



Emscote Infant School and All Saints' Junior School Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Version Date Review Cycle Approved By
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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the federation's approach to restrictive interventions, including the lawful use of reasonable force and seclusion.

The federation is committed to:

- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils and staff;
- creating calm, safe and inclusive learning environments;
- minimising the need for restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation;
- ensuring any use of force is lawful, proportionate, reasonable and necessary;
- protecting the dignity, wellbeing and rights of pupils.

This policy reflects current statutory and non-statutory guidance, including the Department for Education guidance *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (April 2026).

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Behaviour in Schools guidance
- SEND Code of Practice
- DfE guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (April 2026).

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all federation staff;
- volunteers;
- agency staff;
- supply staff;
- governors;
- pupils across the infant and junior schools.

4. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention is any action that prevents, restricts or limits a pupil's movement.

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the lawful use of physical intervention to prevent a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others;
2. committing a criminal offence;
3. damaging property;
4. causing serious disruption or disorder.

Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the shortest possible time.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention where a pupil is kept away from others and prevented from leaving.

Restraint

Restraint refers to actions that immobilise or significantly restrict a pupil's movement.

5. Guiding Principles

The federation believes:

- restrictive interventions should always be a last resort;

- positive relationships and de-escalation are the most effective approaches;
- children should be treated with dignity and respect at all times;
- pupils with SEND may require additional understanding, adjustments and support;
- staff should feel supported when making professional decisions in difficult situations;
- safeguarding and safety are paramount.

The federation will always seek to minimise the need for restrictive interventions through:

- effective behaviour support;
- early intervention;
- trauma-informed approaches;
- communication strategies;
- environmental adaptations;
- individual support plans (PLPs and Positive Handling Plans);
- strong home-school partnerships.

6. Prevention and De-escalation

Staff are expected to use preventative and de-escalation strategies wherever possible before considering restrictive intervention.

Strategies may include:

- calm verbal communication;
- distraction and redirection;
- offering choices;
- use of visual supports;
- reducing sensory stimuli;
- giving time and space;
- changing adult approach or tone;
- use of trusted adults;
- supporting emotional regulation;
- moving other pupils away from risk.

Staff should seek to maintain the dignity of the pupil and reduce distress wherever possible.

7. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in accordance with Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Reasonable force may be used only when necessary and proportionate.

Examples may include:

- preventing a pupil from hurting themselves or others;
- stopping a fight;

- preventing serious damage to property;
- preventing a pupil from leaving a safe area where doing so would place them at risk;
- preventing serious disruption where safety is compromised.

The level and duration of force must always be the minimum necessary.

8. Unacceptable Practice

The federation will never use force:

- as a punishment;
- to intentionally cause pain, humiliation or distress;
- in a way that restricts breathing or circulation;
- by applying pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen;
- in a way that risks injury;
- where less restrictive alternatives are appropriate and effective.

Ground restraint carries significant risk and should be avoided wherever possible.

Staff must never use restrictive interventions in a manner that could be considered degrading, abusive or unlawful.

9. Physical Contact That Is Appropriate

Not all physical contact constitutes restrictive intervention.

Appropriate physical contact may include:

- comforting a distressed child;
- guiding or escorting pupils;
- hand-holding with younger children;
- physical support in PE or practical activities;
- first aid;
- assisting pupils with SEND, toileting or medical needs.

Staff should use professional judgement at all times.

The federation does not operate a 'no contact' policy, in line with current DfE guidance.

10. Seclusion

Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure where there is a serious risk of harm and a pupil is experiencing significant emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

Seclusion must:

- never be used as punishment;
- only last for the shortest possible time;
- occur in a safe environment;
- involve continuous supervision;
- stop as soon as the immediate risk reduces.

Incidents involving seclusion must be recorded and reported on CPOMS in accordance with statutory requirements.

11. Pupils with SEND and Additional Needs

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

Staff will seek to understand:

- communication needs;
- sensory needs;
- anxiety triggers;
- trauma responses;
- medical needs;
- environmental factors.

Where appropriate, Risk Assessments will be developed collaboratively with:

- parents/carers;
- SEND staff;
- external professionals;
- the pupil where appropriate.

