



Use of Restrictive Interventions, including Reasonable Force and Seclusion

Aims

At Wendover CE Junior School, we are committed to creating a safe, secure, and supportive environment for all children and staff. There are occasions where the use of restrictive interventions, reasonable force or seclusion, may be lawful, necessary, and proportionate to prevent harm to a child or others.

We recognise that such interventions can have a significant impact on children, staff, and parents. Restrictive interventions are used as a last resort; they must always be reasonable, necessary, and proportionate to the circumstances.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through early support, prevention, and de-escalation strategies;
- Provide a clear guidance regarding the use of restrictive interventions;
- Set out the process for recording and reporting incidents of restrictive intervention, reasonable force and seclusion;
- Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and staff;
- Maintain a positive and safe environment for everyone at school.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools. It also meets the requirements of:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Equality Act 2010

Definitions

The terms we use in this policy are based on the Department for Education's guidance on restrictive interventions.

Restrictive interventions are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body / part of the body. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrict a child's movement.

Restraint is a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may include manual, environmental (seclusion) or psychological restraint (instructing a child not to leave a designated area).

Reasonable force refers to the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain children, using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time.

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a child restricted to a defined place away from others, for the safety of that child and/or others. Physical or psychological restraint may be used to keep the child in seclusion.

A *significant incident* is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a child. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention, such as seclusion.

Appropriate Physical Contact with Children

Our school does not have a 'no contact' policy. We do not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with children which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions. Examples include:

- Providing first aid;
- Guiding or escorting a child by holding a hand;
- Comforting a child who is upset;
- Offering congratulations or praise, such as with a pat on the back or handshake;
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument;
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, staff should use their professional judgement, and have regard to:

- The child's age and any known vulnerabilities (this may include lived experiences or current safeguarding concerns), special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND);
- The specific circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present;
- Whether any alternative strategies are more appropriate;
- Our Child Protection Policy.

Prevention and De-Escalation Strategies

We use whole-school and individual approaches in order to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.

Our whole-school approach includes:

- Developing highly respectful relationships between staff and children;
- Consideration of the learning environment;
- Training and sharing best practice in behaviour management;
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform planning and training.

The individual approaches we use include:

- Working closely with parents to support their child;
- Providing transition and regulation activities to prevent behaviour escalating;
- Using strategies to support individuals, including SEND support plans and EHCP, behaviour support plans and positive intervention plans;
- Making 'reasonable adjustments' where a child has a disability, to help them participate in school life as fully as possible.

De-escalation

We use de-escalation strategies effectively in school. Techniques that could be used in these situations include:

- Open body language and being aware of a child's personal space;
- Removing the 'audience' – speaking to them on their own rather than in front of a group;
- Using empathy, mirror and validate their feelings;
- Offering a calm space for the child to go to and using the zones of regulation so they can self-regulate;
- Using distraction techniques, limited choices and 'having a 'when...then' conversation;
- Reminding them of the likely consequences of their behaviour and strategies they can use to make things better;
- Swapping out with another member of staff.

Acceptable Use of Force

All our school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain situations. Staff can use reasonable force to prevent or stop a child from:

- Hurting themselves or others;
- Committing a criminal offence;
- Damaging property – particularly if this may result in harm to a child or member of staff;
- Causing disorder that affects the smooth running of the school.

It is illegal to use force on a child for the purpose of punishment. Force is only used when necessary and never as a sanction, threat, or deterrent. Staff will not restrain a child in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation or that intentionally places a child on the ground.

The Headteacher, and any member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, have a statutory power to search a child or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds (see the school behaviour policy for further information). Reasonable force can be used to search for prohibited items only, such as knives, weapons, stolen items, or illegal drugs.

Use of Restrictive Interventions

Staff will use their professional judgment when deciding whether or not to use a restrictive intervention; they will give due consideration to other strategies, such as de-escalation techniques. When assessing whether a restrictive intervention is required, staff should consider:

Necessity:

- Consider alternative, less restrictive ways to manage the situation;
- Is a restrictive intervention likely to escalate the situation or cause more harm than the behaviour itself?

