Restrictive Intervention Policy

(Updated in line with DfE April 2026)

VERSION: June 2026

NEXT REVIEW: June 2027

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the school's approach to the prevention, use, recording and review of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force.

This policy is consistent with the Department for Education guidance:
"Restrictive interventions including the use of reasonable force in schools" (effective April 2026)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restrictive-interventions-and-the-use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools

It should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, behaviour and SEND policies.

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. Restrictive interventions will only ever be used where necessary and in a manner that is lawful, proportionate and respectful of the dignity and rights of the child.

2. Definition

A restrictive intervention is any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. This may include physical intervention such as restraint, but also non-physical actions such as blocking a pupil's path or confining a pupil to a space. See the DfE guidance "Restrictive interventions including the use of reasonable force in schools" (effective April 2026) for the definitions.

The use of "reasonable force" refers to the application of the minimum force necessary for the shortest possible duration in order to prevent harm or serious disruption.

3. Guiding Principles

The school adopts a preventative and child-centred approach. The use of restrictive intervention is always a last resort and is not a behaviour management strategy. It must never be used as a punishment, to secure compliance, or as a substitute for effective behaviour support.

Any intervention must be necessary in the circumstances, proportionate to the level of risk presented, and applied for the shortest time possible. Staff must act in the best interests of the pupil and others, maintaining the pupil's dignity throughout.

Particular care will be taken in relation to pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, recognising that behaviour may be a form of communication and that reasonable adjustments may be required.

4. Circumstances in Which Intervention May Be Used
Restrictive intervention may only be used where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, causing serious damage to property, or seriously disrupting the good order of the school.

All members of staff have the legal authority to use reasonable force in such circumstances; however, they are expected to do so in accordance with this policy, the DfE guidance, and their training.

5. Prevention and De-escalation
The school places a strong emphasis on prevention. Staff are expected to use de-escalation strategies and positive behaviour support to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring. This includes recognising early signs of distress, adapting communication, offering space or time, and using distraction or reassurance.

Where pupils are known to present a higher risk, individual behaviour or risk management plans will be developed. These plans will identify triggers, early warning signs and agreed strategies to support the pupil safely.

6. Use of Seclusion
Seclusion, defined as the supervised confinement of a pupil in a room or area from which they cannot freely leave, will only be used where it is necessary to manage a serious and immediate risk to safety. It must never be used as a disciplinary measure.

Where seclusion is used, the pupil must be continuously supervised, and the intervention must end as soon as it is safe to do so, in line with DfE guidance.

7. Prohibited Practices
The school strictly prohibits any intervention that could cause harm, injury or distress beyond that which is unavoidable in preventing immediate risk. This includes techniques that deliberately inflict pain, restrict breathing or circulation, or involve holding a pupil in a prone (face-down) position.

8. Recording and Reporting
In line with statutory requirements introduced in April 2026 and set out in DfE guidance, every use of restrictive intervention must be formally recorded. The record must be completed as soon as possible after the incident and must include a clear account of what happened, why the intervention was necessary, and what actions were taken.

Parents or carers must be informed of any incident involving restrictive intervention as soon as practicable (preferably the same day), and a record of this communication must be kept.

Accurate and timely recording is essential both for safeguarding purposes and for identifying patterns or trends that may require further intervention or support.

9. Post-Incident Support and Review
Following any incident, the immediate priority is to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of the pupil and any staff involved. Appropriate first aid or medical attention will be provided where necessary.

A debrief will take place to reflect on the incident, including the perspective of the pupil where possible. This process should support learning, reduce the likelihood of recurrence, and inform any necessary updates to behaviour or risk management plans.

10. Roles and Responsibilities
The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively, that staff are appropriately trained, and that systems for recording and monitoring are robust and consistent with DfE expectations.

Staff are responsible for following this policy, using de-escalation strategies wherever possible, and ensuring that any use of restrictive intervention is lawful, proportionate and recorded.

The governing body has oversight of the school's use of restrictive interventions and will monitor patterns, frequency and safeguarding implications through regular reporting.

11. Training
The school will ensure that staff receive appropriate training in behaviour management, de-escalation techniques and the safe use of restrictive intervention where required. Training will be proportionate to role and refreshed regularly, in line with DfE guidance.

12. Monitoring and Review
The school will regularly review records of restrictive interventions in order to identify patterns, evaluate practice and improve support for pupils. This will include consideration of any disproportionate impact on particular groups of pupils.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required in response to changes in legislation, DfE guidance, or best practice.

Restrictive Intervention Record

School Name	
Date of Incident	
Time	
Location	

1. Pupil Details

Name	
DOB	
Year Group	
SEND / Vulnerabilities	

2. Staff Involved

Staff Member(s)	
Witnesses	

3. Description of Incident

4. De-escalation Attempts

5. Reason for Intervention

6. Type of Intervention Used

7. Details of Intervention

Start Time	
End Time	
Duration	
Description	

8. Was the Force Proportionate?

9. Injuries / Medical Concerns

Pupil	
Staff	

10. Pupil Voice

11. Parent/Carer Notification

Date/time informed	
Method	
By whom	

12. Follow-Up Actions

13. Completed By

Name	
Role	
Signature	
Date	

14. Senior Leader Review

Name	
Outcome / comments	
Signature	
Date	