Dene House Primary School

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Restrictive Interventions Policy

In line with statutory guidance:

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools
Guidance for schools in England
April 2026



Date of last review: September 2026

Date of next review: September 2027

Lead member of staff: Mr L Blake (Head Teacher)

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Purpose

- To keep pupils, staff and others safe by minimising the need to use restrictive interventions (including reasonable force) and ensuring any use is lawful, necessary, proportionate and in the pupil's best interests.
- To support a calm, safe and inclusive learning environment through preventative strategies, de-escalation and appropriate staff training.

'All staff have responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn' (KCSIE 2025).

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors working in or for the school, including temporary and agency staff, across all activities on school premises and during off-site activities where the school has responsibility.

It covers:

- Reasonable force (as defined by law) and other restrictive interventions
- Seclusion (where applicable under regulatory duties)
- Non-force related restraint and other physical contact
- Searches of pupils and their possessions (where there are reasonable grounds to suspect prohibited items)

There are many circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils. 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 high five or fist bump

• 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:

• our child protection policy

• the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present

• the individual pupil's age

Legal and policy context

This policy reflects statutory duties and non-statutory guidance concerning recording and reporting significant incidents involving use of force (Education and Inspections Act 2006, as amended; and relevant regulations from 2025/2026).

It recognises the safeguarding and human rights framework, and the need for equality and SEND considerations.

Key definitions

Restrictive intervention: any action that prevents, restricts, or subdues movement of a pupil's body or part of it (including physical and non-physical methods).

Reasonable force: the minimum force necessary in the circumstances, used for the shortest time possible.

Seclusion: confining a pupil away from others and preventing them from leaving a space by obstruction or threat of punishment (to be used only when appropriate and lawful; see statutory guidance).

Restraint: a non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or substantially restricts movement; may or may not involve physical contact.
Significant incident: an incident involving force beyond normal, everyday physical contact between staff and pupils or involving other restrictive interventions.

Prohibited items: items listed in law; searches may be conducted with reasonable force if required to locate such items (subject to statutory guidance).

Roles and responsibilities

Governing body:

- Ensure a clear policy is in place and that staff receive appropriate training.
- Ensure effective data collection, reporting, and oversight of use of restrictive interventions.
- Ensure safeguarding, equality, SEND and health and safety considerations are integrated.

School leaders (Headteacher and SLT):

- Implement policy, risk assessments, and prevention strategies.
- Ensure staff training, supervision, and support; review incident data; promote a culture of de-escalation and inclusion.

All staff and volunteers:

- Use restrictive interventions only when lawful, necessary, proportionate, and as a last resort.
- Prioritise de-escalation, avoidance of escalation, and safeguarding of all pupils.
- Attend training as arranged; seek support when needed.

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and special educational needs staff:

- Ensure SEND considerations are embedded; provide targeted strategies and supports as appropriate.
- Contribute to risk assessments and individual plans (e.g., for pupils with SEND).

Training and risk assessments

All staff likely to need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions will receive training in:

- Lawful use of force
- Safe holding techniques and positioning (Team Teach minimising risk to airway, breathing, circulation)
- De-escalation and safe alternatives
- Safeguarding, consent and pupil welfare
- Recording, reporting and communication with families

Individual risk assessments must be carried out for any pupils identified as being at risk of needing restrictive interventions and these must be shared with parents and reviewed at least termly.

Prevention, de-escalation, and formative support

At Dene House Primary we implement proactive strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions, including:

- Positive behaviour approaches and consistent expectations
- Early identification of pupils at risk of escalation and tailored support
- Relationship-building, trauma-informed approaches where relevant
- Clear, age-appropriate rules and routines
- Access to alternative strategies (calm-down spaces, sensory supports)

Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions

All staff may use reasonable force to prevent:

- Injury to self or others
- A pupil from committing a criminal offence

At Dene House Primary School, designated and trained staff (Mr Blake, Mr Leyland) may also use reasonable force to prevent:

- Damage to property
- Disruption of the learning environment

The use of force must be proportionate, measured, and used for the shortest time necessary.

