Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

Implementation Date:June 2026

	Signed	Date
Chair of Governors		25th June 2026
Headteacher		25th June 2026

This policy is a	School Plan using LA & WG guidelines
	Statutory Policy
Aims of Policy:	• To outline the policy and provision for restrictive physical intervention at the school.
Review date	
Next review date	September 2028
Reviewed by	Policy committee

1. Background

We define restrictive physical intervention as follows:
Restrictive physical intervention is when a member of staff uses force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will.

All staff within this setting aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour. We do this through a combination of approaches, which include:
o positive role modelling
o teaching an interesting and challenging curriculum
o setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
o and providing supportive feedback.

More details about this and our general approach to promoting positive behaviour can be found in our behaviour policy.

There are times when children's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require restrictive physical intervention. This policy sets out our expectations for the use of such intervention. It is not intended to refer to the general use of physical contact which might be appropriate in a range of situations, such as:
o giving physical guidance to children (for example in practical activities and PE)
o providing emotional support when a child is distressed
o providing physical care (such as first aid or toileting).

This policy is consistent with our Child Protection and Equal Opportunities policies, and with national and local guidance for schools on safeguarding children. We exercise appropriate care when using physical contact (there is further guidance in our Child Protection policy); there are some children for whom physical contact would be inappropriate (such as those with a history of physical or sexual abuse, or those from certain cultural/religious groups). We pay careful attention to issues protecting characteristics and privacy, and to any specific requirements of certain cultural/religious groups.

2. Principles for the use of restrictive physical intervention

2.1 In the context of positive approaches
We only use restrictive physical intervention where the risks involved in using force are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force. It is not our preferred way of managing children's behaviour. Restrictive physical intervention may be used only in the context of a well established and well-implemented positive behaviour management framework with the exception of emergency situations. We describe our approach to promoting positive behaviour in our Behaviour Policy. We aim to do all we can in order to avoid using restrictive physical intervention. We would only use restrictive physical intervention where we judge that there is no reasonably practicable less intrusive alternative. However, there may be rare situations of such concern where we judge that we would need to use restrictive physical intervention immediately. We would use restrictive physical intervention at the same time as using other approaches, such as saying, "Stop!" and giving a warning of what might happen next. Safety is always a paramount concern and staff are not advised to use restrictive

physical intervention if it is likely to put themselves at risk. We will make parents/guardians aware of our Physical Intervention policy alongside other policies when their youngster joins our school.

2.2 Duty of care
We all have a duty of care towards the children in our setting. This duty of care applies as much to what we don't do as what we do do. When children are in danger of hurting themselves or others, or of causing significant damage to property, we have a responsibility to intervene. In most cases, this involves an attempt to divert the child to another activity or a simple instruction to "Stop!" along with a warning of what might happen next. However, if we judge that it is necessary, we may use restrictive physical intervention.

2.3 Reasonable force
When we need to use restrictive physical intervention, we use it within the principle of reasonable force. This means using an amount of force in proportion to the circumstances. We use as little force as is necessary in order to maintain safety, and we use this for as short a period as possible.

2.4 When can restrictive physical intervention be used?
The use of restrictive physical intervention may be justified where a pupil is:
1. committing an offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
2. causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);
or 3. prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Restrictive physical intervention may also be appropriate where, although none of the above have yet happened, they are judged as highly likely to be about to happen. We are very cautious about using restrictive physical intervention where there are no immediate concerns about possible injury or exceptional damage to property. Restrictive physical intervention would only be used in exceptional circumstances, with staff that know the student well and who are able to make informed judgements about the relative risks of using, or not using, restrictive physical intervention; for example stopping a younger child leaving the school site. The main aim of restrictive physical intervention is usually to maintain or restore safety. We acknowledge that there may be times when restrictive physical intervention may be justified as a reasonable and proportional response to prevent damage to property or to maintain good order and discipline at the school. However, we would be particularly careful to consider all other options available before using restrictive physical intervention to achieve either of these goals. In all cases, we remember that, even if the aim is to re-establish good order, restrictive physical intervention may actually escalate the difficulty. If we judge that restrictive physical intervention would make the situation worse, we would not use it, but would do something else (like go to seek help, make the area safe or warn about what might happen next and issue an instruction to stop) consistent with our duty of care. Our duty of care means that we might use a restrictive physical intervention if a child is trying to leave our site and we judged that they would be at unacceptable risk. This duty of care also extends beyond our site boundaries: there

may also be situations where we need to use restrictive physical intervention when we have control or charge of children off site (e.g. on trips). We never use restrictive physical intervention out of anger or as a punishment.

2.5 Who can use restrictive physical intervention?
If the use of restrictive physical intervention is appropriate, and is part of a positive behaviour management framework, a member of staff who knows the child well should be involved, and where possible, BILD accredited trained in the use of restrictive physical intervention. However, in an emergency, any of the following may be able to use reasonable force:

1. any teacher who works at the school,
2. any other person whom the head teacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils, including:
(a) support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors;
and (b) people to whom the headteacher has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising pupils (for example catering or premises-related staff) and unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school organised visits) but not prefects.

2.6 Planning around an individual and risk assessment
In an emergency, staff do their best, using reasonable force within their duty of care. Where an individual child has an individual positive behaviour management plan, which includes the use of restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that such staff receive appropriate training and support in behaviour management as well as restrictive physical intervention. (Further guidance is available for schools in the Assessing and Managing Risks: Learners who present challenging behaviours). We consider staff and children's physical and emotional health when we make these plans and consult with the child's parents/guardians. In most situations, our use of restrictive physical intervention is in the context of a prior risk assessment that considers:
• What the risks are
• Who is at risk and how
• What we can do to manage the risk (this may include the possible use of restrictive physical intervention)

We use this risk assessment to inform the individual behaviour plan that we develop to support the child. If this behaviour plan includes restrictive physical intervention it will be as just one part of a whole approach to supporting the child's behaviour. The behaviour plan outlines:
• Our understanding of what the child is trying to communicate or achieve through his/her behaviour
• How we adapt our environment to better meet the child's needs
• How we teach and encourage the child to use new, more appropriate behaviours
• How we reward the child when he or she makes progress
• How we respond when the child's behaviour is challenging (responsive strategies).
• We pay particular attention to responsive strategies. We use a range of approaches (including distraction, relocation, and offering choices) as direct alternatives to using restrictive physical intervention.

• We choose these responsive strategies in the light of our risk assessment.
• We draw from as many different viewpoints as possible when we anticipate that an individual child's behaviour may require some form of restrictive physical intervention. In particular, we include the child's perspective. We also involve the child's parents (or those with parental responsibility), staff from our school who work with the child, and any visiting support staff (such as Educational Psychologists, Behaviour Support Teachers)
• Colleagues from health services or local authority.

We record the outcome from these planning meetings and seek signed parental agreement of our planned approach. We review these plans at least once every 4 to 6 months, or more frequently if there are any concerns about the nature of frequency of the use of restrictive physical intervention or where there are any major changes to the child's circumstances.
• We recognise that there may be some children within our school who find physical contact in general particularly unwelcome as a consequence of their culture/religious group or disability. There may be others for whom such contact is troubling as a result of their personal history, in particular of abuse. We have systems to alert staff discreetly to such issues so that we can plan accordingly to meet individual children's needs.

2.7 What type of restrictive physical intervention can be used
Any use of restrictive physical intervention by our staff should be consistent with the principle of reasonable force. In all cases, staff should be guided in their choices of action by the principles in section 2 above. Staff should not act in ways that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:
• Holding a child around the neck or collar or in any other way that might restrict the child's ability to breathe
• Slapping, punching or kicking a child
• Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
• Tripping a child
• Holding a child by the hair or ear
Such actions would normally be considered inappropriate. We do not plan for and do not allow, except in emergency situations, staff to use seclusion. Seclusion is where a young person is forced to spend time alone in a confined space against their will. We may, however, use withdrawal in a planned way. Withdrawal is defined as follows: Withdrawal involves taking a young person, with their agreement, away from a situation that has caused anxiety or distress, to a place where they can be observed continuously and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This is different to Time-out where a response to a young person's inappropriate behaviour includes a specific period of time with no positive reinforcement as part of an overall intervention plan.

Recording and reporting
We record any significant use of restrictive physical intervention. We do this as soon as possible and in any event within 24 hours of the incident. The incident must be recorded by the school and will form part of the pupil's records. An electronic incident form will be submitted to the local authority via the Portal within six days. The Governing Body ensures that procedures are in place for recording significant incidents and then reporting these incidents as soon as possible to pupil's parents /

carers. After using restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that the headteacher is informed as soon as possible. We also inform each parent / carer.

2.9 Supporting and reviewing

We recognise that it can be distressing to be involved in a physical intervention, whether as the child being held, the person doing the holding, or someone observing or hearing about what has happened. After a restrictive physical intervention, we give support to the child so that they can understand why it was necessary. Where we can, we record how the child felt about this. Where it is appropriate, we have the same sort of conversations with other children who observed what happened. In all cases, we will wait until the child has calmed down enough to be able to talk productively and learn from this conversation. If necessary, the child will be asked whether he or she has been injured so that appropriate first aid can be given. This also gives the child an opportunity to say whether anything inappropriate has happened in connection with the incident. We also support adults who were involved, either actively or as observers, by giving them the chance to talk through what has happened with the most appropriate person from the staff team. A key aim of our post-incident support is to repair any potential strain to the relationship between the child and the people that were involved in the restrictive physical intervention. After a restrictive physical intervention, we consider whether the individual behaviour plan needs to be reviewed so that we can reduce the risk of needing to use restrictive physical intervention again.

2.10 Monitoring

We monitor the use of restrictive physical intervention in our school. The Headteacher and ALNCO are responsible for reviewing the records on a termly basis, and more often if the need arises, so that appropriate action can be taken. The information is also used by the governing body when this policy and related policies are reviewed. Our analysis considers equalities issues such as age, gender, disability, culture and religion issues in order to make sure that there is no potential discrimination; we also consider potential child protection issues. We look for any trends in the relative use of restrictive physical intervention across different staff members and across different times of day or settings. Our aims are to protect children, to avoid discrimination and to develop our ability to meet the needs of children without using restrictive physical intervention. We report this analysis back to the governing body so that appropriate further action can be taken and monitored.

2.11 Concerns and complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to concerns, allegations or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use. In particular, a child might complain about the use of restrictive physical intervention in the heat of the moment but on further reflection might better understand why it happened. In other situations, further reflection might lead the child to feel strongly that the use of restrictive physical intervention was inappropriate. This is why we are careful to ensure all children have a chance to review the incident after they have calmed down. If a child or parent has a concern about the way restrictive physical intervention has been used, our school's complaints procedure explains how to take the matter further and how long we will take to respond to these concerns. Where there is an allegation of assault or abusive behaviour, we ensure that the head teacher is immediately informed. We would also follow our child protection procedures. In the absence of the head teacher, in relation to restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that the deputy head teacher is

informed. If the concern, complaint or allegation concerns the head teacher, we ensure that the Chair of Governors is informed. If parents/carers are not satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled, they have the right to take the matter further as set out in our complaints procedure. The results and procedures used in dealing with complaints are monitored by the governing body.

2.12 Reviewing this policy We adopted this policy on
It is next due for review by
(this would depend on the individual setting, but it is recommended that this should be at least every 2 years.)