

Restrictive Intervention Policy

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Introduction

This policy has been written in conjunction with the [DFE Guidance USE of Reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in Schools \(2026\)](#).

All staff at St James C of E Primary School are aware that their employment imposes on them a general duty of care. It is necessary therefore to maintain an acceptable level of safety at all times. The physical proximity of staff and children necessitates daily physical contact, for the purposes of providing care, instruction, therapy, guidance and positive handling. There are many occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children for a variety of reasons, for example:

- communication
- First Aid
- to comfort a child or young person in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age)
- to direct a child or young person (holding hands, hand on shoulder etc)
- for educational skills (PE, Drama etc)
- for life skills (changing for PE, toileting, using cutlery etc)
- in an emergency to increase safety to the child or young persons and staff

During an emergency incident staff may take into account the use of reasonable force and their responsibilities under duty of care.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and child or young person takes place, staff will consider the following:

- the child or young person's age and level of understanding
- the child or young person's individual characteristics and history
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)
 - Is it necessary?
 - Is it proportional?
 - Has the welfare of the child been considered?

Responsibilities

It is the Headteacher's duty to ensure all staff are aware of their statutory powers to use force and or restrain a child or young person. As part of the induction process into school the Headteacher will inform staff if they have the powers to restrain, and who they can turn to if they are in a situation with a child or young person that may be causing concern. The Headteacher will inform the governors through the Headteacher's report those people that have been authorised to use force or restrain a child or young person in school. We have 13 members of staff who have been trained in Positive Touch. **These are: Mrs Murphy, Mrs Cowden, Mrs Patel, Mrs Bull, Mrs Mattingly, Mrs Wales, Mrs Michaelides, Mrs Plume, Mrs Dodd, Mrs Herbert, Mrs Wyeth, Miss Wyeth-White and Mrs Punter.**

Restrictive Intervention to manage behaviour

At St James C of E Primary School we understand that behaviour is a means of communication and has a cause and a purpose. Behaviour that challenges may signal a need for support and it is essential to understand its underlying causes. It may, for example, be the result of a medical condition or sensory impairment, previous trauma or neglect, or be exacerbated by an unmet need or undiagnosed medical condition. It may reflect the challenges of communication, or the frustrations faced by children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties, who may also have little choice and control over their lives. These factors may result in behaviours that are challenging.

Behaviours that challenge may reflect the impact on a child or young person of being exposed to challenging environments which they do not understand or where positive social interactions are lacking or personal choices are limited. Since the behaviour of children can occasionally become unsafe, physical intervention may be required which, inevitably, is a high-risk activity. For all children where this is the case, a risk assessment will be undertaken with the parents, with support from the Surrey Behaviour Management Team. Written guidelines cannot however anticipate every situation: the sound judgement of staff at all times therefore remains crucial. It is, however, the intention that this guidance offers both children and staff a level of protection.

Adults have a duty to safeguard the health, welfare and safety of children in their care. The law recognises circumstances when the use of reasonable physical intervention will not amount to an offence. Examples would include the use of reasonable physical intervention to prevent a crime or physical injury to the child or others.

Adults at St James C of E Primary School will only use restraint where they consider it is necessary to prevent serious harm, including risk of injury to the child or young person or others. Staff should use their professional judgement to decide if restraint is necessary, reasonable and proportionate. This will involve assessing the risks, taking account of the needs of the child or young person (including as set out in any relevant behaviour support plans drawn up for them) and the circumstances of each case, including the availability of alternative approaches to restraint. When a decision is being made whether and how to restrain a child, their best interests are a primary consideration. This does not mean that the child's best interests automatically take precedence over other considerations such as other people's rights, but they must be given due weight in the decision.

It should be emphasised that whether an act of physical intervention falls within the law will depend very much on the circumstances of the particular case.

Surrey County Council will support any member of staff who has physical contact or who has used appropriate physical intervention with children provided:

- (a)** any physical contact was in the context of Section **(ii)** below;
OR
- (b)** any physical intervention was used as a last resort; and
 - (i)** the level of physical force used was related to the seriousness of behaviour, its potential consequences and the size, strength, gender, maturity and physical ability/disability of the child, and was the minimum necessary to secure control;
 - (ii)** the behaviour concerned involved:
 - personal injury or risk of personal injury to the young person or other people
 - serious damage or criminal offence being committed or the likelihood of a criminal offence being committed
 - a breakdown in the ability to maintain good order and discipline
 - (iii)** strenuous attempts to de-escalate the situation prior to the use of physical intervention were made;
 - (iv)** in emergency situations, the action taken was consistent with ALL of the above points except above point iii.