Staff must not use force as a punishment or to cause harm; any use of force must be appropriate to the pupil and the situation.

The school recognises that restraint, including seated or standing, poses risks and should be used only when necessary and as a last resort

If a pupil is restrained in a way that affects airway, breathing, or circulation, staff must release promptly and seek medical assessment if needed.

The school will not employ restraint methods that could cause unnecessary harm or long-term injury.

All incidents involving seclusion or restraint are to be recorded and reported in line with statutory requirements

Use of reasonable force for searching

Headteachers and permitted staff may search a pupil or their possessions if there are reasonable grounds to suspect they have a prohibited item.

Reasonable force may be used to search for legally prohibited items, not items banned under school rules only.

Schools should follow the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance for procedural details.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention and should only be used in authorised, lawful circumstances. It is not a disciplinary measure.

It should be considered only when less restrictive means have been attempted or are unlikely to be effective and when there is a risk to the pupil or others that justifies withdrawal from others for safety or significant disruption to the learning environment.

Seclusion must be used in a way that is proportionate to the risk presented and for the shortest time necessary to manage the risk to safety and return to a calm environment with regular reassessment of the situation.

It must be implemented in a setting that is appropriate and safe, with appropriate supervision and oversight. The space used must be suitable for this purpose and allow for monitoring and safeguarding. Example spaces in school suitable for seclusion include the hall, outdoors, internal quad, The Nook and SLT office areas.

Two members of staff should be present wherever possible with a line of sight and method for contacting help.

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded in detail (what led to seclusion, what was done, duration, who was involved, location, any injuries, aftercare and communications with parents).

Recording and reporting

The governing body must ensure that significant incidents involving the use of restrictive interventions are recorded and reported to parents in a timely manner, per statutory requirements.

Recording:

- A clear, factual, timely account of the incident, including:
- Date, time, location
- People involved (pupils and staff)
- The circumstances leading to the incident
- The type of intervention used (including duration and any equipment used)
- Outcomes for the pupil and others
- Any injuries and actions taken (including medical assessment if relevant)
- Post-incident support and follow-up actions

All records should be stored securely and kept in accordance with data protection rules.

Reporting:

- Incidents must be reported to parents in a timely manner as required by policy and statutory guidance.

- Headteacher or designated senior leader to notify governing body and Local Authority where required.

- For seclusion or restraint, comply with the specific reporting duties set out in the relevant regulations (Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England, April 2026).

- Maintain a dataset of restrictive interventions to monitor trends, identify training needs and support safeguarding oversight.

- Data will be reviewed regularly by the governing body and used to inform ongoing prevention and staff support.

SEND considerations

At Dene House Primary, we recognise that some pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to escalation. Interventions should be tailored and justified on an individual basis.

All pupils with SEND, who may need restrictive interventions, must have up-to-date risk assessments and individual support plans that inform expectations and safeguarding strategies.

Staff will receive targeted training and supervision to support pupils with SEND and to apply any necessary restrictive interventions safely and proportionately.

Support for pupils and staff

Pupils involved in restrictive interventions will receive appropriate post-incident care, including opportunities to discuss the event, access to pastoral support, and reassurances about safety.

Staff involved in incidents will receive debrief and wellbeing support, with access to supervision if needed.

External help will be sought if required (e.g., medical assessment, mental health support).

Complaints and allegations

Parents have the right to raise concerns or complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions.

School will handle complaints in accordance with safeguarding procedures and the our formal complaints policy.

Any allegations about staff misuse of restrictive interventions will be treated seriously and investigated promptly in line with safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

Incidents outside school hours and off-site

If an incident occurs during activities under school responsibility but outside school premises (e.g., trips), staff should follow the same policies and ensure proper recording and reporting.

Governance and monitoring

The governing body will receive regular data reports on restrictive interventions to monitor trends, evaluate the effectiveness of prevention measures and ensure compliance with statutory duties.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes.