Restrictive Interventions Policy

Including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion

Approved:	May 2026
Next review due by:	May 2029

1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out the Trust approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. Restrictive interventions should only ever be used when necessary, proportionate and lawful.

The Trust is committed to:

- safeguarding the welfare, dignity and human rights of pupils
- preventing and minimising the need for restrictive interventions
- supporting staff to manage behaviour safely and confidently
- meeting statutory recording and reporting duties
- using data to continuously improve practice

This policy is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

2. Definitions

- Restrictive intervention: Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement, including physical and non-physical interventions and also a means to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a part of the body of a pupil.
- Reasonable force including restrictive intervention is a physical force used by staff to prevent injury, damage, criminal behaviour or serious disorder. It must be the minimum necessary for the shortest time.
- Restraint: A non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises or limits a pupil's movement, with or without physical contact.
- Seclusion: A non-disciplinary safety measure involving keeping a pupil in a place away from others and preventing them from leaving.
- Significant incident: Any incident where force goes beyond everyday physical contact and requires formal recording and reporting.
- Where this policy uses the word '**must'**, this indicates a legal requirement. Where it uses '**should'**, this indicates expected practice unless there is good reason not to follow it.

3. Prevention and de-escalation

The Trust prioritises proactive strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions, including:

- positive behaviour support approaches
- consistent routines and expectations
- trauma-informed practice
- environmental adaptations
- early identification of triggers
- effective communication strategies
- strong relationships between staff and pupils

Individual support may include behaviour support plans, reasonable adjustments, sensory strategies and joint working with parents [1]and external professionals.

3.1 Staff Training

The Trust recognises that staff training is a critical component of preventing the need for restrictive interventions and ensuring that, where they are used, they are applied safely, lawfully and proportionately.

In line with the April 2026 Department for Education guidance, staff who are likely to work in situations where restrictive interventions may be required will receive appropriate training in behaviour support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and the safe and lawful use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. In our schools this refers to those staff employed to specifically work with individual pupils or small groups of pupils who are likely to require restrictive interventions. Who receives this training is the decision of the Head of School / Headteacher.
The training will be provided by a Norfolk Steps trained provider and will include Step On (de-escalation) and Step Up (restrictive interventions) Schools must keep a record of trained staff and refresher dates.

Norfolk Steps Training will reflect the principles of this guidance and will support staff to assess necessity and proportionality, understand risks to physical and psychological wellbeing, recognise the impact of trauma and SEND, and make defensible professional judgements, including in situations where decisions must be taken quickly.

The School will ensure that training needs are informed by its pupil cohort, patterns and trends in incidents, and risk assessments. As an employer, the Trust will take reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, including providing refresher training, access to advice and support, and additional guidance where staff regularly work with pupils who present a higher level of risk. All of this is accessed through the Norfolk Steps package of support.

4. When restrictive interventions may be used:

Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion, may only be used in when necessary and when they are lawful, necessary and proportionate, and where other less restrictive measures have been attempted or assessed as inappropriate in the circumstances.
In line with the April 2026 Department for Education guidance, restrictive interventions may only be used to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- causing serious damage to property
- causing significant disorder
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The decision to use a restrictive intervention is a matter of professional judgement and must always be based on the specific circumstances at the time. Before using, or continuing to use, a restrictive intervention, staff must, wherever practicable, consider the following factors, which are drawn directly from the guidance:

Necessity
Staff should consider whether a restrictive intervention is required to reduce an immediate risk of harm and whether other less restrictive strategies, including de-escalation, redirection or support from other staff, are likely to be effective. Where a restrictive intervention is unlikely to successfully reduce risk, or is likely to escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself, it should not be used.

Proportionality
Any restrictive intervention must be the least restrictive option available, using the minimum amount of force for the shortest amount of time necessary to reduce the risk. If an intervention is not reducing risk or is escalating the situation, staff must reconsider their approach and seek to reduce or cease the intervention as soon as it is safe to do so.

Pupil welfare and dignity
Staff must consider the impact of any restrictive intervention on the pupil's physical and psychological wellbeing. Where possible, staff should seek to maintain the pupil's dignity, including consideration of the environment in which the intervention takes place, and should communicate calmly and clearly with the pupil about what is happening and why.

Vulnerabilities and SEND
Staff must have regard to the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil, including any special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions, communication needs, sensory sensitivities, past trauma or other vulnerabilities. These factors may affect how a pupil experiences an intervention and must inform decision-making before, during and after any restrictive intervention.

Equality implications
Staff must consider relevant duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the need to avoid discrimination, make reasonable adjustments and ensure that responses do not disproportionately impact pupils who share protected characteristics.
Restrictive interventions must never be used as a punishment, as a disciplinary sanction, or for the purpose of compliance or convenience. They must only be used as a last resort safety measure and must cease as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

Following any restrictive intervention, staff must ensure that appropriate post-incident actions are taken in line with this policy, including recording and reporting, medical checks where appropriate, reflection and review. *At CJS it is the responsibility of the member of staff who conducted restrictive intervention to initiate the review/reflection conversation.*

4.1 Statutory power to use reasonable force (Education and Inspections Act 2006)
Under section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all members of school staff have a statutory power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances to prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder.

This power applies while staff are lawfully in charge of pupils and extends to situations both on and off the school site, including educational visits. Section 93 provides the legal basis for the use of reasonable force in schools, and any such use must be reasonable in the circumstances, meaning that it must be necessary and proportionate to the risks presented at the time.

In addition, section 93A of the Act places a statutory duty on governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that arrangements are in place for recording and reporting significant incidents involving the use of force. This policy reflects both the legal power under section 93 and the statutory recording and reporting duties under section 93A, and must be implemented in a way that is consistent with wider safeguarding, equality, human rights and health and safety obligations.

4.2 Unacceptable use of restrictive intervention
Restrictive interventions must never be used as a punishment, a disciplinary sanction, or for the purpose of compliance, convenience or to manage behaviour where there is no immediate risk of harm. Any use of force or restrictive practice for these purposes is unlawful.

Staff must not use any techniques or approaches that may restrict or interfere with a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation. This includes, but is not limited to, applying pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen, covering the mouth or nose, or positioning a pupil in a way that compromises respiration. Such practices present a serious and potentially fatal medical risk and are strictly prohibited. Norfolk Steps, does not include any of the above as it's approach and actively train not to use any hold outlined above.

The use of restrictive interventions carries inherent physical and psychological risk, particularly where they occur on the ground. Norfolk Steps does not cover ground restraint. Ground restraint should not be used. Where a pupil is unintentionally brought to the ground or falls by themselves to the ground, staff must take immediate steps to reduce risk by repositioning or releasing holds as soon as it is safe to do so and moving to a safer alternative or standing position.

Any restrictive intervention that presents, or begins to present, a medical risk must stop immediately. Where a pupil has been restrained, particularly where there has been any impact to breathing, circulation, consciousness or physical injury, staff must seek medical assessment and treatment as soon as practicable. Professionals must carry

out a dynamic risk assessment during the incident as required to ensure the intervention remains reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Staff must also be mindful that restrictive interventions can cause significant psychological distress. Interventions that humiliate, degrade, intimidate, threaten or deliberately cause emotional harm are unacceptable. All responses must seek to preserve the pupil's dignity and wellbeing, even in high-risk situations.

Any incident involving unacceptable practice, or where there is concern that an intervention may have compromised a pupil's safety, must be reported immediately in line with the School Safeguarding Policy, consideration should be given to any other relevant reporting requirements.

4.3 Appropriate physical contact

Appropriate physical contact (for example, first aid, comfort, guiding or PE instruction) is lawful and sometimes necessary. Staff must use professional judgement and consider safeguarding context, pupil age, vulnerability and alternative strategies.
Guiding (without using reasonable force or resistance) such as compliant cooperative hand holding is appropriate physical contact.

4.4 Reasonable force for searching pupils.

Under statutory powers, in line with the DFE searching, screening and confiscation guidance, the headteacher and staff authorised by the headteacher may search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item.

Prohibited items are those set out in legislation and include, for example, knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, vapes, smoking paraphernalia, stolen items and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.
Where a lawful search is taking place for a prohibited item, staff may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to conduct that search. Any use of force in this context must be necessary, proportionate and for the shortest possible time, and must be consistent with the principles set out in this policy.

Reasonable force must not be used to search for items that are banned only under the school's own rules. Where force is used during a search, this will be treated as a restrictive intervention and must be managed in line with this policy, including consideration of the pupil's welfare, dignity, vulnerabilities and any SEND or medical needs.

Any significant incident involving the use of force during a search must be recorded and reported in accordance with statutory duties. This will be on the recording form provided by Norfolk Steps and uploaded onto CPOMS. The CPOMS category will be Restrictive Intervention with subcategories of reasonable force, restraint, seclusion. The form must be uploaded to CPOMS under one of the above sub-categories.

