WHITE HOUSE SCHOOL

Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Prepared by: Marci Osborn
Date: September 2026

CAVENDISH EDUCATION

Contents:

1. Context 3
2. Aims 4
3. Legislation and Guidance 4
4. Definitions 5
5. Positive Behaviour Support 6
6. PRICE Training 7
7. Using Reasonable Force 7
8. Post-Incident Support and Review 9
9. Recording and Reporting 10
10. Risk Assessment for Physical Intervention 10
11. Code of Conduct 11
12. Safeguarding Considerations 11
13. Monitoring arrangements 11
14. Links with other policies 11

Appendix 1: Arbor Recording System 13

1. Context

The White House School is an independent specialist school for children and young people with additional and complex needs. We are part of Cavendish Education and are committed to transforming lives through highly personalised education, therapeutic support and ambitious teaching.

Our vision is **"Making Learning Possible Again."** We create a school where pupils feel safe, belong, achieve and thrive. Through removing barriers to learning, rebuilding confidence and fostering positive relationships, we empower every pupil to realise their potential and prepare for successful and fulfilling lives beyond school.

Our mission is to provide a nurturing, ambitious and mindful education that supports both academic progress and personal growth. Guided by our whole-school ethos of **Healthy Minds, Happy Hearts**, we create the conditions for every pupil to become **Ready to Learn and Prepared for Life**.

Everything we do is underpinned by our core values:

- **Ambition** – developing curiosity, courage and aspiration.
- **Resilience** – developing confidence, character and perseverance.
- **Community** – demonstrating kindness, integrity and respect.

We believe that pupils thrive when they feel safe, understood and valued. Our culture is built upon strong relationships, high expectations and a commitment to seeing the strengths and potential in every child. We are deeply nurturing without lowering expectations and remain unashamedly ambitious for every pupil.

Our practice is informed by the National Autistic Society's **SPELL Framework**, which promotes:

- Structure and predictability;
- Positive approaches and expectations;
- Empathy and understanding;
- Low arousal environments;
- Strong links between school, home and professionals.

Alongside this, we adopt a trauma-informed, relational and therapeutic approach across all aspects of school life. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and believe that pupils do well when they can. Our role is to understand the barriers they face and provide the support, strategies and relationships that enable them to succeed.

At The White House School:

- Every interaction is viewed as an intervention.
- Every adult is an emotionally available adult.
- Relationships come first.
- Emotional readiness is the foundation for learning.

We support pupils to develop emotional regulation, communication, independence and social understanding through consistent relational practice, personalised support and integrated therapeutic approaches. Emotional regulation is explicitly taught through co-regulation, sensory support, movement opportunities and personalised regulation strategies. Pupils are encouraged to understand themselves, develop resilience and build the skills needed to navigate life successfully.

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. We recognise the additional vulnerabilities that many pupils with special educational needs may experience and maintain a culture of vigilance, care and advocacy. We place the child at the centre of decision-making, listen to pupil voice in all its forms and work closely with families and external agencies to promote safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes.

Through ambitious and adapted teaching, meaningful relationships, therapeutic support and a culture of belonging, we help pupils feel safe, build confidence, achieve success and thrive both in school and beyond.

2. Aims

The White House School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary.

The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance 2026
- Behaviour and discipline in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff, 2016

- Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024
- Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK
- Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026

4. Definitions

These definitions are from the Department for Education's most recent guidance on the use of reasonable force in schools:

Restrictive intervention
A means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force
A term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident
Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion
A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint
A term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

Holding
Holding refers to the firm use of physical contact by one member of staff where the pupil retains **some freedom of movement** and would be able to withdraw or leave if determined enough. The intention is to calm, prompt or guide the pupil safely, not to overpower them.

Touching
Touching refers to **minimal and non-restrictive physical contact** used to lead, guide, block or usher a pupil. It allows a high degree of freedom and mobility and is used only for brief and proportionate intervention.

Presence
Presence involves the use of **non-contact, graduated** strategies to influence a pupil's behaviour, such as standing in front of them, blocking a doorway, or positioning oneself appropriately to encourage compliance. The pupil retains the freedom to move or leave.

Injury
For the purposes of this policy, injury refers to **significant harm**, including (but not limited to) actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, serious risk to the lives of others or the individual themselves, or behaviour that could lead to serious or life-threatening consequences (e.g. reckless behaviour or self-poisoning).

5. Positive Behaviour Support

The White House School promotes positive behaviour through the principles of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), an evidence-based approach that focuses on understanding the underlying causes of behaviour, teaching new skills, and using proactive strategies to support students in developing positive behaviours.

