



Brentfield Primary School

Children of Today Champions for Tomorrow

Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions Policy

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Person Responsible	Ms S. Rawat
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Date of Next Review	February 2027

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Aims

This policy outlines the principles, responsibilities and procedures governing the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions at Brentfield Primary School.

The school is committed to maintaining a safe, calm and supportive environment where all pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Physical intervention will only ever be used as a last resort to prevent harm.

Guiding principles

- All appropriate prevention and de-escalation strategies will have been exhausted.
- Any intervention must be reasonable, necessary and proportionate.
- Restrictive interventions must never be used as punishment.
- The least restrictive option must always be used.
- Interventions must be applied for the shortest time possible.
- The dignity, safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff must be preserved.
- Practice reflects a trauma-informed and safeguarding-led approach

Legislation and Statutory Context

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to:

- Prevent a pupil committing an offence
- Prevent personal injury
- Prevent damage to property
- Maintain good order and discipline

In line with Department for Education guidance (2025), reasonable force may be used to:

- Remove a disruptive pupil from the classroom where they refuse to follow an instruction
- Prevent behaviour that disrupts a school event, visit or trip
- Prevent a pupil leaving a classroom where this would risk safety
- Prevent a pupil attacking another person
- Prevent self-harm

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025

Definitions

Reasonable Force

The use of no more force than is needed for the least amount of time in the circumstances.

Significant incident

Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff.

Restraint

A non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not involve direct physical contact.

Restrictive Intervention

Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues movement of the body or part of the body. This includes both physical and non-physical interventions.

Seclusion

A non-disciplinary intervention where a pupil is kept in a space away from others and is prevented from leaving, for their own safety or the safety of others.

Scope

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This includes:

- The Headteacher
- Teachers
- Support staff (including lunchtime support staff)
- Volunteers or adults temporarily placed in charge of pupils by the Headteacher

Staff are not expected to place themselves at risk of injury.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Review and approve the policy
- Ensure systems are in place for recording and reporting incidents
- Monitor the use of restrictive interventions
- Review data to identify patterns or disproportionality

Headteacher

- Ensure policy implementation
- Arrange staff training
- Ensure that parents/carers are informed when restraint has been used

- Monitor practice and ensure compliance

The Senior Leadership Team

- Review incidents during Inclusion Meetings
- Monitor for patterns or trends
- Analyse disproportionality (e.g. SEND, gender, ethnicity)

Inclusion Lead

- Work with pupils, parents/carers and relevant school staff to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies and review risk assessments
- Ensure arrangements for debriefing once the situation has been managed and participate in reviewing incident
- Contact the local authority in cases where informing a pupil's parent/carer of the use of reasonable force, seclusion or restraint on their child would put that child at risk of significant harm (see sections 12.2 and 12.3 of this policy)

Staff

- Make sure they have read and understood the principles of this policy and any other linked policies
- Use de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour management strategies to try to minimise and prevent the need for restrictive interventions
- Accurately recording every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force that they are involved in
- Report these incidents to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- Record any injuries that occur as part of an incident involving restrictive intervention, and so that these are reported to the Health and Safety Executive where necessary
- Take part in training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions
- Engage in follow-up conversation(s) to debrief and reflect on incidents involving restrictive intervention that they were involved in, to help us understand what happened and why

Safeguarding and Equality Considerations

The school recognises that restrictive interventions disproportionately affect pupils with:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Neurodivergent profiles
- Trauma histories
- Communication difficulties
- Social, emotional and mental health needs

The use of force must comply with duties under the Equality Act 2010 and must not discriminate unlawfully.

Where behaviour is linked to an underlying need, staff must prioritise reasonable adjustments and preventative strategies. They should consider possible environmental triggers such as sensory overload and seek to support pupils to cope with situations that they may find distressing.

Safeguarding concerns arising from incidents must be reported in line with child protection procedures.

Prevention and De-escalation

Staff must always prioritise:

- Strategies to calm before behaviour escalation
- Supporting the pupil to express their emotions
- Maintaining open body language
- Clear instruction and verbal warnings of consequences in a calm voice
- Distraction and redirection
- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- Space and time
- Support from additional adults

Determining when to use Restrictive Intervention

Restrictive intervention must only be used when de-escalation strategies have failed or are judged unsafe.

