

Restrictive Interventions, including Use of Reasonable Force



Responsible Person: Jack Thompson

September 2026 to September 2027

Purpose

West Street Primary School is committed to providing a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment in which all pupils are respected and supported to learn. This policy:

- Sets out when and how staff may lawfully use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, in line with current UK legislation and guidance.
- Emphasises the duty to minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early intervention, and tailored support.
- Ensures consistent, accountable, and transparent procedures for staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors.
- Protects the welfare, dignity and human rights of pupils and staff.

Legal framework and definitions

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Education Act 1996 and subsequent relevant legislation
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE guidance: “Use of reasonable force in schools” (and successor publications)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest edition)
- Relevant local authority guidance and any sector-specific guidance
- The school’s safeguarding and behaviour policies

Definitions

- Restrictive intervention: any response that restricts a pupil’s movement, liberty or freedom to act. This includes the use of reasonable force, restraint, and seclusion.
- Reasonable force: any force used that is proportionate, necessary and the least intrusive option to prevent harm or damage and to maintain safety.
- Seclusion: the supervised confinement of a pupil alone in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving. (Seclusion must only be used where lawful and in line with this policy.)
- Restraint: the use of physical contact to prevent, restrict or subdue a pupil’s movement (standing, sitting or lying).

Scope and principles

- This policy applies to all employees of West Street Primary School, volunteers, supply staff, pupils, governors and contractors on school premises or at school-led activities off-site.
- Restrictive interventions must only be used when there is a clear, immediate risk to the safety of a pupil, other pupils, a member of staff, or where there is significant risk of serious damage to property.
- Interventions must be lawful, necessary, proportionate, the least restrictive option for the shortest possible time, and carried out with respect for the pupil's dignity.
- The school will prioritise prevention, de-escalation and reasonable adjustments so that restrictive interventions are rare.
- The school will keep accurate records of all incidents and use data to review practice, identify patterns and reduce disproportionate use.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing Board

- Ensure the school has an accessible, up-to-date policy aligned to legal duties (Human Rights Act, Equality Act).
- Ensure robust arrangements for recording, reporting and reviewing use of restrictive interventions, and that these are complied with.
- Regularly review data to identify patterns (including any disproportionate use for pupils with protected characteristics, those with SEND or other vulnerabilities) and ensure improvement actions.
- Ensure staff receive suitable training, and that the policy is resourced and implemented.

Headteacher / Senior Leaders

- Ensure the policy is implemented consistently and that staff know when and how to use restrictive interventions.
- Ensure staff receive regular, appropriate training (including de-escalation and decision-making under pressure).

- Ensure incident reporting, post-incident support and liaison with parents/carers are completed promptly.
- Carry out reviews of serious incidents and ensure learning is shared.
- Make reasonable adjustments so pupils with SEND are supported and protected under the Equality Act 2010.

All staff (including supply and volunteers)

- Follow this policy and associated procedures.
- Prioritise preventing and de-escalating behaviours that might lead to restrictive interventions.
- Take part in training and use agreed strategies and risk-reduction plans for pupils.
- Record and report any use of restrictive interventions promptly and accurately.

Parents / Carers

- Work collaboratively with the school to reduce risks and support behaviour plans and strategies.
- Be informed when a restrictive intervention has been used involving their child, and provided with an opportunity to discuss the incident.

Pupils

- Be supported to understand expectations and to develop strategies for managing emotions and behaviour.
- Be treated with dignity and respect whenever interventions are used.

When restrictive interventions may be used- decision-making framework

Staff may use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions only where:

- It is necessary to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or others; or
- It is necessary to prevent a criminal offence; or
- To remove a pupil from the scene where continuing behaviour is seriously disrupting learning or poses a safety risk; or
- To prevent serious damage to property.

Decision-making considerations (always document rationale):

- Is the intervention necessary? Have less restrictive alternatives been considered and attempted?
- Is the intervention proportionate to the risk, the pupil's age, size, medical condition, SEND, and other vulnerabilities?
- Will the intervention reduce the risk or could it escalate the situation?
- Has the pupil's welfare and dignity been considered (location, privacy, ability to process communication)?
- Is there time to consult another trained colleague? If not, has the decision been made in the pupil's best interests?