Our approach prioritises creating a calm, structured and supportive environment, where high and consistent expectations are applied and the language of PBS is used by all staff. Through PBS, students are encouraged to develop self-regulation, independence, and social and emotional skills, enabling them to participate fully in school life and their wider communities.

PBS at The White House School emphasises:

- Functional assessment: understanding why behaviour occurs and what it communicates about student needs.
- Preventative strategies: modifying environments and routines to reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviour.
- Teaching alternative skills: equipping students with social, emotional, and communication strategies to replace challenging behaviours.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviour: recognising and rewarding effort, cooperation, and achievement.
- Consistent staff response: ensuring that all adults respond predictably, calmly, and consistently to behaviour incidents.

PBS recognises that challenging behaviour can be a form of communication, particularly for pupils with SEND, and aims to address the root cause rather than simply reacting to incidents. This reduces the need for restrictive practices, improves student well-being, and supports long-term learning outcomes.

Staff are trained to take a proactive approach to low-level disruption and to ensure students remain on task, providing the best opportunities to learn effectively. Physical interventions or restrictive practices are only used as a last resort, to

maintain safety, and are carefully recorded, reviewed, and reflected upon to ensure they remain proportionate, necessary, and consistent with DfE guidance.

6. PRICE Training

All staff receive specialist training in PBS through PRICE (https://www.pricetraining.co.uk/), which is certified by BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities) and the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN). BILD is a leading professional body promoting best practice for supporting people with learning disabilities, while RRN sets standards for safe, evidence-based behaviour support and restraint reduction. This dual certification ensures that our staff receive high-quality, professional training that is widely recognised in the field of specialist education and behaviour support.

PRICE Training focuses on:

- Primary strategies: addressing student needs proactively to prevent difficulties from arising.
- Secondary strategies: recognising early behavioural signs and responding effectively to prevent escalation.
- Non-restrictive tertiary strategies: using de-escalation, diversion, distraction, and strategic capitulation to safely manage challenging behaviour.
- Safe breakaway techniques: responding to unwanted physical contact while prioritising safety.

In line with RRN guidance, the school emphasises proactive and de-escalatory approaches to crises. All staff are PRICE trained, and physical restraint is high-risk and used only as a last resort to reduce immediate threats to the safety of an individual or group.

7. Using Reasonable Force

Who can use reasonable force?
All members of school staff have authority to use reasonable force if needed according to the relevant statutory guidance. This applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?
Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from harming themselves or others, damaging property, or causing serious disruption. Examples of situations where reasonable force may be appropriate include:

- Preventing a pupil from behaving in an unsafe way during a school event, trip, or visit.

- Preventing a pupil from hurting staff or another pupil or stopping a fight in the playground.
- Restraining a pupil who is at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.
Staff always follow plans and guidelines when using reasonable force to avoid causing injury. However, in extreme situations, it may not always be possible to prevent injury while ensuring the safety of the pupil or others. For this reason, a risk assessment is carried out on each pupil needing physical intervention and this is added to the pupil's positive behaviour support plan.

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

Seclusion
Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving. It should only be used as a safety measure to protect themselves and others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be timed, recorded and reported. Seclusion will only be used as a last resort intervention to keep staff and pupils safe, when every other means has been exhausted. It will be a planned use and written on positive behaviour support plans. All incidents involving the use of seclusion are reported to parents in writing, on the same day.

Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate
There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and they should know this option may be available to them. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

Is it necessary?
• Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation. In line with the pupil's positive behaviour support plan.
• Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.

• Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?
• Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
• If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
• Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Considering the pupils' welfare
• Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
• Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
• Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
• For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
• Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped. A pupil debrief will happen after every incident to include the pupil's feelings, relation repair and things to do differently next time. This is recorded on the incident sheet.

8. Post-Incident Support and Review

In the event that physical intervention has been required as an absolute last resort, the following actions will be undertaken without delay:

- Immediate support will be provided for staff and pupils involved, including:
  - medical checks (where required)
  - a debrief facilitated by the PBS Lead

- The incident will be recorded on IRIS and reported to parents in writing.

- The PBS Lead will:
  - review the incident record

- meet with the staff and pupils involved for an initial debrief
- Reflect and complete the incident form
- Bring each incident to HPG meeting for discussion with SLT
- Discuss with class team any actions or strategies and interventions needed for the pupil

- The Headteacher will:
- review whether the intervention was necessary, safe and proportionate
- take further action (e.g. additional training or disciplinary processes) if the intervention is *not* deemed appropriate

- A summary of all incidents and physical intervention will be shared with the School Board at the next scheduled meeting.

- Incidents will also be reviewed to:
- identify lessons learned
- refine individual behaviour support plans
- improve preventative measures moving forward

- Incident data will be analysed by the Senior Leadership Team and School Board Members to:
- identify trends
- highlight training needs
- monitor for any disproportionate use of intervention affecting specific pupil groups

9. Recording and Reporting

All 'significant incidents' where reasonable force or seclusion are used will be recorded, reported and shared with parents, in writing, on the same day. A 'significant incident' is one that goes beyond ordinary appropriate contact, such as guiding or comforting.

The school uses IRIS, an online recording system, to log incidents. A screen shot of the log is shown in Appendix 1. This log will be always available for inspection by the Governing body and outside stakeholders. Monthly reports are produced for Governors scrutiny and challenge.

10. Risk Assessment for Physical Intervention

The school's Pastoral Manager will keep an up-to-date risk assessment that covers physical intervention. This is a live document that will be updated accordingly to individual student needs as required. This forms part of the individual pupil's positive behaviour support plan.

11. Behaviour Code of Conduct

Students are expected to follow the school behaviour code of conduct:

- Be kind, be safe, be mindful.
- Students are encouraged to be polite and respectful to all members of the school community
- Take pride in your appearance
- Treat our school and school property with care and respect
- Treat others as you would expect to be treated

12. Safeguarding Considerations

This policy does not provide detailed guidance for every possible situation. The safeguarding of students is the school's priority. In cases such as sexual violence, sexual harassment, or other harmful sexual behaviours, Local Authority Children's Social Care and the police will be involved if a crime may have been committed.

13. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually.
At every review, the policy will be approved by the headteacher.

14. Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

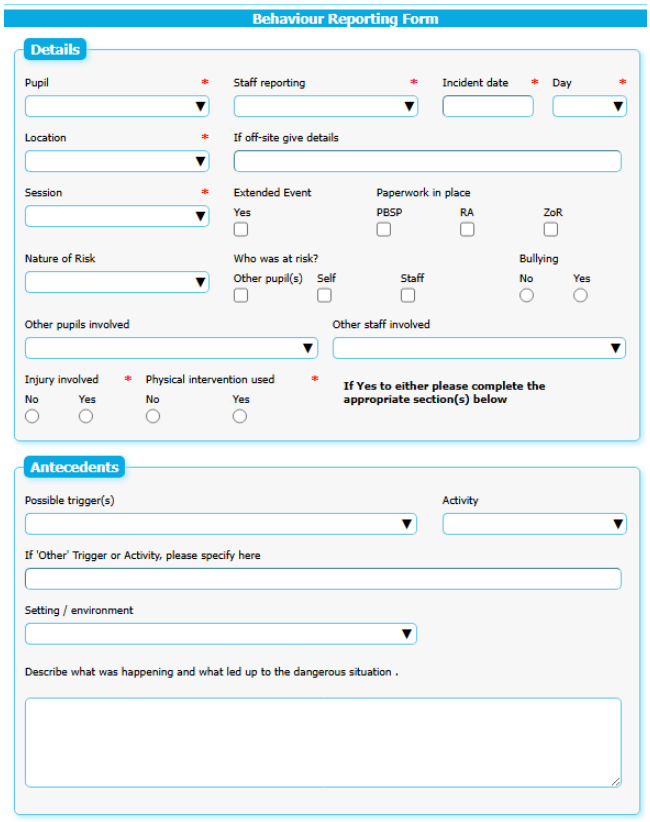
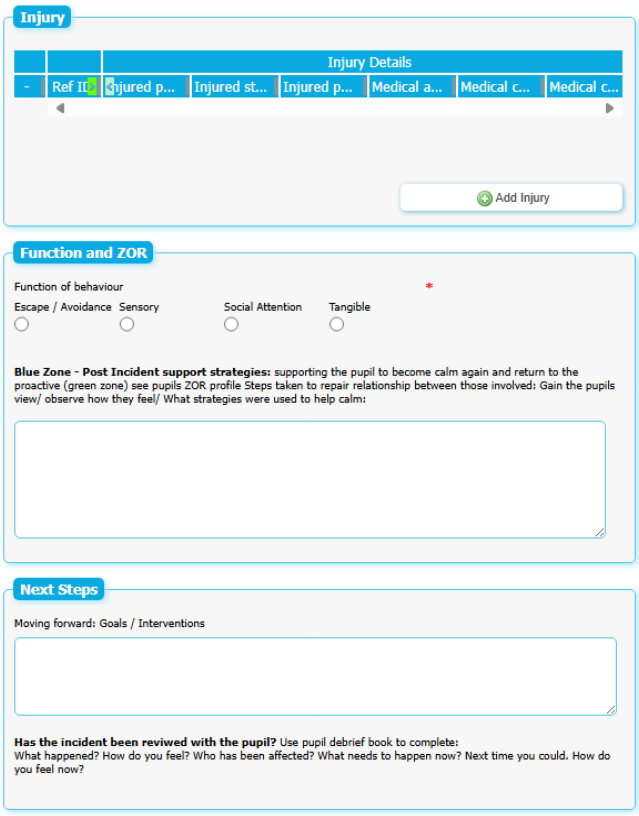
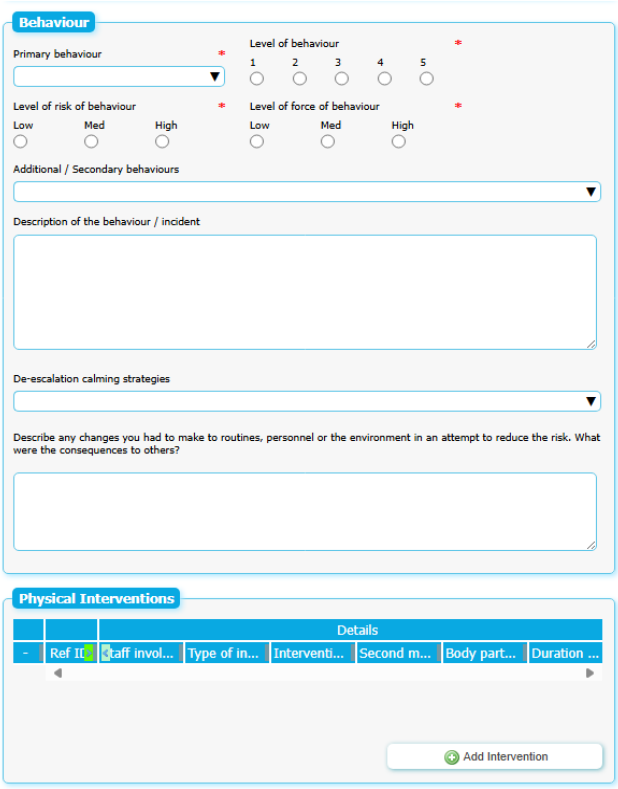
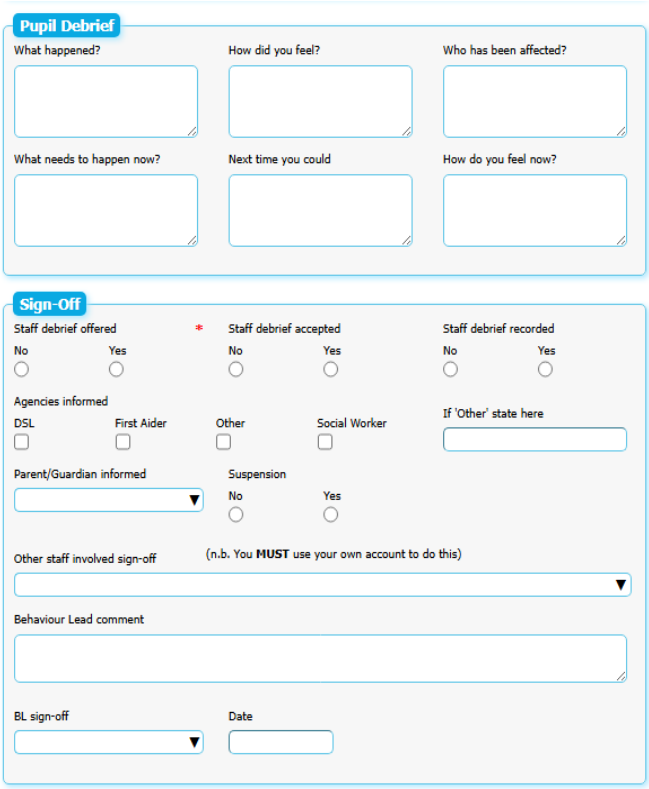
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Approval & Policy Review

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Policy Approver(s)	Elle Vinall - Headteacher
Storage Location	Online
Effective Date	September 2026
Next Review Date	July 2027

Revision History

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change
1	First published	Marci Osborn	July 2025
2	Updated to reflect guidance changes	Marci Osborn	March 2026
3	Updated to reflect legislation changes and new format.	Marci Osborn	September 2026

Appendix 1: IRIS Recording System