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention will depend on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff must consider:

- Whether the intervention is necessary
- Whether less restrictive options are available
- Whether intervention may escalate risk
- The pupil's individual needs and vulnerabilities such as SEND, EAL, adverse life experiences
- The environment and context
- The pupil's emotional state

Any intervention must be proportionate and regularly reviewed during use.

Use of Physical Intervention

When physical intervention becomes necessary, staff must:

- Tell the pupil what they are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Use the least restrictive option
- Seek support from another adult where possible

- Avoid prolonged verbal confrontation
- Avoid any action that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate
- Release restraint as soon as risk reduces
- Maintain continuous risk assessment

Staff must not use techniques they have not been trained to use, except in an unforeseen emergency where immediate action is required to prevent harm.

Seclusion

- Seclusion is only used as a safety measure and never as punishment.
- It involves a pupil being kept in a space away from others and prevented from leaving for their safety or the safety of others.
- The pupil will be continuously supervised.
- The seclusion will end as soon as the risk of harm has reduced.

Using reasonable force to search pupils

The headteacher and any member of staff authorised by the headteacher have a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance) or an item banned under our school rules.

They can use reasonable force to search for prohibited items (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance), such as knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs.

Unacceptable Practice

- Staff using force for the purpose of punishment
- Staff restraining a pupil in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example by covering their nose and/or mouth or applying pressure to their neck or abdomen
- Staff using force on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their hold or move into a safer position as quickly as possible

Risk Assessments and Training

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff must risk assess and choose the safest alternative.

Risk assessments should be carried out for those pupils who are likely to exhibit behaviour that may increase the likelihood of harm and disruption but this should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Plans must:

- Identify triggers
- Identify de-escalation strategies
- Outline agreed interventions
- Be reviewed regularly
- Involve parents/carers
- Consider the voice of the pupil

Our school will make sure that all staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in their safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

Reporting Incidents, Post-Crisis Support and Learning

All significant incidents where a member of staff has used restrictive intervention or seclusion must be verbally reported to a member of the senior leadership team and documented on CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System)

Records must include:

- Names of staff and pupils involved
- Date, time, location and duration
- Description of events leading up to the incident
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type of intervention used and degree
- Rationale for use
- Any injuries sustained
- Body map if injury occurred
- Any witness accounts
- Parent/carer notification (how and when)
- Details of any support after the incident

If CPOMS is unavailable, a paper record must be completed and uploaded once restored.

Informing Parents/carers

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably possible and normally on the same day as any significant use of restrictive intervention, unless doing so would place the child at risk of harm.

Communication will include:

- What happened, when and where
- Why the intervention was necessary
- A short description of the type and degree of force used
- Any injury sustained

When reporting to parents/carers, we will have regard to data protection requirements when deciding what information to share. For example, we will not include any identifying details of any other pupil.

We will invite parents/carers to have a follow-up discussion about the incident to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Reporting incidents to the local authority

In cases where a pupil has parents/carers and is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, we will report the incident to the relevant local authority in addition to the parents/carers (unless we deem it unsafe to inform the parents/carers, as set out in section 12.2 of this policy).

Post-Incident Support and Debrief

Following any significant incident:

- The pupil will be offered emotional support
- A restorative conversation will take place when appropriate
- Staff will engage in reflective debrief
- Risk assessments will be reviewed
- Learning points will be identified

If injury occurs, appropriate medical attention will be sought.

Complaints

Complaints relating to the use of force will be handled in accordance with the school's complaints procedure.

Allegations against staff will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- New legislation or guidance is issued
- Patterns in monitoring indicate change is needed
- Safeguarding concerns arise
- Ofsted recommendations are made

Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy
- SEND policy

Private and Confidential

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Signature		Date	
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Please note names of pupils should be removed if the completed form is sent to parents and the names of members of staff should only be included with their consent.

Post Incident Record Form



Name of person completing report			
Post incident support required?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Those with parental responsibility informed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details		Details	
External agency contact	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Identified Triggers?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details		Details	

Additional Information

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Continue overleaf if necessary

Signature		Date	
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