Physical Contact, touching and holding children.

Any form of physical contact should be a conscious, self-aware, reasonable and justifiable act. Staff must seek to make their intention explicit to the child.

It is appropriate for teachers and other staff to use touch with children in their care in a positive and professional manner.

Particularly with younger children, touching them is inevitable and can give welcome reassurance or comfort to the child. However, staff must bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued and must therefore conduct themselves accordingly.

Staff should respond to children in a way that gives expression to an appropriate level of care, and to provide comfort to ease a child's distress. However, it is recognised that staff need to protect against physical contact being misinterpreted by the child.

Although a child with special needs may frequently be held for a number of reasons not directly concerned with control, there are occasions when control can be maintained by holding a child in a manner which does not carry the force of physical restraint. The main factor separating the holding from physical restraint is the degree of force applied, the intention of the action and how the child perceives the action. It is appropriate to use such physical prompts and guidance when positive verbal prompting has been unsuccessful.

Restrictive Intervention without Physical Contact

In accordance with the April 2026 DfE guidance, St James C of E Primary School recognises that a restrictive intervention can occur even without direct physical touch. This includes any action taken by staff that intentionally limits a pupil's freedom of movement, such as the removal of a walking aid, wheelchair, or other mobility equipment, or the use of physical barriers to prevent a pupil from leaving a specific area. These actions carry the same statutory recording and reporting obligations as physical force. Staff must ensure that such measures are only used when necessary and proportionate to prevent harm, and that every instance is recorded on CPOMS including a clear justification for why the non-physical restriction was the safest course of action.

ACCEPTABLE SUPPORTIVE RESPONSES

Accident Prevention

- Holding forearms or elbows, e.g. to support balance
- Supporting body, head and limbs for disabled young people to meet individual need
- Support by staff trained in acceptable methods within a specified subject such as gymnastics and swimming
- Adjusting equipment and outer clothing

Skill promotion

- Correcting hand, finger, arm and body position in the use of instruments, tools and implements
- Correcting body position in the acquisition of a sporting skill, e.g. holding a racket or performing a headstand in gymnastics
- Preventing inappropriate body movements and facilitating appropriate ones for some pupils with special needs
- Physical prompting techniques in modelling behaviour

ACCEPTABLE THERAPEUTIC RESPONSES

Comforting Contact

- Holding hands, hands on shoulders, arms around shoulders

Therapeutic contact

- Physiotherapy
- Speech & Language targets (cued articulation, modelling)

NON-ACCEPTABLE RESPONSES

- Avoid contact with parts of the body other than shoulders, arms and hands in all but exceptional circumstances e.g. staff working with physically disabled pupils or when intimate care, changing and assisting with toileting are required
- Avoid contact when a pupil is in a reactive emotional state unless essential for reasons of safety
- Avoid contact when alone with a child unless it is clearly relevant

It is important to remember:

- Physical contact is never made as a punishment, to humiliate or to inflict pain
- All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited
- Physical contact will not be made with the child or young person's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints
- Physical contact will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular child or young person

Hierarchy of responsive to support children with challenging behaviour

De-escalation
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Speak calmly and ask the child to stop the unwanted behaviour, using specific and clear description of the negative behaviour.2) Invite the child to use their dedicated calming down space or employ distraction techniques (as identified by SENCO team).3) Clear the area, where possible, including children and objects.
If behaviour persists
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Inform the child that you will calling a member of SLT. Use TA, internal phones, or send another sensible child (if other options unavailable) to alert the member of SLT, as in Behaviour Policy.2) SLT member to remind child of the expectations and monitor within the classroom, or ask the child to leave the classroom to talk in a quieter space. <p>If other children are at risk, vacate the room/area and leave child to calm down. Alert a member of the SLT immediately as above.</p> <p>If child still presents that they are at risk of harming themselves or causing significant damage to property, the named member(s) of staff will assess, plan and carryout removing the child to a safer space, using the Government's guideline for the use of restraint and restrictive intervention.</p>

Use of Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention where a pupil is confined alone in a room or area and prevented from leaving, either by physical obstruction (such as a locked door or a staff member blocking the exit) or by the pupil's belief that they will be punished if they attempt to leave. Seclusion should only be used under the following circumstances:

- **Safety Only:** Seclusion must only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.
- **Non-Disciplinary:** It must never be used as a punishment for deliberate or wilful misbehaviour.
- **Duration:** Seclusion must be used for the shortest time possible; the pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.
- **Environment:** The space used for seclusion must be safe and must not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil.
- **Supervision:** Any pupil in seclusion must be supervised by a member of staff at all times.

