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Statutory:	Policy provided centrally for adoption by schools with minimal amendment to the core text. Changes are allowed to the text where indicated

Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force

St Christopher's Primary School

Approved by:	**EQSI**
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Contents

Linked documents 2
Summary 2
Terminology 3
Who can use reasonable force? 4
Use of reasonable force to search pupils 4
When use of restrictive interventions is appropriate 4
Other physical contact with pupils 5
Seclusion 5
Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) 6
Support After Restrictive Intervention 7
Medical Attention and Recording 7
Debrief and Wellbeing Support 7
Recording and Reporting Duties 8
Informing Parents 8
Guidance for Local Governing Bodies and Trust Board on using data 9
Complaints and allegations 9

Linked documents

Linked to: DfE Guidance on Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Behaviour Policy
- SEN Policy
- ODST Safeguarding Standard

The principal legislation to which this guidance relates are:

- 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

Summary

The school recognises that the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

The school will ensure staff are trained in de-escalation and the use of restrictive interventions so they are confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

The ODST promotes a Team Teach approach to restrictive interventions. The Team Teach approach to behaviour focuses on how someone is feeling and why they may be behaving in a particular way. This helps staff to build positive relationships with children and young people, find the best ways to support them, and keep everyone safe.

The school will have appropriate staff Team Teach trained. The majority of this training is focused on supporting a child or young person, before they become distressed, to help them calm down. This is called de-escalation. Appropriate staff are also trained in medically risk assessed physical interventions, such as ways to hold or guide someone, to use only when it is necessary to keep everyone safe.

The school will work towards proactively minimising the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies. It considers whole school measures and approaches to individual pupils:

Whole-school measures include:

- consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive
- sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds
- training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

Individual approaches can include:

- working closely with parents/carers to support individual pupils
- strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of behaviour support plans. Where a pupil has a disability, schools have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers
- giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates

Terminology

For clarity, this guidance will use the following definitions:

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff (see examples below: other physical contact with pupils). This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. This includes, but is not limited to holding, blocking, separating pupils physically, preventing them from causing harm or damage.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.
The various restrictive interventions above have been defined for completeness and should not be construed as an endorsement or otherwise for their use in schools. Some will not be relevant to most schools.

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. To prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

The headteachers, and staff they authorise, have a statutory power to 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 not to search for items banned under the school rules only.

Please see the school's behaviour policy available on the school website, for more information.

When use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff will consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff must consider the pupil's overall wellbeing when deciding on any intervention, taking into account individual needs such as medical conditions, disabilities, sensory needs, communication difficulties, trauma, or past experiences.
- Staff must always respect the pupil's dignity and, where possible, consider the location of any intervention to minimise distress or embarrassment.
- Staff should communicate calmly and clearly, explaining what is happening, why it is happening, and what the pupil needs to do.
- Where pupils have communication difficulties or English as an additional language, staff should use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication and allow time for understanding and response.
- Staff should monitor the pupil's emotional state throughout and use this to decide whether an intervention should continue, be reduced, or stop.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations

Training on the use of restrictive interventions should equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed.

Other physical contact with pupils

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:
- the school's child protection (or any other relevant) policy
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
- any other material factors, including but not limited to whether:
    - the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities
    - any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used

Seclusion

Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

Seclusion, as defined in this document, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Some pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may experience distress in certain situations and may display behaviours that could place themselves or others at risk. Triggers for such behaviour may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar environments, changes in routine, or feelings of fear and anxiety. Pupils who are non-verbal or who find verbal communication difficult may express their needs or discomfort through behaviour rather than words.

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may be at increased risk of being subjected to restrictive interventions. The school is committed to understanding the underlying causes of behaviour, with the aim of providing proactive support, promoting inclusion, and reducing the need for restrictive practices.

Understanding and Preventing Challenging Behaviour

The school will:

- Seek to identify and understand individual triggers for behaviour that may be challenging
- Consider how the school environment, routines, and culture may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND
- Make reasonable adjustments to reduce distress and enable pupils to access learning safely
- Use staff who know pupils well to help identify patterns, trigger points, and early warning signs
- Implement proactive and preventative strategies to reduce the likelihood of escalation

The school will work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, and relevant professionals to develop effective prevention and de-escalation strategies.

De-escalation and Support Strategies

Depending on individual needs and circumstances, strategies may include:

- Reducing or removing sources of sensory or emotional distress
- Using calm body language, facial expressions, and a reassuring tone of voice
- Supporting pupils to recognise and express their emotions at an early stage
- Providing activities that help pupils manage anxiety or regulate emotions
- Using familiar objects, routines, or preferred activities to redirect attention safely

Behaviour Support Plans

Where appropriate, the school will co-produce Behaviour Support Plans with pupils with SEND and their parents/carers. Plans will:

- Identify individual needs, triggers, and effective support strategies
- Outline reasonable adjustments to the school environment
- Provide clear guidance on how pupils can communicate their needs
- Be shared with relevant staff to ensure consistency of support

Where increased physical contact may be required to support a pupil's safety, this will be clearly documented in the Behaviour Support Plan. Any such arrangements will be discussed and agreed with relevant parties, which may include parents/carers, teaching and pastoral staff, the pupil (where appropriate), and external professionals.

Risk Assessment and Positive Handling
Where there is an identified risk of serious harm, including a potential need for reasonable force or other restrictive interventions, the school will:

- Complete and regularly review risk assessments
- Put appropriate training and preventative strategies in place
- Take all reasonable steps to minimise risk and avoid restrictive interventions

The decision to use any restrictive intervention will always depend on the circumstances at the time and will be used only as a last resort, irrespective of whether it is included in a Behaviour Support Plan.

Review and Legal Duties
Behaviour Support Plans will be reviewed regularly and following any significant incident, in partnership with the pupil and their parents/carers. Reviews will be informed by evidence of what has been effective and what requires adjustment.

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will take reasonable steps to avoid placing pupils with disabilities at a substantial disadvantage. This includes ensuring that pupils with SEND can participate fully in education and access the wider opportunities, facilities, and services provided by the school.

Support After Restrictive Intervention

All incidents involving restrictive intervention must be reviewed as soon as possible. The review will consider:

- why the intervention was used
- the impact on the pupil and staff
- how similar incidents can be avoided in future

This may lead to the introduction or update of a Behaviour Support Plan.

Medical Attention and Recording

Any pupil or staff member involved in an incident must receive medical attention for injuries where needed.
All use of reasonable force or seclusion must be recorded in line with school procedures. Injuries must also be recorded and reported in accordance with health and safety requirements.

Debrief and Wellbeing Support

A follow-up conversation must take place to support reflection, learning, and wellbeing. This will:

- help staff and pupils understand what happened
- support emotional recovery
- rebuild positive relationships

Where possible, debriefs should be led by a staff member not involved in the incident.

The school will continue to monitor the wellbeing of pupils and staff and provide further support where required. Pupils who witness an incident and are distressed will also be supported as appropriate.

Recording and Reporting Duties

Recording and reporting the use of force
The local governing body must ensure there is a clear procedure in place for recording all significant incidents in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, in line with the school's legal duties. This will be via the use of CPOMS.

All such incidents must be recorded as soon as possible after the event. The record should be completed by the staff member(s) involved and, wherever possible, on the same day.

A written record must be made for every incident involving the use of force. This requirement applies even where the use of restrictive interventions has been agreed with parents as part of a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan. This record can be handwritten, if appropriate, but must be stored on CPOMS as part of the child's chronology.

In establishing and applying these procedures, the local governing body will have regard to relevant statutory guidance and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Local governing bodies must ensure that a procedure is in place for reporting each significant use of force to the parents of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. This will be via the monitoring undertaken by the safeguarding LGB member.

Recording and Reporting Seclusion and Non-Force Restraint
The local governing body must ensure that there is a clear procedure in place for recording all incidents of seclusion and restraint, in line with statutory requirements.

All incidents of seclusion and restraint must be recorded, including those that do not involve direct physical contact with a pupil. This includes, for example, actions such as the removal of a walking aid or other measures used to restrict a pupil's movement without physical force.

As with reporting incidents using force, all use of seclusion and non-force restraint must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable after the event. The record should be completed by the member(s) of staff involved and, wherever possible, on the same day. This record can be hand written, if appropriate, but must be stored on CPOMS as part of the child's chronology.

The requirement to record applies even where the use of seclusion or restraint has been agreed in advance with parents as part of a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan.

Informing Parents

The school should clear procedures to informing parents about any incident involving seclusion or restraint. Parents must be informed as soon as practicable after the incident, and wherever possible on the same day.

It's helpful to put a robust 3-step system in place following the use of any restrictive practice so you can inform and support families and ensure they are part of decision-making processes:

1. **In-Person/ Phone Call**
   As soon as possible, let parents / carers know what has happened, either in person or over the phone. Where there is a face-to-face meeting, this should take place in a quiet, private and comfortable space, to ensure confidentiality. This conversation is an opportunity to clarify the reasons for the intervention, allay any fears, and offer reassurance.

2. **Written Follow-Up**
   After talking about the incident, write a letter that provides details of the incident explaining what will happen next to move forward together. The letter will contain the statutory reporting information as outlined in the DfE guidelines. The school may share the Team teach information leaflet so that parents /carers can understand more about behaviour support strategies used in school.

3. **Planned Meeting**
   Set up a meeting with the parents/carers to identify ways to avoid similar situations happening in the future, and to review and update individual risk assessments and support plans. If appropriate, you may also want to involve the student and any relevant staff members. This can form part of a wider restorative process, to encourage the repairing of damaged relationships and to promote a culture of post-incident reflection and support.

The requirement to report applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Guidance for Local Governing Bodies and Trust Board on using data

The local governing body must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with.

Local governing bodies should regularly review and interrogate data provided in the Headteacher's Report on restrictive interventions to ensure school leaders:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

Local governing bodies and proprietors should consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis should be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of people.

Complaints and allegations

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure.

If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education will be followed be followed.