

BILLINGHAY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS
April 2026

Introduction

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

This policy sets out how as a school we aim to proactively minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and when necessary, how and when these interventions can be used safely, appropriately and lawfully.

This policy has been developed in response to the DfE Restrictive interventions, inc use of reasonable force, in schools guidance April 2026.

This policy should be read alongside other policies such as Behaviour, anti Bullying, Intimate Care Policy and Health and Safety.

Power to use Reasonable Force

School staff at Billingham Church of England Primary School have the legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances (meaning using no more force than is needed) to prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Definition of School Staff

- Any teacher who works at the school; and
- Any person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This:
 - Includes support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors.
 - Can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff or unpaid volunteers (e.g. parents accompanying pupils on school organised educational visits).
- In the Headteachers absence authorisation can be granted from the Assistant Headteacher.
- This power may be used where a pupil (including one from another school) is on school premises or in the lawful control or charge of the member of staff (e.g. on a school visit).

Restrictive Intervention, Reasonable Force and Restraint

- Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.
- Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.
- Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical

contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

Determining when to use restrictive intervention

- There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations.

Whole school and individual approaches to consider minimise the need for restrictive interventions.

Whole-school measures can include:

- consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive.
- sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds.

- training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation.
- development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust.
- recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning.

Individual approaches can include:

- working closely with parents to support individual pupils.
- strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of behaviour support plans. Where a pupil has a disability, schools have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers.
- Giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates.

Considerations for Pupils with SEND

- Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

Schools should seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND. For example, schools should consider how the school culture and environment may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND and seek to support pupils to cope with situations that they may find distressing. Schools should utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used.

Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies may include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention.

Where appropriate, school staff should work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans. Behaviour support plans should outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

- Head teachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only. Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

- Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.
- We would not search pupils where resistance is expected and would then call the police.

Unacceptable uses of force

- It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.
Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible.

Risk Assessments/ Positive Handling Plan

- We will assess the frequency and severity of incidents requiring use of force that are likely to occur and use the assessments to inform staff training.
- If following completion of a risk assessment/ Positive Handling Plan training is required it will be organised for staff.
- The Positive Handling Plan will be completed in consultation with all the staff who work on a daily basis with the child. This plan will automatically be put in place (if not already there) as a consequence of any restrictive interventions taking place.
- A copy of the plan will be distributed to all staff so that they can support the pupil and understand how best to manage him/her.

Other physical contact with pupils

- It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:
 - to give first aid
 - to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self regulate
 - to comfort a distressed pupil
 - to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
 - to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
 - to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

Seclusion

- Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.
An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting duties'.
Seclusion, as defined in this guidance, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or

wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom.

Situations where staff should not normally intervene without help

- Help may sometimes be needed in dealing with a situation involving an older pupil, a large pupil, more than one pupil, or if the member of staff feels that he/she may be at risk of injury. In such situations staff would send a red card to another member of staff including the Headteacher to summon help quickly. The member of staff will also take steps to remove other pupils who might be at risk.

Recording and Reporting Duties

- Records of significant incidents in which force was used will be on the form in Appendix 1 of this policy. Once completed a copy will be held on CPOMS.
- Reports should be completed within 24 hours of the incident occurring.
- After any recordable event parents/carers will be informed using the form in Appendix 2 (as soon as is practicable after the incident, endeavouring to do this no later than the same day), as will Governors.

Dealing with Complaints and Allegations

- Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with our complaints procedure.
- If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education will be followed and the school will contact the Safeguarding Team 01522 554674.

APPENDIX 1 – Incident Reporting Template

Name of the individual:	Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil e.g. SEND:
Date of Birth:	
Full name and signature of the individual completing this report:	Date of writing this report:
Location of this incident:	Date of the incident:
Full names of other individuals present:	Nature of restrictive intervention used:

The following information is an account of what happened before, during, and after the incident.

- Give a comprehensive, accurate, and detailed account of the incident.
- Avoid abbreviations and jargon where possible.
- Give details of any restrictive and non-restrictive practices used, including the full names of individuals involved, and the impact it had.

What happened <i>before</i> the incident? Inc details of the behaviour requiring use of restrictive intervention, inc attempts at de-escalation such as humour, verbal advice/support, firm clear directions, negotiation, limited choices, distraction, diversion, reassurance, calm talk, patient, withdrawal offered/directed, swap adult, success reminders, reminder about consequences.
What happened <i>during</i> the incident? How was the incident resolved?

What happened <i>after</i> the incident? Inc any post incident support eg details of any medical treatment.	
Start time of any restrictive intervention:	Duration of any restrictive intervention:
How was the intervention in the best interests of the individual?	
Describe any injuries and if medical treatment was offered and accepted. <i>Injuries should also be recorded on Arbor.</i>	
Family member and / or external agencies who have been informed of this incident (if applicable):	
Other supporting documentation relevant to this incident, e.g. witness accounts, Individual Support Plan (if applicable):	

Wherever possible, the viewpoint of the individual should be sought and recorded, using appropriate communication support strategies.

Viewpoint of the individual:	
Signature of the individual (if applicable):	
Was a debriefing offered? Yes/ No	Was a debriefing accepted? Yes/ No

Include any completed debrief form with this report.

Risk assessment implications following this incident:

Follow up actions required:

Name and signature of the person monitoring these records:	Role in this organisation:
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APPENDIX 2 – Incident Reporting template to Parents / carers

Date:	Location:
Time:	Duration of intervention:

Brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary.
Brief account of what happened.
Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.
Date of follow up discussion about the incident to involve: Any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident. Behavioural Support Plans. What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were. What might be done differently if there is a future incident.

Name of person completing this form:	Signature:
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