Proportionality:

- Use the least amount of force or the least restrictive intervention until the risk is reduced;
- The use of alternate strategies if the intervention is escalating the situation
- Consider the individual circumstances of the child - age, size, any medical conditions, SEND, or other vulnerabilities.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention used to keep children safe. We only use seclusion as a safety measure when a child is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is not used as a threat or punishment. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour (see our behaviour policy for information on our response to misbehaviour).

During seclusion:

- The child will be in a safe place;
- The child will be supervised at all times, by at least 1 member of staff;
- The period of seclusion will be as short as it needs to be;
- Physical, non-physical or psychological restraint may be used in order that the child remains in a safe place, for instance an adult may block the door or make it clear that further consequences will apply if the child leaves;
- The incident will be recorded and reported.

Child and Staff Welfare

In a school, the most important consideration when using any restrictive intervention is the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of the child, alongside the safety of other children and staff.

Staff should always:

- Consider the environment and location, avoiding, wherever possible, the use of interventions in front of peers;
- Be mindful of any SEND or sensory needs, including noise, touch and space;
- Use the least restrictive option for the shortest possible time.

Effective communication is essential. Staff should:

- Use clear, calm, and developmentally appropriate language, adapted to the child's communication needs;
- Incorporate non-verbal communication strategies, visual supports, or agreed communication systems where appropriate;
- Clearly explain what is happening and why, and what the child can do to help resolve the situation;
- Allow processing time, recognising that some children may need longer to understand and respond.

Staff should demonstrate a *responsive and reflective practice*, which includes:

- Recognising signs of distress, anxiety, or sensory overload;
- Considering whether the intervention should be continued, reduced, or ceased, based on the child's response;
- Using knowledge of the child's individual profile, triggers, and support strategies.

Wherever possible, staff should prioritise co-regulation and relational approaches, supporting the child to regain control safely. This approach ensures that restrictive interventions, when unavoidable, are applied in a way that is trauma-informed, individualised, respectful, and reflects the needs of the child.

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Support Following an Incident

As soon as possible after any use of restrictive intervention, we will evaluate the incident to: understand why restrictive intervention was used; assess the impact on the child and staff; identify any patterns or trends; reduce the risk of recurrence.

We will provide support for those involved in an incident, including a medical assessment and treatment if needed, and an opportunity to reflect on the incident. A restorative conversation will be facilitated so that everyone can develop a shared understanding and to repair / rebuild relationships. Wherever possible, this process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident. The school will continue to monitor the wellbeing of child(ren) and staff, providing additional support if needed. Depending on the circumstances, support may also be offered to those who witnessed the incident.

Recording and Reporting Arrangements

We have a legal duty to record and report all significant incidents involving force, restraint and seclusion. Staff must record incidents on the Restrictive Intervention, Use of Force and Seclusion Report Form, as soon as possible after the event – they should endeavour to do this on the same day (Appendix 1). Staff should do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a behaviour support plan or positive intervention plan. The form, phone call and parental letter must all be recorded on CPOMS.

For all incidents, we will record:

- The names of the child and staff members directly involved;
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the child, including SEND;
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention;
- A clear and brief description of what happened, including:
 - a) What led up to the incident
 - b) Any known or potential triggers for the behaviour
 - c) Any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
 - d) The type and degree of reasonable force used (if any)
 - e) Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable and care given
 - f) Details of restorative conversation / debrief
- If applicable, why the use of force was deemed necessary;
- Notification telephone call to parent recorded on CPOMS;
- Notification letter sent after telephone call to parent, also recorded on CPOMS.

Completed reports will be kept securely and retained in line with our data protection procedures.

