

- Individual risk assessments will be created and reviewed regularly
- Plans will outline triggers, preventative strategies, and agreed interventions
- Parents and relevant professionals will be involved in planning

10. Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 Headteacher

- Ensures the policy is implemented and reviewed
- Ensures staff receive appropriate training
- Oversees incident reporting and monitoring

10.2 Staff

- Follow the policy and training
- Use de-escalation as the primary approach
- Report and record incidents accurately

10.3 Governors

- Monitor the implementation of the policy
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance

11. Monitoring and Review

- All incidents involving restrictive interventions are monitored for patterns, frequency, and proportionality
- The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes

12. Communication of the Policy

The policy will be:

- Published on the school website
- Shared with all staff
- Available to parents on request
- Included in staff induction

Last updated: Summer 2026

Date of review: Summer 2027