All searches must be carried out in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures, and staff involved in searching pupils will receive appropriate guidance and training.

5. Seclusion

Seclusion is defined in statutory guidance as a non-disciplinary, short-term safety measure and may only be used where a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to the pupil or to others. Seclusion must never be used as a punishment, a sanction. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil must be always supervised. During the period of seclusion, a dynamic risk assessment must be ongoing, and staff should ensure their own safety and that they are supported by others as necessary.

Supervision must be active and purposeful, enabling staff to monitor the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing, communicate appropriately, and respond immediately if the pupil becomes distressed, unwell or at risk. During the period of seclusion, as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

Where seclusion is used, the place in which the pupil is confined must be safe, suitable and non-threatening, taking account of the pupil's age, needs, vulnerabilities and sensory sensitivities. The environment must not present a risk to the pupil's physical or psychological wellbeing and should allow the pupil to calm and regain regulation.

Seclusion must only ever be used to reduce an immediate risk of harm and must not be used to coerce, threaten or control a pupil. It should not be implemented through the threat of punishment or the suggestion that negative consequences will follow if a pupil attempts to leave.

Seclusion must end as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced. Pupils must be supported to plan next steps to return to the activity successfully. It must not continue beyond the point at which it is necessary to manage risk, and pupils must be supported to rejoin others safely when they are able to do so, bearing in mind that re-escalation could be possible.
Any incident involving seclusion must be treated as a safeguarding event.

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported in line with statutory duties. This will be the form provided by Norfolk Steps and uploaded onto CPOMS as outlined above.
Following any use of seclusion, appropriate post-incident actions must take place, including welfare checks, reflection, support and review of preventative strategies.

6. Record Keeping

The Trust recognises that incidents involving restrictive interventions are significant safeguarding events.
The Headteacher / Head of School is responsible for ensuring that clear procedures are in place for the recording and reporting of all relevant incidents and that these are followed by all staff as appropriate.

6.1 Recording of significant incidents involving the use of force

All significant incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded in writing on the form provided in appendix 1 as soon as practicable after the event, and staff should endeavour to complete records and upload the form to CPOMS no later than the same day

Records must be completed by the staff member(s) involved and must provide a clear, factual account of the incident. As a minimum, records will include:

- the name of the pupil and the names of staff directly involved
- the date, time, location and approximate duration of the incident
- a brief account of what happened, including any known context, antecedents, triggers and behaviours of concern
- details of any preventative or de-escalation strategies attempted prior to the use of force
- where relevant, the type of reasonable force used and the degree of force applied
- a brief explanation of why the use of force was assessed as necessary at the time
- details of any physical injuries, distress or welfare concerns
- details of any immediate and ongoing post-incident support including restorative work, including medical attention where provided and any disability/ SEN codes.

The requirement to record applies even where the use of restrictive interventions has been discussed or anticipated within a behaviour support plan.

6.2 Reporting of significant incidents involving the use of force

Parents must be informed of each significant incident involving the use of force as soon as practicable after the incident, and the School should endeavour to do this no later than the same day, unless a statutory exception applies.
Reports to parents will include in writing, as a minimum the date, time, location and approximate duration of the incident

- a brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- a brief description of what type of force was used and the degree of force applied
- details of any physical injuries or welfare concerns, where applicable

Exceptions to the duty to report apply only where:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over, or

- it appears that informing a particular parent would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In such cases, the incident will be reported to any parent to whom it can safely be reported, or, where this is not possible, to the relevant local authority.

6.3 Recording and reporting of seclusion and non-force restraint

All incidents involving seclusion or restraint without physical force must be recorded and reported on CPOMS. This includes incidents where restrictive interventions are used in line with an agreed behaviour support plan. Records must be completed as soon as practicable and no later than the same day wherever possible.

Where an incident of restraint also constitutes a significant use of force, the School will follow the significant incident reporting procedure set out above.
The same information will not be reported twice. Where an incident involves seclusion or restraint without physical force and does not constitute a significant use of force, the reporting duties under the 2025 Regulations will apply.

7. Post-incident support and review

Following any restrictive intervention, the School will ensure that appropriate and timely actions are taken to safeguard the physical and emotional wellbeing of all those involved, to understand what happened and why, and to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

7.1 Immediate welfare and medical checks

As soon as practicable after the incident, whenever appropriate, staff will check the pupil and any staff involved for signs of injury, distress or illness. Where appropriate, first aid will be administered and medical assessment or treatment sought. Any injuries or health concerns will be recorded in line with the Trust health and safety procedures and reported to the Health and Safety Executive where required.