Reporting Incidents to Parents

We are committed to maintaining open, transparent, and timely communication with parents following any significant incident involving their child. When reporting an incident to parents, we will take the following steps:

- Initial contact will be made by telephone on the day by a designated member of staff (such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy DSL, or a senior leader); this conversation will provide a clear and factual overview of what has taken place and allow the parent an opportunity to ask questions;
- A written record will be shared with the parent as soon as is practicable after the event; parents are encouraged to make contact if they require any additional information or wish to discuss the incident further.

The exception to the above will be if a member of staff thinks that telling the child's parent would likely result in significant harm to that child. In these cases, we will report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority where the child ordinarily resides.

When we report to parent, we will include the following details:

- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention;
- A brief explanation of why the intervention / force was assessed as necessary in that situation;
- If force was used, a short description of the type and degree of force that was used;
- If applicable, details of any physical injuries sustained and the care given;
- Details of restorative conversation(s).

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will report it in line with our procedure for reporting significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be reported twice.

When reporting to parents, we will have regard to data protection requirements when deciding what information to share. For example, we will not include any identifying details of any other child.

Reporting Incidents to the Local Authority

In cases where we have assessed that an incident needs to be reported to the local authority where the child ordinarily resides, this report will include all the information that we would normally share with the child's parent, as well as the reasons why we thought it was unsafe to tell the child's parent directly.

In cases where a child has parents and is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, we will report the incident to the relevant local authority in addition to the parents (unless we deem it unsafe to inform the parents).

Following Up with Parents After an Incident

Where necessary the school will invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident. This may include:

- Reviewing and updating risk assessments, behaviour support plans or positive intervention plans;
- Providing additional support for the child, families, or staff;
- Implementing staff training or guidance;
- Working with external organisations to support the child and family outside of school.

This approach ensures that parents are kept fully informed, while also ensuring that all incidents are managed, recorded, and reviewed in line with safeguarding expectations.

Training and Risk Assessments

Our school provides all staff with training on the use of de-escalation, restrictive interventions, reasonable use of force and seclusion. We have a duty to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our staff. Therefore, we carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside child where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

Review and Monitoring of Incidents

All incidents are formally recorded and reviewed to ensure that the school's policies and procedures have been followed appropriately. Actions taken by leaders and staff will include:

- Completing a detailed incident report by the member(s) of staff involved on the same day;
- Reviewing the incident to ensure that actions taken were proportionate, appropriate, and in line with school policy and statutory guidance;
- Considering amendments to SEND support plans, behaviour support plans or positive intervention plans;
- Relevant records will be completed and stored securely (child record on CPOMS and safeguarding record in school);
- Notifying the safeguarding governor on the day of an incident to ensure there is robust monitoring and scrutiny of all incidents that take place.

The school will use this information as part of its ongoing monitoring processes to identify any patterns, inform staff training, and improve practice.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled through our school's complaints and resolutions policy, which you can be found on the school website. We take any allegation of inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff very seriously. We will deal with allegations in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Governors** are responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving this policy.
- Ensuring that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting significant incidents involving force, restraint or seclusion.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the procedures for recording and reporting the use of force, seclusion and restraint are followed.
- Reviewing and interrogating data on the use of restrictive interventions.
- Supporting and challenging school leaders to identify where changes may be needed to improve practice. For example, the effectiveness of techniques / approaches or the disproportionate use of restrictive interventions for individuals who share protected characteristics, have SEND or other types of vulnerabilities.

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The **Headteacher** is responsible for the overall implementation and oversight of this policy.

- Making sure that appropriate and high-quality training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions is provided for staff who need it, based on our school's individual context and needs.
- Ensuring adequate staffing levels to support positive behaviour management.
- Monitoring incidents involving restrictive interventions, including regular review of incidents to refine and improve processes.
- Ensuring compliance with recording and reporting requirements.
- Authorising staff to search a child or their belongings if they have good reason to think the child has a prohibited or banned item.
- Following the procedures set out in our complaints policy to deal with any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions.
- Following the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education if an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive intervention is made against a member of staff.