Recording and Reporting Requirements

Each incident of seclusion must be recorded on CPOMS as soon as practicable, and staff should endeavour to do so no later than the same day. The record must include:

- Names of the pupil and staff involved.
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the seclusion.
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary.
- Any physical injuries sustained or post-incident support provided.

Parental Notification

Parents must be informed of any incident of seclusion as soon as practicable, with the school endeavouring to notify them no later than the same day. Notification should be followed by a written report (e.g., via email).

Recording of Incidents

A recording form will be completed by all staff engaged in any incident where restrictive physical intervention has taken place, including witnesses. These forms are saved on CPOMS, along with our other behaviour logs. They must be completed once the situation has been dealt with to ensure accuracy and that it is a true and honest report. Once completed, they must be passed to the Headteacher.

The recording will include:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved

- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- Duration of the intervention

The Headteacher, or nominated member of staff, will inform the parents of the child by phone, email or in person on the same day as the incident. This must also be done in writing, via email on the same day where possible.

This must include:

- time
- date
- location
- approximate length of time the force was used
- brief account of what type of reasonable force was applied, and the degree of force
 - details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
 - brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance

If necessary, a meeting between parents and school will be arranged. All accidents, incidents or near miss reports must be recorded.

Following any incidents where restrictive physical intervention has been appropriate, the Senior Leadership team will make arrangements to support the staff and children as these can be upsetting times. The class teacher or SLT member will work with the pupil to record their views of the incident on the recording form. First aid will be administered by a trained first aider and emotional support will be provided as required.

Post-Incident Support and Review

Following any significant incident involving a restrictive intervention or the use of reasonable force, St James C of E Primary School is committed to a process of recovery, reflection, and support for all parties.

1. Staff and Pupil Debrief (Independent Facilitation)

- To ensure objectivity and emotional safety, debriefing conversations should, wherever possible, be facilitated by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or a designated staff member who was **not directly involved** in the incident.
- **For the Pupil:** The conversation should focus on understanding the triggers, the pupil's feelings during the event, and how to avoid a recurrence. This should be conducted when the pupil is calm and ready to engage.
- **For the Staff:** A debrief will be offered to allow staff to reflect on the incident, discuss the impact on their well-being, and identify any training needs or adjustments required for future Pupil Support Plans.

2. Support for Witnesses

The school recognises that witnessing a restrictive intervention can be distressing for peers. We have a duty of care to those who were present but not directly involved. Staff will identify any pupils who witnessed the incident and provide immediate reassurance. Depending on the nature of the incident, witnesses may be offered a quiet space to talk, a check-in with a known adult (such as a TA or Class Teacher), a wellbeing support plan or follow-up support from the ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant).

3. Review of Support Plans

Every significant incident must trigger a review of the pupil's individual Behaviour Support Plan or Risk Assessment. This review will use the data from the incident (including the duration and de-escalation techniques used) to refine future strategies and reduce the need for restrictive interventions in the future.

Monitoring

Governing bodies of maintained schools and the proprietors of other schools must ensure that a procedure is in place for reporting each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil to each parent of the pupil as soon as practicable after the incident.

The governing body of a maintained school and the proprietor of other schools must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedure for recording and reporting the use of force is complied with.

Governing bodies and proprietors should regularly review and interrogate data on reasonable force and other restrictive interventions to.

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

Governing bodies should consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis should be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of people.

Complaints procedure

The school has a clear complaints procedure and any complaints would be received in the first instance by the Headteacher. If matters were not resolved then the complainant would take the matter to the Governing Body. A copy of the complaints policy can be accessed on our website or our school office can provide a copy on request.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Intimate Care and Toileting Policy
- SEND Policy
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools