



Physical Intervention Policy

Adopted by the Local Governing Bodies of
New Road Primary and Nursery School and Park Lane
Primary and Nursery School
on 30th June and 7th July 2026

Policy reference:

This policy is to be reviewed:

Annually

The next review date is:

June 2027

Review is the responsibility of:

The Local Governing Bodies of New
Road Primary and Nursery School and
Park Lane Primary and Nursery School

Review History

Review ratified:

30th June 2026 (New Road) and 7th July
2026 (Park Lane)

Review ratified:

Review ratified:

Authorised by:

Revisions made:

[illegible]

Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy

(DfE Aligned – April 2026)

1. Policy Statement

This school is committed to safeguarding pupils' welfare, dignity and human rights. Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force and seclusion, are used **only as a last resort** when they are **lawful, necessary and proportionate** to prevent serious harm.

The school prioritises **prevention, early intervention and de-escalation** to minimise the need for restrictive practices and supports staff to act confidently and lawfully to keep pupils safe.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working with pupils:

- on the school site;
- during off-site activities;
- on school-led visits or transport.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy

Physical Contact

The school does **not** operate a “no contact” policy.

- Schools must not adopt “no touch” approaches that prevent staff from acting reasonably to protect pupils.
- The school will not accept requests from parents or staff that reasonable force or other lawful restrictive interventions must never be used.

There are circumstances where **appropriate physical contact** does not constitute reasonable force, including:

- providing first aid;
- guiding or escorting pupils;
- comforting a distressed pupil;
- congratulating or praising pupils (e.g. handshake, pat on the back);
- demonstrating techniques in PE, music or sports coaching.

In deciding whether physical contact is appropriate, staff must use professional judgement and consider:

- safeguarding policies;

- the pupil's age and understanding;
- whether others are present;
- SEND, trauma or vulnerability factors;
- whether non-physical alternatives are available.

3. Definitions (DfE-Aligned)

Restrictive Intervention

Any action (physical or non-physical) that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement or freedom to act.

Reasonable Force

Proportionate physical contact used to control or restrain a pupil to prevent harm. All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances.

Restraint

A non-disciplinary intervention that restricts a pupil's movement, with or without direct physical contact.

Seclusion

A non-disciplinary intervention in which a pupil is placed in a space they cannot freely leave. Seclusion must always be supervised.

Significant Incident

Any incident where force goes beyond everyday physical contact, including restraint, non-force restraint or seclusion.

4. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

All staff may use reasonable force **only** to:

- prevent injury to the pupil or others;
- prevent a criminal offence;
- prevent serious damage to property;
- prevent serious disruption where there is a real risk of harm.

Restrictive interventions:

- must **never** be used as punishment;
- must be **proportionate** to the risk;
- must last **no longer than necessary**.

5. Prohibited Practices

Staff must **never**:

- restrain in a way that restricts breathing or circulation;
- apply pressure to the neck, chest, back, abdomen, nose or mouth;
- intentionally hold a pupil on the ground;
- use pain-inducing, coercive or humiliating techniques;
- Hold/pull a child by the wrist.

6. Prevention and De-escalation

The school reduces the need for restrictive interventions through:

- positive behaviour and emotional regulation teaching;
- proactive risk assessment and planning for pupils with SEND;
- staff training in de-escalation and lawful intervention;
- reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

7. Pupils with SEND

For pupils with SEND, restrictive interventions are considered within a **person-centred and preventative framework**, informed by:

- individual behaviour plans;
- risk assessments;
- specialist advice where appropriate.

Families and professionals are involved wherever possible to promote transparency and safeguarding.

8. Recording and Reporting (Statutory)

The school **must record** every significant incident involving restrictive intervention.

Records will include:

- date, time and duration;
- reason for intervention;
- type and degree of restriction or force used;
- names of staff involved;
- injuries or medical attention required;
- SEND status (where applicable).

All incidents involving:

- seclusion, or
- non-force restraint

must also be recorded.

Parents or carers will be informed **as soon as practicable** (ideally same day), unless doing so would cause serious harm.

The record is kept securely on the school's safeguarding system '**My Concern**'.

9. Post-Incident Support

Following any restrictive intervention, the school will ensure:

- medical assessment where required;
- emotional support for pupils and staff;
- restorative discussion when appropriate;
- review of strategies and risk assessments.

10. Seclusion

10.1 Use of Seclusion

Seclusion may be used **only as a last resort** to prevent serious harm. It must:

- be supervised at all times;
- be time-limited;
- end as soon as the risk reduces;
- never be used as punishment or for convenience.

10.2 Safeguards

When seclusion is used:

- the space must be safe and appropriate;
- basic needs must be considered;
- staff must maintain regular contact and monitoring.

All incidents of seclusion are recorded and reported in line with Section 8.

11. Reasonable Force

11.1 Legal Basis

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force under **section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**.

Reasonable force uses:

- the minimum force necessary;
- for the shortest possible time;
- in response to immediate risk.

11.2 Application

Reasonable force may be used to:

- break up fights;
- prevent self-harm;
- prevent serious damage where injury risk exists;
- prevent unsafe leaving of supervision.