Plans may include:

- known triggers;
- preferred de-escalation strategies;
- reasonable adjustments;
- communication approaches;
- safe support strategies.

The federation will comply with duties under the Equality Act 2010.

12. Training

The federation will ensure staff receive appropriate information, guidance and training.

This may include:

- behaviour support strategies;
- de-escalation techniques;
- trauma-informed practice;
- positive handling approaches;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- SEND awareness;
- risk assessment.

Staff working regularly with pupils who may require restrictive interventions should receive appropriate specialist training, such as Positive Handling Training.

13. Recording Incidents

The federation will comply with statutory recording requirements introduced in April 2026.

Any significant incident involving the use of force, seclusion or restraint must be recorded on CPOMS as soon as practicable and ideally on the same day.

Records must include:

- names of pupils and staff involved;
- date, time and location;
- duration of incident;
- antecedents and triggers;
- de-escalation strategies used;
- type of intervention used;
- rationale for the intervention;
- any injuries or medical support;
- follow-up actions.

The Executive Headteacher as DSL and/or Deputy DSL's should review incidents promptly.

14. Reporting to Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as practicable following any significant incident involving:

- use of force;
- restraint;
- seclusion.

The federation will aim to inform parents on the same day.

Communication will normally include:

- reason for the intervention;
- nature of the intervention;

- duration;
- any injuries;
- next steps or follow-up.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be invited to discuss:

- triggers;
- successful strategies;
- support plans;
- preventative approaches.

15. Post-Incident Support and Debrief

Following an incident, the federation will:

- check the wellbeing of pupils and staff;
- provide first aid or medical assessment where needed;
- allow time for emotional regulation and recovery;
- hold restorative conversations where appropriate;
- review risk assessments or behaviour support plans;
- identify learning to reduce future incidents.

Pupils who witness distressing incidents may also receive support.

16. Monitoring and Governance

Senior leaders and governors will monitor:

- frequency and patterns of incidents;
- use of restrictive interventions across groups of pupils;
- any disproportionate impact on pupils with SEND or protected characteristics;
- effectiveness of prevention strategies;
- staff training needs.

Governors will receive anonymised summary reports as appropriate.

The federation will use data to improve practice and reduce the need for restrictive interventions.

17. Safeguarding, Complaints and Allegations

All incidents involving restrictive intervention are safeguarding matters.

Complaints will be managed in line with the federation complaints policy.

Allegations against staff will be managed in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- local safeguarding procedures;
- staff disciplinary procedures.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

Governors will:

- approve and review this policy;
- monitor implementation;
- ensure statutory compliance.

Executive Headteacher and Senior Leaders

Leaders will:

- ensure staff understand this policy;
- monitor incidents;
- ensure training is appropriate;
- support staff and pupils.

Staff

Staff will:

- follow this policy;
- prioritise prevention and de-escalation;
- record incidents accurately;
- act lawfully and proportionately.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- work collaboratively with school;
- share information that may support prevention;
- contribute to support planning.

19. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Relationships for Behaviour Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

20. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner following:

- legislative changes;
- updated guidance;
- serious incidents;
- governing body request.

Appendix 1: Key Principles for Staff

Before any restrictive intervention, staff should consider:

Is it necessary?

- Are there safer alternatives?
- Can the situation be de-escalated?

Is it proportionate?

- Is this the least restrictive option?
- Is the minimum force being used?

Is it safe?

- Does the pupil have medical or SEND needs?
- Could this increase risk?

Is the pupil's dignity protected?

- Can this be done more privately?
- Has communication been clear and calm?

Appendix 2: Recording Checklist

Following a significant incident, staff should ensure the CPOMS record includes:

- pupil name;
- staff involved;
- date/time/location;
- trigger/antecedent;
- de-escalation attempted;
- intervention used;
- duration;
- injuries;
- parent communication;
- follow-up actions.

The federation is committed to maintaining safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments where restrictive interventions are minimised through positive relationships, proactive support and effective de-escalation.

Where restrictive intervention becomes necessary, it will always be used lawfully, reasonably, proportionately and with the welfare and dignity of the child at the centre of decision-making.