Edisford Primary School

Confidence. Persistence. Getting Along. Organisation. Resilience.

Restrictive Intervention and Reasonable Use Policy

At Edisford Primary School we believe that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, we recognise that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary.

We understand that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when all other prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- Help school staff feel confident in knowing how to use restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully, when they are necessary.
- Clearly set out the steps for recording and reporting incidents of reasonable force, seclusion and restraint.
- Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all pupils and staff, and help create a positive and safe place for everyone at school.

The sections below explain the legal framework, key definitions, prevention and de-escalation expectations, when restrictive interventions may and may not be used, how incidents must be recorded and reported, and the roles responsible for implementation, monitoring and review.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools. It also meets the requirements of:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children
- and Learning Act 2009
- Section 550ZA and section 550ZB of the Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Use of Restrictive Intervention and Reasonable Force Policy April 2026

1. Definitions

The terms used in this policy are defined below. These definitions should be read alongside the Department for Education guidance referenced in the legislation and guidance section of this policy.

Restrictive interventions are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body.

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 refers to the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain children. It means using no more force than is needed, for the shortest amount of time necessary, with the precise response depending on the circumstances.

Restraint is a form of non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

At Edisford Primary School we recognise that all incidents meeting any of the definitions above are significant incidents as defined below:
A significant incident is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

SEND is Special Educational Needs and Disability

CPOMS is Child Protection On-line Management System

2. Appropriate physical contact with pupils

Our school does not have a 'no contact' policy. We do not grant any requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have physical contact with pupils without this amounting to reasonable force or another restrictive intervention. This will depend on the circumstances, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- To give first aid to a pupil.
- To guide or escort a pupil through the school building or on a school trip by holding their hand.
- To comfort a distressed child.
- To congratulate or praise a child, for example a pat on the back or handshake.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, staff should use their professional judgement, and consider:

- All relevant school policies and guidance including the staff code of conduct and Guidance for safer working practices.
- The context of the situation, such as whether there are other adults present
- The child's age and known vulnerabilities (including but not limited to SEND and experience of trauma).
- Whether other non-physical strategies can be used.

3. Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a child confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving. It is a short-term safety measure and may only be used where a child is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and there is an immediate and serious risk of harm to the child or others. As a school, we understand that in such circumstances a child is not acting with intent; the immediate objective is to support the child to regulate and reduce the need for restrictive intervention.

Seclusion will never be used as a punishment, a sanction, a planned behaviour management strategy, or a response to non-compliance where there is no immediate and significant risk.

Seclusion must only ever be used to reduce an immediate risk of harm and for the shortest time possible. It must not be used to coerce, threaten or control a child. It should not be implemented through the threat of punishment or the suggestion that

negative consequences will follow if a child attempts to leave the space they are secluded.

Where seclusion is used, the place in which the child is confined must be safe, suitable and non-threatening, taking account of the child's age, needs, vulnerabilities and sensory sensitivities. The environment must not present a risk to the child's physical or psychological wellbeing and should allow the child to calm and regain regulation. A child who is secluded must be continuously supervised at all times by a member of staff. Supervision must be active and purposeful, enabling staff to monitor the child's physical and emotional wellbeing, communicate appropriately, and respond immediately if the child becomes distressed, unwell or at risk. Adults supervising/supporting a child in seclusion should continue to use de-escalation strategies to calm the child and minimise the risk and therefore time where seclusion is felt to be required.

Following any use of seclusion, appropriate post-incident actions must take place, including staff and child de-brief to check on welfare and review risk assessment and regulation plan.

All incidents involving seclusion must be treated as a significant safeguarding event. All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported in line with statutory duties.

4. Prevention and de-escalation strategies

At Edisford we prioritise whole school proactive strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.
Restrictive intervention is used only when necessary.

Our whole-school approach includes:

- Environmental expectations
- Consistent routines and expectations
- Trauma informed practice including emotional coaching
- Adaptive teaching strategies
- Early identification of needs including SEND

Effective communication strategies

The individual approaches we may use include regulation plans, reasonable adjustments, sensory strategies and joint working with families and external agencies. Children experiencing challenges that increase the likelihood of restrictive interventions will be assessed and supported through a co-produced regulation plan aimed at developing agreed proactive strategies to help them maintain regulation. These plans will include child voice, family views and external agency advice where appropriate. They will be shared with families and relevant staff to ensure consistency of practice and will be reviewed regularly, at least half-termly.

Each child has individual circumstances and each situation is different. We recognise that children with additional vulnerabilities, including but not limited to additional needs/SEND and experiences of adversity/trauma can experience triggers in a school environment which may increase their risk of dysregulation and likelihood of restrictive interventions. All staff will aim to prevent an incident of restrictive intervention through use of de-escalation strategies. All adults responding to children showing signs of dysregulation in their behaviour will respond to the presenting needs of the child and utilise training in de-escalation strategies and their pre-existing relational knowledge of what supports that child best. Where a child is supported by a regulation plan, the strategies in their plan will be implemented. Plans should be reviewed regularly and following a significant incident to consider any required changes.