7.2 Emotional wellbeing and safeguarding support

The school recognises that restrictive interventions can be distressing. Consideration will therefore be given to the emotional wellbeing needs of the pupil, any staff involved, and any pupils who may have witnessed the incident. Support may include access to pastoral staff, counselling services, trusted adults or other appropriate support mechanisms.

7.3 Reflective debrief and learning

Whenever possible and appropriate, the school will hold reflective debrief conversations following incidents involving restrictive interventions. These discussions are intended to support wellbeing, enable learning and improvement, and reduce future risk. Where appropriate, debriefs will include:

- a factual review of what happened and why
- reflection on early warning signs and triggers
- consideration of what preventative and de-escalation strategies were used and their effectiveness
- identification of any alternative approaches that may reduce the likelihood of recurrence

Where possible, debriefs should be facilitated by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident, and may include the pupil and their parent where appropriate.

7.4 Review of support and risk management

Following any restrictive intervention, the School will review relevant behaviour support plans, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments. Changes will be made where necessary to better support the pupil, address underlying needs, and strengthen preventative measures.

7.5 Repairing relationships and reintegration

The school is committed to repairing and rebuilding relationships following incidents involving restrictive interventions. Where appropriate, restorative approaches will be used to support the pupil's reintegration, rebuild trust between pupils and staff, and promote a sense of safety, dignity and belonging.

7.6 Monitoring and escalation

Leaders will monitor incidents and post-incident actions to identify patterns, emerging risks or training needs. Where restrictive interventions occur repeatedly or where concerns arise, this will trigger further review, multi-agency engagement where appropriate, and escalation through safeguarding or SEND processes.

8. Governance

The Trust recognises that the use of restrictive interventions is a significant safeguarding matter and will provide appropriate oversight to ensure that practice across the Trust is lawful, proportionate and focused on prevention.

In line with statutory duties and the April 2026 Department for Education guidance, the Trust will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to support the effective implementation of this policy and the associated recording and reporting requirements.

In fulfilling this responsibility, Heads of School / Headteachers will:

- ensure that this policy is implemented and reviewed regularly
- assure itself that statutory recording and reporting duties are being met
- provide through safeguarding reports and reports to Governors the use of restrictive interventions, including emerging patterns or trends
- be mindful of any disproportionate impact on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities or other identified vulnerabilities
- use information from incidents to inform discussion about prevention, training and support
- ensure that staff are appropriately supported and trained
- ensure that learning from incidents contributes to the ongoing development of practice
- "provide through safeguarding reports and reports to Governors anonymised information regarding the use of restrictive interventions, including emerging patterns or trends"

Oversight of restrictive interventions and trends will also be monitored through Trust level reporting.

9. Complaints

Any complaints raised in relation to the use of restrictive interventions will be managed in accordance with the Trust's complaints procedure.

Where an allegation is made that a member of staff has used restrictive interventions inappropriately, unlawfully or in a way that may have placed a pupil at risk, the matter will be managed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and the Trust's safeguarding and allegations management procedures.

Where appropriate, the school will work with external agencies to ensure concerns are managed in accordance with statutory guidance and recorded on the low level concerns and allegations policy. This includes consideration of whether the concern meets the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and whether any immediate safeguarding or risk management actions are required.

The Trust will ensure that allegations are considered objectively, based on the available evidence, and that appropriate support is provided to all parties involved.

Learning arising from complaints and allegations will be used to inform training, policy review and preventative practice.

Use of Force/Restraint/Incident Record

THIS PAGE SHOULD BE SENT TO PARENTS

Childs Name:		**Date and Time:**	
Location of incident:			
Staff member(s) involved in the use of force / restraint			
Staff Witnesses			
First Aid required			

Brief description of incident:
Trigger/s:
Other trigger or build-up/accumulation of stress:
Setting; (What was taking place prior to incident, where were staff and peers, what was the CYP doing prior to incident?):
Preventative/de-escalation measures used by staff:

THIS PAGE (2) SHOULD NOT BE SENT TO PARENTS / CARERS

Children that witnessed the event:
Post incident support/debrief/recovery (What happened after the incident to support the CYP/s involved to recover? Is the CYP ready to discuss the incident? What needs to be in place to reduce the likelihood of this taking place again?)

This report will be followed up in line with school procedures

All pages should be uploaded to CPOMS under the following categorization:

Restrictive Intervention

Select one sub category from

- Seclusion
- Restraint
- Use of Force