All members of **staff** are responsible for:

- Making sure they have read and understood the principles of this policy and any other linked policies.
- Using de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour management strategies to try to minimise and prevent the need for restrictive interventions.
- Recording every incident involving force, restraint or seclusion in which they are involved and reporting these to the DSL
- Recording any injuries that occur as part of an incident involving restrictive intervention, and following our health and safety policy to ensure these are reported to the Health and Safety Executive, where necessary.
- Taking part in training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions, if relevant to their role (this may include additional training appropriate to their responsibilities).
- Engaging in follow-up conversation(s) to debrief and reflect on incidents involving restrictive intervention that they were involved in, to help us understand what happened and why.

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is responsible for:

- Reporting every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force to each parent/carer of the child involved.
- Making sure records are kept securely and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures.
- Contacting the local authority in cases where informing a child's parent/carer of the use of reasonable force, seclusion or restraint on their child would put that child at risk of significant harm.

The **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator** is responsible for:

- Working with child's, parents/carers, and relevant school staff to develop and review behaviour support plans and risk assessments for any child's with SEND where it's been identified that there is an increased likelihood of the need to use restrictive interventions.
- Ensuring staff are aware of individual child needs and associated behaviour support strategies.
- Working with staff who know child's well, to identify and manage risk (such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur).
- Working with child's, parents/carers, staff, and other relevant professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- Advising on reasonable adjustments for any child's with disabilities when considering prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- Participating in the review of restrictive intervention incidents involving any child with SEND.
- Providing advice and support on the application of this policy for child's with SEND.
- Contributing to staff training on SEND and behaviour management, including the use of restrictive interventions.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and DSL, or sooner the event of a serious incident. At every review, this policy will be approved by the governors.

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour Policy.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Complaints and Resolutions Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- SEND Policy.

Appendix 1 – Record of Restrictive Intervention / Significant Incident involving Force

Record of Restrictive Intervention, Reasonable Use of Force or Seclusion				
Nature of incident:	Restrictive Intervention / Reasonable Use of Force / Seclusion			
Incident time, date and location:				
Name(s) and DOB of child(ren):				
Name(s) of staff involved:				
Names(s) of witnesses:				
Brief description of build up to incident including de-escalation strategies used:				
Description of incident including - strategies / techniques used - duration of any restraint				
Why was the intervention judged necessary? Was the intervention effective / ineffective (give brief description)?				
Detail any injuries sustained by the child or staff and the care given, including first aid:				
Detail any damage to property, especially if it presented a danger to the child or others:				
Details of post incident restorative conversations and / or staff debrief:				
Has restrictive intervention / force been used with this child before?			Yes / No	
Details of any medical needs:				
Is there a plan in place?			SEND Support / EHCP / BSP / PIP / No	
Does the plan require review?			SEND Support / EHCP / BSP / PIP / No	
Record details of review or implementation of a plan.				
DSL Notified	Date:		Time:	
Parents informed	Date:		Time:	
Safeguarding Governor informed	Date:		Time:	
Local Authority Informed	Date:		Time:	
This record is submitted by (name and position):			Date submitted:	

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Appendix 2 – Written Notification to Parent

Dear

I am writing to inform you of an incident that took place at school on [date] at [time] in [location] involving [Child's Name].

[Child's Name] became involved in a situation where their behaviour presented a risk of harm to themselves and/or others. Despite staff using a range of de-escalation strategies, it was necessary to use a restrictive physical intervention. The intervention was reasonable, proportionate, and used only for the minimum time necessary to ensure safety.

The intervention lasted for [number of minutes] and the following intervention techniques were used during the incident, [Please list].

Following the incident, [Child's Name] was supported to calm and reflect, and their wellbeing was carefully monitored.

A record of this incident has been completed and is kept in line with school policy. There were [no injuries / minor injuries – please specify if applicable], and appropriate care was provided.

We are committed to working closely with you to support [Child's Name] in managing their behaviour safely and positively. If you would like to discuss this incident further, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Kind regards

[Name]

[Position]