Examples of de-escalation strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Offer of distraction activity, including sensory activity and/or food/drink
- Remove any distressing stimuli
- Reassurance, verbal reminders of previous success and achievements
- Observe from a distance, providing personal space and processing time
- Change of staff supporting
- Relocating any other children to another space where safe to do so
- Calm and assuring body language/tone of voice

- Use of humour (where appropriate due to pre-existing relationship/knowledge of the child)

At times, staff may not be able to use de-escalation strategies due to the situation requiring dynamic intervention for immediate safety purposes.

5. Using restrictive intervention

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 outlined in this policy. (Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 93 (reasonable force): https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/93

This power applies while staff are lawfully in charge of children and extends to situations both on and off the school sites, 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 away that is consistent with wider safeguarding, equality, human rights and health and safety obligations.

When restrictive interventions may be used

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. Restrictive interventions should be a last resort and only used when other de-escalation strategies have been exhausted, or when the situation is deemed to require immediate intervention due to the presenting risk.

In line with the April 2026 Department for Education guidance, restrictive interventions may only be used to prevent a child from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- causing serious damage to property
- causing significant disorder

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.

Child welfare and dignity

Staff must consider the impact of any restrictive intervention on children's physical and psychological wellbeing.

Where possible, staff should seek to maintain children's dignity, including consideration of the environment in which the intervention takes place, and should communicate calmly and clearly with the child about what is happening and why.

Vulnerabilities and SEND

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

We will 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. We will also work with the pupil, their parents/carers and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

These strategies might include:

- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress to the pupil
- Staff members changing how they communicate with the pupil, such as being more mindful of body language, facial expressions and/or tone of voice
- Helping the pupil express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- Engaging the pupil in activities to help them regulate their emotions
- Distracting the pupil with familiar objects or activities to redirect their attention

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.

Support during use of restrictive interventions

During all restrictive interventions adults must continually attempt to de-escalate the situation so the restrictive intervention can end. Adults must continually assess the child's physical and emotional safety during a restrictive intervention and seek support from other staff members. This includes recognising that through initiating a restrictive intervention the child may become further dysregulated by the presence of the adult/s present at point of the intervention and a change of face can support de-escalation quickly, therefore support from other staff members should be sought swiftly.

Support following a restrictive intervention

At Edisford we recognise that restrictive interventions carry an inherent physical and psychological risk.

Following any restrictive intervention, adults 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.

This includes capturing the child's voice and experience of the restrictive intervention in a safe and supportive environment, by, wherever possible, an adult who was not involved in the restrictive intervention, checking on their wellbeing and ensuring medical attention for any injuries.

Staff should be given time following involvement in a restrictive intervention to record information accurately, to receive any required support for their wellbeing and medical assessment for any injuries.

Following all restrictive interventions, a staff de-brief should take place and a review of the risk assessment/regulation plan in place to support the child.

Staff Training

We recognise 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.

Staff who are likely to work in situations where restrictive interventions will be required will be adequately trained in prevention and de-escalation strategies, as well as the safe and lawful use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions.

We also have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff. Therefore, we carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

6. Acceptable uses of force

All our school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain situations. Staff can use reasonable force only where it is necessary and proportionate to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Hurting themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils, in or out of lessons

While all staff have this power, some staff, especially those who work closely with pupils who might show challenging behaviour, are more likely to need to use it than others.

We will ensure staff are adequately trained and that risk assessments are carried out where necessary.

Any significant incident involving the use of force will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

7. Unacceptable uses of restrictive intervention

At Edisford we are clear that restrictive interventions must only be used as a last resort, 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 significant harm. They must cease as soon as the immediate risk has reduced. 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 child'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. Additionally, children should not be lifted off the ground or carried unless in an emergency situation requiring immediate removal from an area to a place of safety where the risk cannot be supported through an alternative strategy. Using force to remove any item of children's clothing, including children's shoes is not acceptable, unless causing a critical and immediate risk that cannot be managed in an alternative way for example – restricting their breathing.

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. Our responses to children at all times must seek to preserve their 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 child's safety, should be reported immediately.

8. Reporting and recording

Edisford Primary School recognises that incidents involving restrictive interventions are significant incidents.

Immediately following a significant incident, staff should verbally inform senior leaders that the event has taken place to allow for appropriate post-incident support

for all involved/witness to the incident. All significant incidents involving the use of reasonable force, seclusion and non-force related restraint e.g. removal of walking aid, must be recorded in writing, as soon as is practicable after the event, and staff should endeavour to complete the reporting no later than the same day. This duty applies even if restrictive interventions have been agreed with families as part of a child's regulation plan.

Edisford Primary School uses CPOMS to record all significant incidents. These will be logged under the category of restrictive interventions/use of reasonable force which includes a custom form for logging the following information:

- Time, date, location and duration of incident
- SEND status and if supported through a risk assessment
- Antecedents/triggers i.e. description of the circumstances before the incident
- De-escalation strategies used and rationale for restrictive intervention
- Description of the incident, type of intervention, degree of force
- Description of post-incident support including any injuries, medical assessments

Behaviour Log for Level 3 Incidents

The school maintains a separate Behaviour Log for Level 3 incidents. These are incidents requiring intervention from the SLT or Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to support staff in managing behaviour.
Level 3 incidents are recorded in this log to enable the SLT to identify trends and patterns. Any incident involving a restrictive intervention must also be recorded in the Behaviour Log, which is stored on the password-protected Headteacher's computer.

