St John's CofE Primary Academy

Trust Trust Headteacher: Cheryl Heaton

Chair of Combined Local Academy Committee: Zoe Heath

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION POLICY (Including the Use of Reasonable Force)

1. Policy statement and principles

St John's CE Primary Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, nurturing and supportive learning environment in which all pupils are treated with dignity, respect and compassion.

The school recognises that positive relationships, high-quality teaching, effective communication, reasonable adjustments and early intervention are fundamental to promoting positive behaviour and reducing the likelihood of situations requiring restrictive physical intervention.

Restrictive physical intervention will only be used when it is lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances. It will never be used as a punishment or for the convenience of staff.

The school is committed to:

- Prioritising prevention, positive behaviour support and de-escalation.
- Safeguarding the physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Using the least restrictive intervention necessary for the shortest possible time.
- Recognising individual needs, particularly those of pupils with SEND, disabilities, communication difficulties or previous trauma.
- Ensuring staff understand their legal powers, responsibilities and limitations.
- Recording, reporting, reviewing and learning from restrictive interventions.
- Working openly and constructively with parents, carers and relevant professionals.

The school recognises that reasonable physical contact is an appropriate part of caring for and supporting children. This policy does not establish a 'no contact' approach.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, particularly Sections 93 and 93A.
- Department for Education, Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026).
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- DfE guidance on Behaviour in Schools and Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

- Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership and relevant West Midlands safeguarding procedures.

3. Definitions

Restrictive intervention: An action that prevents, restricts or subdues the movement of a pupil's body or part of their body. It includes physical and non-physical forms of restraint.

Reasonable force: Physical force used by school staff in legally permitted circumstances. The amount and duration of force must be no greater than necessary.

Restrictive physical intervention: Direct physical contact used to restrict a pupil's movement, such as holding a pupil to prevent injury.

Restraint: An intervention that immobilises a pupil or restricts their movement, with or without direct physical contact.

Seclusion: A non-disciplinary intervention in which a pupil is confined away from others and prevented from leaving, including through physical obstruction or the belief that leaving will result in punishment.

De-escalation: Strategies used to reduce distress, anxiety, conflict or dysregulation and prevent situations becoming unsafe.

Significant use of force: An incident where force goes beyond ordinary, appropriate physical contact between staff and pupils.

4. Circumstances in which reasonable force may be used

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, school staff may use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

1. Causing injury to themselves or another person.
2. Committing a criminal offence.
3. Damaging property.
4. Causing disorder among pupils at school.

Examples might include intervening to prevent a pupil from seriously injuring another child, stopping a pupil from running into a dangerous road, or preventing a pupil from using an object to cause harm.

The legal power does not mean that physical intervention is automatically justified in every such circumstance.

Staff must consider whether intervention is necessary, whether less restrictive approaches are available and whether the likely benefit outweighs the risk of harm.

The use of force must not be routine or an automatic response to refusal, disruption or non-compliance.

5. Prevention and de-escalation

The school will prioritise preventative approaches and use its knowledge of pupils to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.

Staff will use appropriate strategies, including:

- Developing positive, trusting relationships.
- Establishing consistent expectations and predictable routines.
- Identifying and responding to early signs of distress or dysregulation.
- Using calm language, reassurance and non-threatening body language.
- Allowing appropriate processing time, space and opportunities for self-regulation.
- Offering reasonable choices and alternatives.
- Reducing sensory or environmental triggers.
- Using visual communication and other communication aids where appropriate.
- Seeking support from colleagues before situations escalate.
- Implementing agreed individual behaviour support and risk management plans.

Where possible, staff should allow pupils time to regulate and avoid escalating situations through confrontation, unnecessary demands or public reprimands.

Where a pupil's behaviour presents recurring risks, the school will work with parents, the SENCO and relevant professionals to understand underlying needs and develop appropriate preventative support.

6. Principles governing physical intervention

Before and during any restrictive physical intervention, staff must consider the following:

Principle	Required practice
Necessity	Intervention is required to address an identified risk.
Proportionality	The degree of restriction is proportionate to the risk presented.
Minimum force	No more force is used than is necessary.
Minimum duration	Intervention ends as soon as it is safe to do so.
Safety	Risks to breathing, circulation, physical health and emotional wellbeing are considered.
Dignity	The pupil's privacy, dignity and individual needs are respected.
Communication	Staff explain what is happening where possible and appropriate.
Review	Staff continually assess whether intervention remains necessary.