Types of restrictive interventions and examples

Acceptable (when necessary, lawful, proportionate and recorded):

- Physical guidance to lead a pupil away (e.g., light touch on arm).
- Holding to prevent harmful behaviour (minimal force, designed to release quickly).
- Blocking a pupil's path to prevent them from running into danger.
- Removing a weapon or item that could be used to cause harm.
- Temporary separation in a visible, safe space with supervision (only if agreed in advance in a behaviour plan or in an emergency where seclusion is the only option).

Prohibited or highly restricted:

- Any action that causes pain or is deliberately intended to punish.
- Using prone (face-down) restraint unless an authorised, clinically justified procedure exists and staff are specifically trained and it is lawful under local protocols.
- Seclusion or confinement without adequate supervision and without following the policy.
- Any intervention that breaches pupil dignity or human rights.

Minimising the use of restrictive interventions — prevention and de-escalation

Whole-school measures:

- Positive behaviour culture aligned with school vision and values; consistent expectations across school.

- Carefully designed environment (classroom arrangement, safe spaces, visual timetables).
- High-quality teaching and differentiation to reduce frustration.
- Promotion of emotional literacy, restorative approaches and social-emotional learning.
- Clear routines for transitions, communal areas and playtimes.
- Consistent staff language, non-confrontational tone and respectful behaviour management.

Individual measures:

- Individual behaviour support plans and risk assessments co-produced with parents, CFW, external professionals and the pupil where appropriate.
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, long-term medical or communication needs.
- Early identification and targeted interventions for pupils at risk (speech and language support, counselling, ELSA, CAMHS referrals).
- Personalised de-escalation plans, with triggers, early warning signs and effective strategies.

Training and competence

- All staff will receive initial training on the policy and de-escalation approaches on induction, refreshed annually.
- Some staff will receive accredited training covering legal/ethical context, safe techniques, restraint avoidance, and post-incident practice.
- Training will include how to make rapid, reasonable judgements, taking account of Equality Act and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Training records and competency assessments must be maintained.

Recording, reporting and data monitoring

Immediate actions after an incident:

- Ensure safety and provide first aid if needed.
- Reassure and support the pupil and others involved; separate and supervise as appropriate.
- Inform senior leaders as soon as possible.

Recording:

- Complete the school's restrictive intervention incident record within [specified timeframe — e.g., 24 hours]. The record must include:
 - Date, time and location
 - Names of pupils and staff involved, and witnesses
 - Description of behaviour leading to the intervention
 - The intervention used, duration and rationale (necessity and proportionality)
 - Any injuries or medical treatment provided
 - The outcome and any immediate follow-up actions
 - Confirmation that parents/carers were informed and when
 - Reference to any existing risk assessment/behaviour plan
- Retain records securely and in accordance with data protection requirements.

Reporting:

- Notify parents/carers without delay (same day where possible) with a clear account, offer opportunity to discuss, and provide a copy of the incident record.
- Report to the governing body in agreed timescales and provide summary data for monitoring.
- Reportable incidents (as required by local authority, DfE or other statutory guidance) should be escalated.

Data monitoring and analysis:

- Senior leaders and governors will regularly examine trends and patterns, including disproportionate use by protected characteristics, SEND status or repeat incidents.
- Use findings to review and update policies, training and individual pupil plans.

Responding to complaints and allegations

- Any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with through the school's complaints procedure.
- If an allegation is made that a member of staff used force improperly, follow procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education, local safeguarding arrangements and staff disciplinary

processes. This includes consideration of suspension where appropriate.

- Maintain clear communication with parents during any investigation.

Safeguarding, medical and equality considerations

- Consider medical conditions (e.g., asthma, epilepsy), mental health conditions and trauma history before any intervention. Consult healthcare plans and medical professionals where relevant.
- Treat pupils with disabilities and other vulnerabilities in line with the Equality Act 2010, making reasonable adjustments to reduce the need for restrictive interventions.
- Where pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or identified needs, ensure behaviour support plans and risk assessments are coherent with this policy and routinely reviewed.
- If use of force has safeguarding implications or causes injury, follow safeguarding procedures and report as required.

Communication with pupils, parents/carers and the wider community

- Ensure the policy is accessible to staff, pupils, parents and governors. Publish it on the school website.
- Provide parents with information about the school's approach to behaviour, restrictive interventions, and how incidents will be reported and reviewed.
- Engage parents in co-producing behaviour support plans and risk assessments.
- Promote pupil voice — involve pupils in developing de-escalation strategies and reviewing incidents where appropriate.

Governance, review and quality assurance

- Senior leaders will produce termly reports to governors on restrictive interventions (anonymised where appropriate) covering:
 - Number and type of incidents
 - Pupils involved and their characteristics (e.g., SEND, FSM, protected characteristics) — with attention to proportionality and small number caveats
 - Staff training records
 - Actions taken to reduce incidents

- The governing body will ensure external review if patterns indicate systemic issues or disproportionate use.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes or incidents indicate need.

Purpose and context

- At West Street Primary School, physical interventions and seclusion are used only rarely, as we strive to be as proactive as possible in preventing situations where such measures may become necessary. However, we also recognise that, on occasion, these interventions cannot be avoided and may be required in order to safeguard both children and adults within the school.

Legal and governance arrangements

- Our policy falls in line with Department for Education statutory guidance, including *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* (2026) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and reflects best practice in safeguarding, behaviour management, and the welfare of all pupils and staff.
- The named governor for Restrictive Intervention and Safeguarding oversight is **Lauren Sharpe**

Risk assessment and individual plans

- A list of pupils where restrictive interventions are needed on a regular basis, as part of their care plan or Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) to safeguard them and others, is kept on our internal school system.
- Where this is part of a child's plan, parents are invited into school to discuss how this looks for their child with the SENDCo and class teacher.

Training and competence

- Staff that may be required to use restrictive interventions or seclusion as part of a child's IBP or care plan, or those staff identified as more likely to intervene physically when required, are offered Safer Handling training on an annual basis.

Decision-making, de-escalation and interventions

At West Street Primary School, staff will always prioritise the use of least-restrictive strategies to support pupils and de-escalate situations. These include, but are not limited to:

- Positive behaviour management approaches, including praise, reassurance, and clear, calm communication
- Use of distraction, redirection, and offering choices to support regulation
- Allowing time and space for pupils to self-regulate, including access to a safe or quiet area where appropriate
- Adjusting the environment or task to reduce triggers or demands
- Use of individual support strategies as outlined in behaviour plans, risk assessments, or EHCPs
- Seeking support from another member of staff to assist with de-escalation
- Physical intervention or seclusion will only be considered when these strategies have been unsuccessful, are inappropriate in the circumstances, or where there is an immediate risk of harm.

Where possible, staff should seek support from a senior member of staff during an escalating incident. This may include the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, SENCo, or another designated safeguarding or behaviour lead.

However, all staff have a duty of care to act in the best interests of the child and others. In situations where there is an immediate risk of harm and it is not possible to consult with senior staff, the member of staff present must use their professional judgement to take appropriate and proportionate action to ensure safety.

Following any such incident, the member of staff must report the incident to a senior leader as soon as possible and ensure that it is recorded in line with school procedures.

Recording and reporting

- Incidents of this nature will be written up using a template stored on the staff Google Drive. A copy of this will then be logged on CPOMs and a written copy will be provided to parents that day. Prior to parents receiving a copy in writing, parents will be informed of the incident via telephone and invited into school discuss.
- Post- incident, those involved in the physical intervention/ seclusion will meet to reflect and use it to inform future implementation.

Data monitoring and governance

- Incidents of physical interventions will be relayed to Governors on a termly basis as part of the Headteachers Report.

At West Street Primary School, all incidents involving physical intervention or seclusion are taken seriously and are recorded and monitored. A review will be triggered where patterns, concerns, or significant incidents arise. Thresholds include, but are not limited to:

- Any incident resulting in injury to a pupil or member of staff
- Repeated use of physical intervention or seclusion involving the same pupil
- An escalation in frequency, duration, or intensity of incidents
- Any incident involving a high level of risk or significant distress to the pupil
- Concerns raised by staff, parents/carers, or the pupil themselves
- Any incident where procedures outlined in this policy have not been followed

An **internal review** will typically involve the Headteacher, SENCo, and relevant staff, and may result in updates to risk assessments, behaviour support plans, or additional staff training.

An **external review** may be sought where concerns remain, or where additional specialist input is required. This may involve consultation with external professionals such as the Local Authority, Educational Psychologist, Behaviour Support Services, or safeguarding partners.

The purpose of all reviews is to ensure that practice remains safe, proportionate, and in the best interests of the child, with a continued focus on reducing the need for restrictive interventions.

Safeguarding and equality

At West Street Primary School, we are committed to making reasonable adjustments to support pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in order to minimise the need for restrictive interventions. This includes:

- Developing and implementing individualised support plans, risk assessments, and, where applicable, EHCP provision that reflect each pupil's needs
- Adapting teaching approaches, communication methods, and the curriculum to ensure accessibility and reduce frustration or anxiety
- Providing predictable routines, clear structures, and visual supports where appropriate
- Identifying and reducing known triggers through environmental adjustments and proactive planning
- Ensuring access to safe spaces or sensory regulation strategies to support self-regulation
- Involving the SENCo, parents/carers, and relevant external professionals in planning and reviewing support strategies
- Providing staff with appropriate training in SEND, de-escalation, and trauma-informed approaches

These adjustments are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and responsive to the pupil's changing needs.

The school is committed to ensuring that restrictive interventions are used fairly, proportionately, and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

To support this, the school will:

- Record and analyse all incidents of physical intervention and seclusion, including relevant pupil characteristics (e.g. SEND, disability, gender, ethnicity)
- Regularly review data to identify any patterns or disproportionate use linked to protected characteristics
- Report findings to senior leadership and, where appropriate, governors
- Take action where disparities are identified, including reviewing practice, adapting support plans, and providing targeted staff training
- Seek input from external agencies where needed to support equitable and inclusive practice

- Engage with pupils and parents/carers to understand experiences and ensure that approaches are respectful and appropriate

The aim of this monitoring is to promote inclusive practice, reduce inequalities, and continually minimise the use of restrictive interventions across the school.

Post-incident support and learning

Following any incident involving physical intervention or seclusion, West Street Primary School is committed to ensuring that both pupils and staff are supported through structured debrief and restorative processes.

- **Pupil debrief:** As soon as appropriate, and once the pupil is calm and regulated, a supportive debrief will take place with a trusted adult. This will focus on helping the pupil understand what happened, identify feelings and triggers, and explore alternative strategies for the future. The approach will be age-appropriate, non-judgemental, and trauma-informed.
- **Staff debrief:** Staff involved in the incident will have the opportunity to debrief with a senior leader. This will include reflection on what occurred, what strategies were effective, and any support or guidance needed. Staff wellbeing will be prioritised throughout.
- **Trauma-informed support:** Where needed, additional support will be put in place for pupils, recognising that behaviour may be a form of communication. This may include pastoral support, access to a safe adult, adapted provision, or referral to external services.
- **Restorative work:** Where appropriate, restorative conversations will be facilitated between those involved to rebuild relationships, repair harm, and support reintegration into the classroom. This will always be voluntary, carefully managed, and appropriate to the pupil's level of understanding and emotional readiness.
- **Recording:** All debriefs and outcomes will be recorded in line with school procedures to ensure accountability and inform future planning.

West Street Primary School is committed to continuous improvement in practice and reducing the need for restrictive interventions.

- All incidents will be reviewed by senior leaders to identify patterns, triggers, and areas for development
- Key learning points will be shared with relevant staff through briefings, supervision, and training sessions

- Where trends or concerns are identified, targeted training will be provided (e.g. de-escalation techniques, SEND strategies, trauma-informed practice)
- Risk assessments, behaviour support plans, and individual provision will be updated in response to learning from incidents
- The school's policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly, and sooner if required, to reflect emerging best practice and lessons learned
- Governors will be informed of trends and significant findings as part of their monitoring role

This approach ensures that the school continually refines its practice, strengthens staff confidence, and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Seclusion and supervised separation

At West Street Primary School, supervised separation or seclusion will only be used in exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from causing serious harm to themselves or others, or to prevent significant damage to property. It will only be considered where all appropriate de-escalation and least-restrictive strategies have been attempted or are not possible due to the immediacy of the risk.

Seclusion will never be used as a punishment, for staff convenience, or as a response to non-compliance alone.

The following safeguards will always be in place:

- The intervention must be reasonable, proportionate, and for the shortest time necessary
- The pupil will be continuously supervised by a member of staff
- The environment used will be safe, suitable, and not compromise the pupil's welfare or dignity
- The pupil will have access to basic needs (e.g. ventilation, hydration, toileting where appropriate)
- The pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing will be monitored throughout
- A senior member of staff will be informed as soon as possible
- Parents/carers will be informed following the incident in line with school procedures
- The use of seclusion will be planned for, where possible, within individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans

The school will ensure that all seclusion events are managed safely, respectfully, and transparently.

- **Supervision:** A member of staff will maintain continuous supervision at all times. The pupil will not be left alone without oversight, and staff will remain alert to any changes in risk or wellbeing
- **Dignity:** The pupil will be treated with respect throughout. Staff will use calm, reassuring communication, avoid unnecessary restriction, and ensure privacy is maintained as far as possible
- **Monitoring:** The duration of the seclusion will be kept to the absolute minimum, with regular checks and clear criteria for ending the intervention as soon as it is safe to do so
- **Documentation:** Incidents will be recorded as soon as possible on the same day, including the reason for the intervention, strategies used prior to seclusion, duration, staff involved, and outcomes
- **Oversight:** Records will be reviewed by senior leaders to ensure compliance with policy and identify any patterns or concerns
- **Communication:** Parents/carers will be informed promptly, and, where appropriate, the pupil will be supported to reflect on the incident through a debrief

These measures ensure that any use of seclusion remains a last resort, is carried out safely, and is subject to clear accountability and review.

Complaints and allegations

West Street Primary School takes all complaints and allegations relating to the use of physical intervention or seclusion seriously and will respond in line with safeguarding procedures and guidance from the Department for Education, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Steps staff must follow:

- Report the concern immediately to the Headteacher or, in their absence, the Deputy Headteacher
- Where the concern involves a safeguarding issue or allegation against a member of staff, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay
- The DSL/Headteacher will consider the concern and, where appropriate, follow procedures for managing allegations, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- Staff must make a clear, factual written record of the incident as soon as possible, including any actions taken and observations, avoiding opinion or speculation
- Staff must maintain confidentiality and not discuss the matter outside of appropriate professional channels
- Staff are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation, whether internal or external

Designated contacts:

- The **Headteacher** is the primary point of contact for parents/carers in relation to complaints
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is responsible for managing safeguarding concerns and liaising with external agencies
- Where appropriate, the school will liaise with the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** and other relevant professionals during any investigation

Parents/carers will be kept informed in line with school procedures, and all concerns will be handled fairly, transparently, and in a timely manner, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all involved.

Record retention and data protection

West Street Primary School will ensure that all records relating to physical intervention and seclusion are retained and managed in accordance with statutory requirements and best practice, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

- Records of incidents will be kept securely as part of the pupil's safeguarding or behaviour file
- In line with national guidance, records relating to safeguarding and child protection will typically be retained until the pupil reaches the age of 25, or longer where there is a clear safeguarding or legal reason to do so
- Access to records will be restricted to authorised staff only, such as senior leaders and safeguarding personnel, on a need-to-know basis
- All records will be stored securely, whether in electronic or paper format, with appropriate measures in place to prevent unauthorised access, loss, or disclosure

- Information will be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently, and only for legitimate purposes.
- When records are no longer required, they will be disposed of securely in line with the school's data retention and disposal procedures

The school will regularly review its data handling practices to ensure ongoing compliance and to protect the rights and privacy of pupils, staff, and families.

Summary

West Street Primary School recognises the rare but necessary circumstances in which restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, may be required to ensure safety. The school will:

- Prioritise prevention, de-escalation and tailored support to reduce occurrences.
- Ensure any restrictive intervention is lawful, necessary, proportionate and the least restrictive option.
- Record and review incidents, involve parents and governors, and take action to reduce future need.