

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

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1. Statement of intent

This policy acknowledges Lancashire County Council's Restrictive Physical Intervention Protocol, previous joint guidance from DfES and DoH on restrictive physical intervention, and DfE guidance on reasonable force.

Reasonable force means the minimum force necessary for the shortest time necessary to prevent injury, damage to property, serious disruption or the commission of an offence.

Acorns Primary School is committed to being a nurturing environment prioritising positive mental health, educational attainment, wellbeing, and

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positive behaviour. Through a robust system of care, guidance, and support, all pupils are enabled to thrive and achieve their best educational and social outcomes.

This policy aligns with the OFSTED 2026 inspection framework, ensuring that safeguarding arrangements take account of the increased vulnerability of pupils with SEND and that restrictive physical interventions are used only as a last resort, proportionate, and in the best interests of the child.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2024) 'Behaviour and discipline in schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2022) 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2021, updated 2026) 'Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges'

It operates alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Social and Emotional Needs Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Data Protection Policy

3. Policy aims

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils ensure good order and positive responses to support strategies. Restrictive

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physical intervention is only used in exceptional circumstances and forms a small part of a holistic approach to behaviour management and support.

All staff will:

- Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care.
- Receive appropriate, regular training, including induction and refresher sessions, tailored to the needs of pupils with SEND and complex behaviours.

4. School culture

The school adopts a whole-school approach to care, guidance, and support for all pupils. The governing body ensures this approach is integrated across policies, procedures, and the curriculum.

The headteacher and SLT promote a positive environment by modelling respectful communication, positive behaviour, and care. Staff are supported in their own mental health and wellbeing to enable effective support for pupils.

Staff will ensure that pupils are aware that their health, wellbeing, safety and progress are of the highest priority to the school and that all pupils know where they can access support and guidance when they need it. The SLT will ensure that there are clear processes in place to reduce any stigma related to speaking out about their wellbeing and to make pupils feel comfortable enough to approach staff to discuss their wellbeing and progress.

The Behaviour Policy and Child-on-child Abuse Policy (contained within the Safeguarding Policy) ensure all pupils are treated with respect and that bullying or abuse is handled effectively, considering vulnerabilities and wellbeing.

5. Underpinning values

Everyone in the school community has the right to:

- Recognition of their unique identity

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- Respect and dignity
- A safe learning and working environment
- Protection from harm, violence, and verbal abuse

Pupils and their parents have the right to:

- Individual consideration by staff responsible for their care
- Clear information about school rules, policies, and expected conduct
- Support Plans and Positive Handling Plans tailored to their needs
- Access to the school's complaints procedure

6. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body:

- Ensure care, guidance, and support are integrated throughout school operations
- Provide high-quality pastoral support
- Implement educational support interventions

Headteacher:

- Oversee care, welfare, behaviour, and progress of pupils
- Support staff in policy implementation
- Oversee outcomes of interventions
- Liaise with future education providers for smooth transitions
- Lead whole-school mental health approach and engagement with pupils and parents
- Liaise with external professionals and agencies

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Support and advise staff on safety, safeguarding, and welfare
- Liaise with mental health leads and support teams

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Staff:

- Model positive behaviour
- Address poor behaviour, bullying, and abuse according to policies
- Provide unbiased, age-appropriate careers guidance
- Collaborate to ensure inclusive care, guidance, and support
- Support pupils to achieve their best outcomes

7. Pastoral care

Pastoral care is embedded throughout school life to support pupil wellbeing consistently. Activities include student councils, school plays, community visits, ELSA sessions, pet therapy, and an open-door policy for pupils to discuss issues.

Support plans are personalised and may involve one-to-one ELSA, parental monitoring meetings, play/lego therapy, and engagement with health services.

Pupil feedback is regularly collected to improve pastoral support.

8. Safety and supervision

Pupil safety and welfare are paramount. The headteacher ensures adequate supervision and adherence to safeguarding procedures. Immediate risks are reported to Children's Social Care or police as required.

9. Behaviour

The school promotes high behavioural standards with an emphasis on prevention and support, recognising behaviour as communication of unmet needs.

Behaviour strategies focus on:

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- Staff modelling desired behaviour
- Promoting self-esteem and positive relationships
- Praising positive behaviour
- Early pastoral intervention (ELSA)
- Meeting pupils' needs holistically (Maslow's hierarchy)
- Positive parental relationships
- Strong pupil-staff relationships

Wherever possible, restrictive physical intervention will be undertaken by staff appropriately trained in Team Teach, recognised by Lancashire County Council. However, any member of staff may use reasonable force where lawful and necessary to prevent injury, serious damage to property, or disorder.

10. Minimising the need to use force

The school fosters a calm environment encouraging independence, choice, and inclusion to reduce incidents requiring restrictive intervention.

All staff are trained in de-escalation and defusing techniques. Individualised approaches address specific behavioural needs with consistent strategies across staff.

Support Plans detail proactive and reactive strategies, including restrictive intervention only when necessary and proportionate.

Personalised programmes support pupils with sensory integration or anxiety issues.

11. Definitions of positive handling

Physical contact: Appropriate, age- and person-appropriate contact supporting care and curriculum access, e.g. appropriate contact that provides reassurance and support consistent with safeguarding guidance, pupil age, developmental needs and individual circumstances

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Physical intervention: Guiding or leading a compliant pupil to divert from disruptive actions.

Restraint and Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI): Use of force to control behaviour in extreme circumstances, only as a last resort when risks of not intervening outweigh risks of intervention.

All incidents are recorded on CPOMs with injury reports completed as needed. If a restrictive physical intervention has been used, parents should be informed with a phone call and a 'Parent/Carer notification: restrictive physical intervention' form should be completed to send home on the day of the intervention, alongside CPOMS reports.

12. Seclusion, time out and withdrawal

- **Seclusion:** Forced isolation in a locked room is considered restrictive intervention and is avoided.
- **Time out:** Withdrawal of positive reinforcement in a space pupils may leave freely, used as part of planned support.
- **Withdrawal:** Removing pupils from distressing situations to calm under continuous observation.

13. Planned and emergency physical interventions

Planned interventions are outlined in Support Plans and Positive Handling Plans, often involving Team Teach techniques.

Emergency interventions are proportionate, use minimum force, and lead to updated support plans.

Positive Handling is a proactive, holistic strategy aligned with school ethos and staff responsibilities.

14. Supporting following an incident

The school commits to learning opportunities post-incident, enabling pupils to take responsibility at an appropriate developmental level.

Team Teach techniques aim to avoid injury, but accidental bruising may occur and is recorded.

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Support is provided to staff and pupils to repair relationships and maintain a positive learning environment. Staff should also reflect on possible triggers and preventative strategies, and update pupils' 'social and emotional plans' as required.

15. Monitoring and review

The deputy headteacher and governing body review this policy annually and after any serious incidents. Monitoring and analysis will be undertaken by Team Teach tutors and the SLT/DSLs to identify trends, patterns and areas of concern. Changes are communicated to all staff.

Signed:

Laura Hall

Headteacher

September 2026

Next scheduled review: September 2027