Staff must immediately reassess an intervention if it appears to be increasing distress or creating additional risks.

7. Unacceptable physical interventions

The following practices are prohibited by school policy:

- Using force as punishment, retaliation, intimidation or humiliation.
- Applying pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen.
- Covering a pupil's mouth or nose or otherwise restricting their airway.
- Using techniques that compromise breathing or circulation.
- Deliberately causing pain to secure compliance.
- Using physical intervention simply because a pupil refuses an instruction.
- Using an intervention that is disproportionate to the risk.
- Continuing restraint once it is no longer necessary.
- Using unauthorised restraint techniques as part of planned behaviour management.

Ground restraint must be avoided. If a pupil is unintentionally restrained on the ground, staff must release or reposition them into a safer position as quickly as possible.

Staff must monitor for signs of physical distress and seek emergency medical assistance where necessary.

8. Seclusion, isolation and removal from classrooms

The school distinguishes between:

- Voluntary regulation: A pupil chooses to access a calm space and is free to leave.
- Classroom removal: A supervised behaviour measure implemented in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Seclusion: A restrictive intervention where a pupil is prevented from leaving a space.

Seclusion must never be used as punishment.

The school's normal approach is not to use seclusion. In an exceptional situation where seclusion is considered necessary to protect others from harm, it must be used only for as long as the immediate risk continues, with continuous supervision, appropriate safeguarding oversight and full recording and reporting.

Pupils must not be locked in rooms or left unsupervised.

Any incident meeting the DfE definition of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the statutory requirements, even if no physical force was used.

9. Pupils with SEND and additional vulnerabilities

The school recognises that some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to physical and psychological harm arising from restrictive interventions.

Staff must take account of:

- SEND and any Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Communication, language and understanding.
- Autism, sensory differences and emotional regulation needs.
- Medical conditions and physical disabilities.
- Previous trauma and adverse childhood experiences.
- Age, developmental stage and physical characteristics.
- Any relevant reasonable adjustments.

Where a pupil is identified as being at increased risk of requiring restrictive intervention, the school will develop an individual risk assessment and behaviour support plan.

The plan should identify known triggers, preventative approaches, de-escalation strategies, communication needs, appropriate responses to identified risks and arrangements for reviewing incidents.

Plans should be developed with parents, the pupil where appropriate, and relevant professionals.

The existence of an individual plan does not provide automatic permission to use restraint. Every intervention must still be justified by the circumstances at the time.

The school will also monitor whether pupils with SEND or other protected characteristics are disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions and take action to address any identified inequalities.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body / Academy Trust

The governing body or proprietor is responsible for ensuring that:

- An appropriate restrictive intervention policy and statutory recording and reporting procedures are in place.
- Staff receive appropriate information and training.
- Relevant legal and safeguarding duties are met.
- Incident data is reviewed to identify patterns, risks and improvement priorities.
- Appropriate oversight and accountability arrangements are maintained.

Trust Trust Headteacher

The Trust Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy, ensuring appropriate risk assessments and training, overseeing significant incidents, communicating with parents and ensuring incidents are reviewed.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will assess safeguarding concerns arising from interventions, ensure appropriate referrals are made and consider whether incidents raise concerns about the conduct of adults or the welfare of children.

SENCO

The SENCO will support individualised planning, reasonable adjustments, risk assessments and liaison with parents and external professionals.

All staff

All staff must understand the policy, prioritise de-escalation, act within their legal powers and competence, report incidents promptly and cooperate with subsequent reviews.

11. Staff training and competence

All staff will receive information on:

- Legal powers and responsibilities.
- The principles of prevention and de-escalation.
- Understanding behaviour as communication.
- SEND, trauma-informed practice and reasonable adjustments.
- Recognising situations in which physical intervention may be justified.
- Safeguarding and the risks associated with restrictive interventions.
- Recording, reporting and post-incident procedures.

Staff identified through risk assessment as likely to require physical intervention skills will receive suitable practical training from an appropriately qualified provider.

Training records, refresher requirements and individual competencies will be maintained.

The school will not assume that attendance at training makes every technique appropriate in every situation.

A member of staff may need to act in an unforeseen emergency, but any intervention must remain lawful, necessary and proportionate.

12. Recording and reporting incidents

All significant incidents involving the use of force must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable. Staff should aim to complete the record on the same day.

The school will also record all incidents of seclusion and non-force restraint as required by the relevant regulations.