Any use must be recorded and reviewed.

12. Searches of Pupils

12.1 Principles

Searches must be lawful, proportionate and respectful, with safeguarding as the priority.

12.2 Searches with Consent

Staff may search with a pupil's informed consent for items not prohibited by law.

12.3 Searches without Consent

Authorised staff may search without consent for prohibited items, including:

- weapons;
- alcohol or illegal drugs;
- stolen items;
- items banned under the Behaviour Policy.

Such searches:

- should be conducted by same-sex staff where possible;
- should have a witness;
- must never be intimate.

12.4 Recording

Searches without consent or involving force must be recorded on My Concern by safeguarding lead and parents informed unless this presents a safeguarding risk.

13. Governance, Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy;
- ensuring staff training and awareness.

The Governing Body will:

- review anonymised data;
- monitor patterns and frequency;
- provide safeguarding oversight and challenge.

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.

Statutory Language

- **“Must”** indicates a legal requirement.
- **“Should”** indicates guidance to be followed unless there is good reason not to.

Appendix 1

Term	Definition	Examples	Recording and Reporting Expectations
Restrictive Intervention	Any action, physical or non-physical, that prevents, limits or controls a pupil's movement or freedom to act. Used only to manage risk and maintain safety.	• Holding a door shut briefly to stop a pupil running into a car park • Standing in a pupil's path to block them from hitting another child • Guiding a pupil to a safer area when they attempt to abscond	• Record if the intervention is significant, prolonged, or part of a pattern • Log on the school's behaviour or safeguarding system • Inform senior staff if risk was high or intervention was repeated
Reasonable Force	Proportionate and necessary physical contact used to control or restrain a pupil to prevent injury, serious damage to property, or serious disruption. All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances.	• Holding a pupil's arms to prevent them hitting another child • Physically separating pupils who are fighting • Stopping a pupil throwing a chair	• Must be recorded as a significant incident • Headteacher or senior leader informed as soon as possible • Parents informed (normally the same day) • Record must include reason, duration, and outcome
Restraint	A non-disciplinary intervention that restricts a pupil's movement, with or without direct physical contact, to prevent harm to the pupil or others.	• Two trained adults using an agreed positive handling technique • Holding a pupil's hands to stop self-injury	• Always recorded as a significant incident • Details logged factually (who, what, why, how long) • Senior leadership review required • Consider follow-up risk assessment or behaviour plan review
Seclusion	A non-disciplinary intervention where a pupil is placed in a space they cannot freely leave. Seclusion must always be supervised.	• Pupil supervised in a safe room during a severe emotional crisis • Door held closed briefly while staff remain present to prevent harm	• Always recorded and escalated to senior leadership • Continuous supervision noted in the record • Parents informed • Incident reviewed to ensure seclusion was necessary, proportionate, and time-limited
Significant Incident	Any incident where force goes beyond everyday physical contact, including restraint, non-force restriction, or seclusion.	• Any restraint or seclusion • Blocking exits during a high-risk situation • Multiple staff involved due to risk of injury	• Full written record required on the same day • Senior leader oversight and review • Parents informed • Patterns monitored and

Term	Definition	Examples	Recording and Reporting Expectations
			reported to governors where required

Appendix 2

Important safeguarding note:

Reasonable force must always be **last resort**, **proportionate**, **time-limited**, and used **only to prevent harm**. Schools should rely on **approved training** (e.g. positive handling) for any physical intervention.

Techniques Commonly Associated with Reasonable Force

Technique / Type of Contact	Description	When It May Be Used	Key Safeguards and Limits
Open Hand Guiding	Using an open hand to gently guide or steer a pupil's movement (e.g. at the arm, shoulder blade, or back), without gripping.	• To guide a pupil away from danger • To direct a distressed child to a safer space • To prevent collision or impulsive movement	• Must not involve pulling or dragging • Pressure kept minimal • Stops immediately once risk reduces
Flat Hand Blocking	Using a flat hand or forearm as a barrier rather than to hold, push, or strike.	• To block attempts to hit, kick, or throw objects • To protect staff or other pupils from injury	• No impact or striking motion • Body positioning prioritises staff safety • Reassess constantly; reduce force quickly
Two-Handed Holding (Upper Limb)	Briefly holding a pupil's hands or forearms to stop immediate harm.	• To prevent hitting, scratching, or grabbing during a crisis • To stop self-injurious behaviour	• Only for immediate risk • Avoid joints, wrists, or twisting • Ends as soon as the pupil calms
Physical Separation	Using physical presence and controlled contact to separate pupils.	• During fights or serious physical conflict • To stop escalation or injury	• Focus is separation, not control • Use minimum contact required • Call for assistance promptly
Blocking or Shielding	Using the body (side-on stance) or arms to shield others without gripping the pupil.	• To protect a child or adult from being struck • To maintain safety during volatile behaviour	• Avoid cornering the pupil • Maintain escape routes • Constant verbal de-escalation
Non-Force Restriction (Positioning)	Using positioning, proximity, or blocking exits without physical contact.	• To prevent absconding • To manage unsafe movement	• Escalate only if risk increases • May still count as a restrictive intervention