

COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE



Restrictive Interventions Policy

Status	STATUTORY
Responsible Governors Committee	Governing Body
Responsible Person	Vice Principal
Next review Date	Summer 2026
Ratified Date	Summer 2027

1. Policy Statement

Cowley is committed to providing a safe, respectful and supportive environment for all pupils and staff.

Cowley International College will:

- Promote positive behaviour through prevention and de-escalation.
- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions.
- Ensure any use of reasonable force or other restrictive intervention is lawful, proportionate, necessary and recorded appropriately.
- Protect pupils' dignity and safety at all times.

The College will ensure that Restrictive interventions are only used as a last resort where necessary to prevent harm.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools 2026
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation 2022
- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Human Rights Act 1998

Cowley International College records and report incidents involving reasonable force, seclusion and other restrictive interventions.

3. Definitions

3.1 Restrictive Intervention

Any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom of action.

This includes:

- Physical restraint
- Reasonable force
- Seclusion (where a pupil is prevented from leaving a room or space)

3.2 Reasonable Force

Physical contact that is:

- Necessary
- Proportionate
- Used for the shortest time possible
- To prevent:
 - Injury to any person
 - Serious damage to property
 - Serious disruption to good order of the college

3.3 Seclusion

Seclusion is where a pupil is prevented from leaving a room or area.

Seclusion must:

- Only be used to prevent serious harm
- Be supervised
- Be recorded and reported
- Never be used as punishment

4. Principles

Cowley International College ensures that:

- Restrictive interventions are a last resort.
- Prevention and de-escalation are always prioritised.
- The least restrictive option will always be used.
- Interventions must be reasonable and proportionate.
- The welfare and dignity of the pupil remain central.
- Staff safety is also prioritised.
- Incidents are recorded and reviewed.

5. Prevention and De-escalation

Cowley International College ensures that staff:

- Use restorative and relational approaches.
- Apply behaviour support strategies.
- Follow individual behaviour plans and risk assessments.
- Be aware of known triggers and vulnerabilities.
- Use calm verbal de-escalation techniques.
- Seek support from colleagues where appropriate.

Pupils with SEND, SEMH needs, trauma backgrounds or safeguarding vulnerabilities can have personalised support strategies.

6. Authorised Staff

All school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force.

All senior leaders at Cowley International College are trained in CPI.

Cowley International College:

- Identifies staff who are trained in positive handling or CPI.
- Ensures appropriate training is provided to staff.
- Maintains a list of CPI trained staff.

The College ensures that any agency, temporary staff and visitor teachers are briefed on this policy.

7. When Restrictive Intervention May Be Used

Restrictive intervention may be used to:

- Prevent a pupil injuring themselves or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a pupil leaving a safe environment where this would put them at risk
- Prevent serious disruption that risks harm

The College ensures that Restrictive Intervention must not be used:

- As punishment
- For compliance alone

- Where less restrictive alternatives are available

Examples of situations where restrictive interventions may be used:

- A student attacks a member of staff or another student
- Students are fighting
- A student is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A student is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way that he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others.
- A student persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave a classroom
- A student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson
- A student absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a student could be at risk if not kept in a classroom or at school).

8. Searches and Reasonable Force

8.1. Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Only the Principal or a member of staff authorised by the Principal can search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item.

A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules only.

Prohibited items include:

knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers
fireworks and pornographic images

and:

any article that a member of staff reasonable suspects has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence, or cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil)

Under common law, school staff have the power to search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees.

8.2 Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Any concerns about the use of force or seclusion will be managed under the school's safeguarding, complaints and allegations procedures. Serious breaches may be reported to external agencies including the local authority or Ofsted.

9. Use of Seclusion

The College ensures that if seclusion is used then:

- It should be proportionate and necessary.
- The pupil should be supervised at all times.
- The duration should be kept to the shortest possible time.
- The pupil's welfare is to be monitored.
- A record should be made.
- Parents/carers should be informed.

The College ensures that seclusion should not be used as a behaviour sanction.

10. Recording and Reporting

Cowley International College records all incidents involving restrictive interventions including:

- Date and time
- Location
- Staff involved
- Pupil(s) involved
- Reason for intervention
- De-escalation attempts used
- Type of intervention
- Duration
- Outcome
- Any other details
- Follow-up actions

Reporting to Parents/Carers

Cowley International College ensures that:

- Parents/carers will be informed on the same day where possible.
- The school will offer a meeting if appropriate.
- a report to parents should include: time, date, location and duration of the intervention, brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary, brief account of what type and degree of force was applied, and details of any injury sustained if applicable

- notification must occur even when the intervention forms part of an agreed behaviour plan.
- reports to parents should be made in writing (email or online messaging system)
- schools should not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.
- Best practice would include inviting parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate to identify strategies focussed on reducing any future need for such interventions.

All records are stored securely in line with GDPR.

11. Post-Incident Support

Cowley International College ensures that following an incident:

- The pupil will be supported to reflect on and discuss incident.
- Pupils must be offered emotional and, if necessary, medical support following any restrictive intervention.
- Staff will be supported and offered a debrief.
- Staff are offered emotional and, if necessary, medical support following any restrictive intervention.
- Incidents are reviewed to reduce future risk
- Risk assessments and support plans will be reviewed.
- Patterns will be monitored.

Cowley International College ensures that the DSL is informed and involved in this process.

12. SEND and Equality Considerations

Cowley International College recognises that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions.

The College ensures that:

- Reasonable adjustments are made.
- EHCPs and support plans are reviewed following incidents.
- Data is monitored for disproportionality
- Parents and external professionals are involved, where appropriate.

13. Monitoring and Oversight

The Principal and Governors will ensure that:

- Incidents and trend are monitored
- Data is reported to Governors termly.
- The policy is reviewed annually.

The Governing Body will ensure:

- Compliance with statutory duties.
- Data and safeguarding implications are monitored.

14. Complaints

Cowley International College ensures that parents/carers may raise concerns through standard the College complaints procedure

15. Training

The College will ensure that:

- Training in de-escalation and CPI is provided to relevant staff.
- Staff understand legal responsibilities.
- Safeguarding updates related to restrictive practice are provided, when appropriate.
- Training is reviewed annually.

16. Linked Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy