



Positive/Safer Handling with pupils Policy

Date of last review:	January 2026
Date of next review:	January 2027
Type of policy:	Non-statutory
Frequency of review:	1 year
Governor committee:	Curriculum Committee

1. Rationale and Purpose

This policy is based on the existing *Safer Handling with Pupils Policy* and has been updated to reflect the **DfE guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (April 2026)** and the **Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025**.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and others
- promote positive behaviour management, prevention and de-escalation
- set out clearly when and how restrictive interventions may be used
- ensure legal compliance with recording and reporting duties
- reduce the need for restrictive interventions wherever possible

This policy should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct

2. Legal Framework

This policy complies with and is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (ss.93, 93A)
- Education Act 1996 (ss.550ZA–550ZB)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE Guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (April 2026)

All staff must act within this framework.

3. Terminology

Restrictive intervention: any action that prevents, restricts or subdues movement of the body or part of the body of a pupil. This includes physical and non-physical interventions.

Reasonable force: a legal term which includes physical restrictive interventions. It means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, based on the circumstances.

Restraint: a non-disciplinary intervention that restricts a pupil's movement. This may or may not involve direct physical contact.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined away from others and preventing them from leaving, used only as a safety measure.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond everyday physical contact and must be recorded and reported.

These definitions are provided for clarity and do not imply endorsement of their routine use.

4. Principles and Ethos

The school is committed to:

- preventing behaviour escalation wherever possible
- maintaining pupils' dignity, rights and wellbeing
- acting lawfully, proportionately and professionally
- supporting staff to make reasonable decisions in challenging situations

Restrictive interventions must never be used as punishment or as a disciplinary response.

5. Who Can Use Reasonable Force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force where necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property
- causing serious disorder

Staff are not expected to put themselves at risk. Failure to intervene where personal safety would be compromised is not a breach of duty.

6. Preventative and De-escalation Strategies

Before any restrictive intervention is considered, staff must use preventative approaches, including:

- calm verbal communication and clear expectations
- allowing time and space for regulation
- use of trusted adults and positive relationships
- environmental adjustments
- distraction and redirection

Low-level interventions include prompting, guiding or escorting without force, and supporting pupils who are physically unstable.

7. Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint should be used only as a last resort where there is an immediate risk of harm or serious damage.

Any restraint must be:

- **necessary** – no effective alternative available
- **proportionate** – the least restrictive option
- **time-limited** – reduced or stopped as soon as risk decreases

Types of restraint

- **Minor restraint:** guiding or blocking movement
- **Partial restraint:** restricting specific movements
- **Total restraint:** immobilisation, used only in extreme circumstances

Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil, and should make it clear that they only intend to use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure that the situation is addressed as safely as possible. The use of restraint must always be proportionate to the level of risk and should always be reduced at the earliest possible opportunity.

Pupils must never be restrained in a way that compromises breathing or circulation. Ground restraint should be avoided and ended as quickly as possible.

8. Seclusion

Seclusion is a **non-disciplinary safety intervention** and may be used only to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent.

Seclusion:

- must never be used as punishment or through threat of punishment
- must take place in a safe, non-threatening environment
- must involve continuous supervision
- must end as soon as the immediate risk has reduced

A pupil must never be locked in a room or prevented from leaving through intimidation. All incidents of seclusion are considered **significant incidents** and must be recorded and reported.

Seclusion is distinct from disciplinary removal from class; staff should refer to Behaviour in Schools guidance for disciplinary measures.

9. Pupils with SEND

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions.

The school will:

- identify triggers and underlying needs
- use individual behaviour support plans where appropriate
- make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010
- co-produce plans with parents, pupils and professionals

Any planned physical intervention must be clearly documented, justified and regularly reviewed.

10. Training and Risk Assessment

Although it is not a legal requirement to have staff trained in restraint techniques, some key staff have received additional training.

The training received works with the premise that de-escalation techniques and non-contact methods should be implemented before any physical restraint. If the need arises that a person needs to be restrained because the de-escalation techniques have not worked four different holds that ideally will be used with two people present have been identified for use. The four different holds are listed below and pictures of each one can be found in the Google Drive Behaviour/Restraint.

2a - Underarm with Double wrist hold

2b - Straight arm Immobilisation (seat belt position)

2c - Underarm with fist hold (used when student clenches fist e.g. angry)

3a - Walking underarm with fist hold, arm held back to encourage forward momentum.

4a - seated underarm with double wrist hold.

4b - seated underarm with double fist hold

4c - seated underarm with either wrist or fist hold, leg restraint.

4d - Disengaging from the seated Position.

5a - Going to the floor in hold if student's legs drop to the ground.

5b - Placing student in Recovery Position from hold e.g. faint

Part of the training offered to staff is always that if a staff member uses restraint, then it must be 'their honest held belief' that if they had not intervened then the situation would have been much worse. Risk assessments will be in place for pupils with known behavioural risks and for high-risk situations. Training prioritises prevention, de-escalation and lawful practice.

11. Recording and Reporting (Effective April 2026)

All significant incidents involving reasonable force, restraint or seclusion must be:

- recorded in writing as soon as practicable (same day where possible)
- reported to parents/carers as soon as practicable

Staff should complete the Use of Restraint form (Found in Google Drive - Behaviour/Restraint) (*appendix 1*) if they come into contact with a student, this could include:

- Stopping an altercation between students.
- A student putting themselves in harm's way.
- A student pushing through a member of staff.

Records must include:

- names of pupils and staff
- date, time, location and duration
- reason for intervention
- strategies attempted
- type and degree of intervention
- injuries and follow-up actions

The procedure below is followed once an incident has occurred:

- Restraint form completed by staff in as much detail as possible.
- Form is emailed to Headteacher and Behaviour Lead, and will be uploaded to My Concern.
- The Behaviour Lead will contact the parents of the child to inform them of the incident.
- Staff involved in the restraint of a student should not be put in a position to make contact once the incident has happened.
- A member of the SLT will update you on the outcome of the incident once it has concluded.

12. Pupil and Staff Support Following Incidents

After any incident involving restrictive intervention, the school will:

- check pupils and staff for injuries and arrange medical treatment if required
- record injuries in line with health and safety procedures and report to the HSE where appropriate
- hold follow-up conversations to support reflection, learning and wellbeing
- repair and rebuild relationships
- review behaviour support plans where necessary

Debriefing should be facilitated by a staff member not involved in the incident wherever possible.

13. Monitoring and Governance

The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor patterns, training needs, and any disproportionate impact on groups of pupils. The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually.

14. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints will be managed through the school complaints procedure. Allegations against staff will be handled in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed every year by the curriculum committee.

Date Agreed:	
Signed:	
Review Date:	January 2027

Use of Restraint

(Please ensure you complete all sections of this form)



Name(s) of Student(s) Involved:	Tutor Group:
Name(s) of Member of Staff Involved:	
Date the incident took place:	Time the incident took place:
Location the incident took place:	
Name(s) of any witnesses to the incident (staff and/or students):	
Reason why restraint was used?	
Details of the incident - Please <u>ensure</u> you include - How it began and progressed? Please <u>ensure</u> you include details of the student's behaviour, what was said and by whom.	
What steps were taken to calm and defuse the incident / situation?	
Degree of restraint - How was it applied?	
Degree of restraint – How long was it applied for?	
What was the student(s) response?	
Outcome of the incident:	
Details of any injury sustained by the student(s)	
Details of any injury sustained by the member of staff:	
Details of any damage to property:	
Details of First Aid treatment required: First Aid book filled in:	
Parent informed:	Date:
Review/actions:	Date:

Print Name Sign Name:
Headteacher signature:

Dated:
Date

Please email this form to Headteacher and Behaviour Lead once completed, this will then be uploaded to My Concern and the Behaviour Lead will contact parents to let them know an incident has happened.

Pastoral Teams – Please add to My Concern that parental contact has been made to inform parents of the incident.

Safer Handling and Restrictive Interventions – One-Page Staff Flowchart (2026)

START - Is there behaviour causing concern?



STEP 1 – PREVENT & DE-ESCALATE (ALWAYS FIRST)

Use before any physical intervention

- Calm verbal communication
- Clear expectations and choices
- Time, space and opportunities to regulate
- Trusted adults and positive relationships
- Environmental adjustments
- Distraction and redirection

Low-level interventions:

- Verbal prompting
- Guiding or escorting *without force*
- Supporting a pupil who is physically unstable



Has the risk reduced?

- **YES** Continue support, record as appropriate → **END**
- **NO** Immediate risk remains



STEP 2 – DECISION CHECK

Ask yourself:

- Is there an **immediate risk of harm** to the pupil or others?
- Is there a **serious risk to property or order**?
- Have **all reasonable alternatives** been attempted?
- Am I acting **calmly, lawfully and proportionately**?



Is a restrictive intervention necessary?

- **NO** Continue de-escalation and seek support → **END**
- **YES** Proceed



STEP 3 – REASONABLE FORCE / RESTRAINT (LAST RESORT)

All staff have a legal power to use **reasonable force** where necessary.

Force must be:

- **Necessary** – no effective alternative
- **Proportionate** – least restrictive option
- **Time-limited** – stop as soon as risk reduces

Types of restraint:

- **Minor** – guiding or blocking movement
- **Partial** – restricting specific movements
- **Total** – immobilisation (extreme circumstances only)

✗ Never:

- restrict breathing or circulation
- act out of anger or frustration
- continue once risk has reduced



STEP 4 – SECLUSION (EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY)

May be used **only as a safety measure** when:

- pupil is experiencing **severe emotional or behavioural dysregulation**
- there is **immediate risk of harm to others**
- pupil is **not acting with intent**

Seclusion must:

- never be used as punishment or threat
- take place in a **safe, non-threatening space**
- involve **continuous supervision**
- end **as soon as risk reduces**

✗ A pupil must **never be locked in a room.**



STEP 5 – AFTER THE INCIDENT (SAME DAY WHERE POSSIBLE)

Immediate actions:

- Check pupils and staff for **injuries**
- Provide **first aid or medical support** if needed
- Ensure pupil is **calm and supported**



Recording & reporting (STATUTORY – April 2026):

- Complete Restrictive Intervention / Use of Force form
- Record what happened, why, strategies used, duration and outcome
- Inform senior leadership
- Parents/carers informed as soon as practicable

→ All restraint and seclusion incidents are **significant incidents**



STEP 6 – REFLECTION, SUPPORT & LEARNING

School will:

- hold post-incident debrief (independent facilitator where possible)
- listen to **staff and pupil reflections** separately
- support emotional wellbeing
- repair relationships
- review or update behaviour support plans



SEND – APPLY THROUGHOUT ALL STEPS

- Consider communication, sensory and regulation needs
- Follow agreed behaviour/support plans
- Make reasonable adjustments (Equality Act)
- Work with parents and professionals



REMEMBER

If you reasonably believe that not intervening would result in greater harm, and you act lawfully, proportionately and in good faith, the school will support you.