

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
John Keble C of E Primary School
Date of Issue: April 2026
Review date: April 2027



Rooted in Faith, Growing in Community, Thriving in Learning

1. Background

We define restrictive intervention (sometimes referred to as the use of reasonable force) as:

Any use of force by a member of staff that intentionally restricts a child's movement against their will.

Our school is committed to a positive, preventative and inclusive approach to behaviour. We aim to support children to self-regulate and take responsibility for their behaviour through:

- Positive role modelling
- A broad, engaging and inclusive curriculum
- Clear expectations, boundaries and routines
- Consistent, supportive feedback and relational approaches

Further detail is available in our Behaviour Policy.

Restrictive intervention is not a routine behaviour management strategy. It is used only in exceptional circumstances where necessary to prevent harm.

This policy does not refer to appropriate, non-restrictive physical contact, such as:

- Guiding or supporting pupils in learning activities
- Providing comfort where a child is distressed
- Personal care or first aid

We recognise that physical contact must always be:

- Age-appropriate
- Sensitive to individual needs (including SEND, trauma history, culture, religion)
- Respectful of dignity, privacy and consent where possible

This policy aligns with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice

2. Principles

2.1 Last resort and least restrictive approach

Restrictive intervention will only be used when:

- It is necessary to prevent harm, and
- It is reasonable, proportionate, and the least restrictive option available

Staff must always prioritise de-escalation strategies and consider:

- The child's needs and communication
- Known triggers
- Environmental factors

Where possible, force will be avoided. In rare emergency situations, it may be used immediately.

2.2 Duty of care

Staff have a duty to:

- Protect children from harm, including self-harm
- Protect others from injury or serious disruption

This includes taking action where a child is:

- At risk of injury
- Putting others at risk
- Leaving a safe area and at significant risk

2.3 Proportionality and necessity

Any intervention must:

- Use the minimum force necessary
- Last for the shortest possible time
- Be proportionate to the risk presented

Staff must never use force:

- As punishment
- In anger or frustration
- To enforce compliance (unless safety is at risk)

3. Circumstances Where Force May Be Used

Reasonable force may be used to:

- Prevent injury to the child or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Maintain safety and/or restore order where disruption poses a risk

It may also be used where harm is imminent.

We acknowledge that:

- Using force can escalate situations
- Decisions must be based on dynamic risk assessment

Staff must always ask:

"Is this necessary, proportionate, and in the child's best interests?"

4. Who May Use Reasonable Force

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act (2006), reasonable force may be used by:

- Teachers
- Support staff authorised by the Headteacher
- Others temporarily responsible for pupils (e.g. trip volunteers)

Where possible:

- Staff involved should know the child
- Staff should be appropriately trained

However, any staff member may act in an emergency.

5. Individual Planning and Risk Assessment

Where a child is identified as at risk of requiring restrictive intervention:

- A risk assessment and/or Positive Behaviour Support Plan will be developed

This will include:

- Understanding the child's behaviour and communication
- Preventative strategies
- De-escalation techniques
- Agreed responses (including any physical intervention if necessary)

Plans are developed with:

- Parents/carers
- The child (where appropriate)
- Relevant professionals (e.g. SENCO, EP, therapists)

Plans are:

- Reviewed regularly (at least termly or sooner if needed)
- Sensitive to trauma, SEND, and individual differences

Emergency situations may occur where no plan is in place; staff must still act lawfully and proportionately.

6. Types of Intervention

All interventions must comply with:

- Safety, dignity, and human rights principles

Staff must not:

- Restrict breathing (e.g. neck holds)
- Use prone restraint (face-down holds), except in extreme emergency where life is at risk
- Apply pressure to joints or pain-inducing techniques
- Use humiliation or degrading treatment

We do not use seclusion (locking a child in a room alone).

Any removal from a space must:

- Be supervised
- Maintain the child's safety and dignity

Staff are trained in:

- De-escalation
- Behaviour understanding
- Safe handling techniques (e.g. Team Teach or equivalent)

7. Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving restrictive intervention must be:

- Recorded as soon as possible (within 24 hours)
- Logged on CPOMS (or equivalent system)
- Shared with senior leaders

Records must include:

- What happened before, during and after
- Reason for intervention
- Type of intervention used
- Any injuries or concerns

Parents/carers will be:

- Informed on the same day where possible
- Offered the opportunity to discuss the incident

Records are retained in line with safeguarding requirements.

Serious incidents may be reported to external agencies (e.g. safeguarding partners or police).

8. Post-Incident Support

After an incident:

For the child:

- Time to recover and regulate
- Opportunity to reflect (when ready)
- Support to understand what happened

For staff:

- Opportunity to debrief
- Emotional support if needed

A key aim is to:

- Repair relationships
- Reduce future risk

Plans and risk assessments should be reviewed if necessary.

9. Monitoring

Senior leaders and governors will:

- Review incident data at least termly
- Monitor patterns, including:
 - Frequency
 - Individual pupils
 - Staff involvement
 - Equality considerations

This ensures:

- No disproportionate use on particular groups
- Continuous improvement in practice

10. Concerns and Complaints

We recognise that restrictive intervention can be distressing.

Concerns will be taken seriously and managed through:

- The school complaints procedure
- Safeguarding procedures where appropriate

Allegations involving staff will be:

- Reported to the Headteacher immediately
- Managed in line with safeguarding guidance

If the concern involves the Headteacher, it will be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Parents/carers retain the right to escalate concerns externally.