The incident record will include:

- Name of the pupil and staff involved.
- Date, time, location and approximate duration.
- Relevant SEND status and individual needs.
- Events leading to the incident and any identified triggers.
- Preventative and de-escalation strategies attempted.
- Nature, degree and duration of the intervention.
- Reasons why intervention was considered necessary.
- Any injuries or other adverse effects.
- Medical attention or support provided.
- Pupil and witness accounts, where appropriate.
- Parent/carer notification and follow-up actions.
- Management review and any changes to future support.

Staff directly involved should provide their own factual accounts. Records must distinguish between observations and interpretations.

The school will use [insert agreed recording system] to maintain secure and accessible records.

Notification to parents

Parents will be informed of significant incidents of force, seclusion and other reportable restraint as soon as practicable, normally on the same day.

The school will explain the circumstances, the intervention used, any injuries or concerns and the steps being taken to support the pupil and review the incident.

Where notifying a parent would be likely to cause significant harm to the pupil, the school will follow the statutory safeguarding exception, including notifying another parent where safe or reporting to the relevant local authority where required.

A previously agreed behaviour support plan does not remove the requirement to record and report a significant incident.

13. Post-incident support and review

Following any restrictive intervention, the school will ensure that:

1. The immediate safety and wellbeing of everyone involved are checked.
2. Appropriate first aid or medical assistance is provided.
3. The pupil receives reassurance and an opportunity to recover.
4. Staff involved are offered appropriate support.
5. A factual incident record is completed.
6. Parents are notified in accordance with statutory requirements.
7. The pupil's views are sought in an age-appropriate and supportive manner.
8. The incident is reviewed to identify what happened, why it happened and how recurrence might be prevented.

Where possible, a member of staff not directly involved will facilitate the post-incident reflection.

The review will consider whether the intervention was necessary and proportionate, whether de-escalation was effective, and whether changes are needed to teaching approaches, staffing, risk assessments, the environment or individual support plans.

The school will also consider the impact on other pupils who witnessed the incident.

14. Safeguarding, allegations and concerns

All restrictive interventions must be consistent with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026.

Where an incident raises concerns that a member of staff may have harmed a child, behaved in a way indicating a risk of harm, or otherwise met the applicable harm threshold, the Trust Headteacher will follow the relevant allegations procedure and seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold will be managed through the school's low-level concerns procedures, where applicable.

Any allegation concerning the Trust Headteacher will be referred through the appropriate governing body or Trust arrangements.

The school will not automatically assume that a physical intervention was inappropriate because a complaint has been made, nor that it was appropriate simply because the staff member believed it was necessary.

All concerns will be considered fairly, promptly and with the child's welfare as the central consideration.

Staff must report safeguarding concerns and must not attempt to investigate allegations themselves.

15. Complaints and parental concerns

Parents and carers may raise concerns about the use of restrictive intervention through the school's Complaints Policy.

The school will ensure that:

- Concerns are listened to and taken seriously.
- Relevant records and accounts are considered.
- Safeguarding matters are referred through the appropriate procedures.
- Responses are transparent while respecting confidentiality.
- Lessons learned inform future practice.

The complaints process must not replace statutory safeguarding or staff allegation procedures.

16. Monitoring, evaluation and governance

The Trust Headteacher will ensure that restrictive intervention incidents are monitored and reviewed.

Analysis will include:

- Frequency and type of intervention.
- Pupils and groups affected, including those with SEND.
- Locations, times and recurring triggers.
- Staff involvement and training needs.
- Duration of interventions.
- Injuries or adverse effects.
- Effectiveness of preventative strategies.
- Repeated incidents involving individual pupils.
- Progress towards reducing the need for restrictive intervention.

An anonymised summary of incidents, trends and improvement actions will be provided to governors or the relevant Trust committee at least termly.

Any significant safeguarding concerns or serious incidents will be escalated immediately through the appropriate procedures.

17. Policy implementation and review

The policy will be communicated to all staff, governors and parents and made accessible through the school's usual policy arrangements.

New staff, including temporary and supply staff, will receive appropriate information during induction.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following significant legislative or guidance changes, a serious incident, safeguarding recommendations or identified weaknesses in practice.

18. Related policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.
- Equality and Accessibility Policies.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Low-Level Concerns and Allegations Procedures.
- Complaints Policy.
- Individual pupil behaviour support plans and risk assessments.