Reflection Room Behaviour Book for Level 1 and Level 2 Incidents

All other behaviour incidents are recorded in the Behaviour Book, which is kept in the Reflection Room. This log is used to record Level 1 and Level 2 incidents.

We will inform parents/carers about an incident as soon as we can after it happens and will endeavour to do this on the same day. We will do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

When we report significant incidents involving force to parents/carers, we will include the following details:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

Staff will use the Record of Restrictive Intervention Seclusion or restraint form.

Parents /carers will be provided with a copy of the written record of the incident.

When we report seclusion incidents and restraint incidents to parents/carers, we will provide parents/carers with a copy of our written record of the incident.

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will report it in line with our procedure for reporting significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be reported twice.

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.

In circumstances where the school believes that reporting a significant incident to a family would result in serious harm to the child, the school is exempt from the duty to report to that parent or carer. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent or carer to whom it can be reported without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the child is ordinarily resident. In this situation, the school should follow its safeguarding policy and local safeguarding arrangements.

9. Post incident support and review

Following all restrictive interventions, we 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.

Immediate welfare and medical checks

As soon as practicable after the incident, staff will check the child 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 our health and safety procedures.

Emotional wellbeing and safeguarding support

Our school recognises that restrictive interventions can be distressing. Consideration will therefore be given to the emotional wellbeing needs of the child, any staff involved, and any children who may have witnessed the incident.

Support may include access to pastoral staff, counselling services, trusted adults or other appropriate support mechanisms.

Reflective debrief and learning

We 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; reflection on the rationale for the intervention; discussion of early warning signs and triggers; and consideration of what preventative and de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- identification of any alternative approaches that may reduce the likelihood of recurrence

Children's voices will be sought as part of the de-brief process. Staff will ensure that children's views are sought in ways which are appropriate to their age and stage of development, considering any additional need and/or protected characteristics. Where possible, debriefs should be facilitated by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident.

Following any restrictive intervention, we will review risk assessments, regulation plans and need for further support. Changes will be made where necessary to better support the child, address underlying needs, and strengthen preventative measures. We are committed to repairing and rebuilding relationships following incidents involving restrictive interventions.

Where appropriate, restorative approaches will be used between children and staff to promote a sense of safety, dignity and belonging.

10. Monitoring and escalation

Use of restrictive interventions and all significant incidents will be monitored by school leaders for patterns, training needs and practice development. This process will be supported by the governing body, which will have oversight of all incident recordings. 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.

11. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body

- The governing body is responsible for:
- Reviewing and approving this policy
- Ensuring that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each:
    - Significant incident involving force,
    - Seclusion incident,
    - Restraint incident
    - If approaches have been used for some time but haven't been effective

- If there is any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions, including in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics or have SEND or other types of vulnerabilities

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall implementation and oversight of this policy
- Making sure that appropriate and high-quality training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions is provided for staff who need it, based on our school's individual context and needs
- Ensuring adequate staffing levels to support positive behaviour management
- Monitoring incidents involving restrictive interventions, including regular review of incidents to refine and improve processes
- Ensuring compliance with recording and reporting requirements
- Authorising staff to search a pupil or their belongings if they have good reason to think the pupil has a prohibited or banned item
- Following the procedures set out in our complaints policy to deal with any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions
- Following the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education if an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive intervention is made against a member of staff

All Staff

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Making sure they have read and understood the principles of this policy and any other linked policies
- Using 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
- Reporting these incidents to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

- Recording any injuries that occur as part of an incident involving restrictive intervention, and following our health and safety policy to ensure these are reported to the Health and Safety Executive where necessary
- Taking part in training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions, if relevant to their role (this may include additional training appropriate to their responsibilities)
- Engaging 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

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Reporting every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force to each parent/carer of the pupil involved
- Making sure records are kept securely and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures
- Contacting 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, in line with the reporting and recording section of this policy

Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)

- The SENCO is responsible for:
- Working with pupils, parents/carers and relevant school staff to develop and review behaviour support plans and risk assessments for any pupils with SEND where it's been identified that there is an increased likelihood of the need to use restrictive interventions
- Ensuring staff are aware of individual pupil needs and associated behaviour support strategies
- Working with staff who know pupils well, to identify and manage risk (such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur)
- Working with pupils, parents/carers, staff and other relevant professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies

- Advising on reasonable adjustments for any pupils with disabilities when considering prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Participating in the review of restrictive intervention incidents involving any pupil with SEND
- Providing advice and support on the application of this policy for pupils with SEND
- Contributing to staff training on SEND and behaviour management, including the use of restrictive interventions

12. Complaints and allegations

Any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled through our school's complaints policy, which you can find on the school website.

We take any allegation of inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff very seriously. We will deal with allegations in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the full governing body.

14. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and Safety policy
- SEND policy

Updated October 2026.

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