



East-the-Water Primary School

Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force Policy

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1. Statement of Principles

East-the-Water Primary School is committed to providing a safe, calm, respectful and inclusive learning environment in which all pupils can thrive.

We seek to minimise the need for restrictive interventions through positive behaviour support, relational practice, early intervention and effective de-escalation strategies.

Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, will only be used:

- As a last resort;
- When necessary to prevent harm;
- In a way that is reasonable, proportionate and lawful;
- For the shortest time necessary;
- In the best interests of the pupil and others.

This policy complies with the Department for Education guidance *Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* (effective April 2026).

2. Legal Framework

The use of reasonable force is permitted under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The school also fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and to prevent discrimination.

The school complies with the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

3. Definitions

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the statutory power staff have to use force to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence;
- Causing personal injury to themselves or others;
- Damaging property;

- Seriously disrupting good order and discipline.

Force means physical contact used to control or restrain a pupil. The degree of force must always be proportionate to the circumstances. “Reasonable” means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time required to manage the risk.

Restrictive Intervention

Any action that restricts a pupil’s movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. This may include:

- Physical restraint;
- Environmental restriction (for example, preventing a pupil from leaving a room);
- Seclusion.

Restraint

A non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.

Seclusion

The supervised isolation of a pupil away from others for the purpose of managing a crisis situation where there is a risk of harm.

Seclusion:

- Is not a punishment;
- Is used only to maintain safety;
- Is supervised at all times;
- Ends as soon as it is safe to do so.

Seclusion will never be used for behaviour management, compliance, convenience or as a disciplinary sanction.

4. Prevention and De-escalation

The school prioritises prevention through:

- A whole-school positive behaviour culture;
- Clear routines and expectations;
- Relational approaches;
- Individual risk assessments where appropriate;
- Co-regulation plans;
- Staff training in de-escalation and preventative strategies.

Staff will always attempt appropriate de-escalation before considering restrictive intervention, unless there is an immediate and significant risk of harm requiring urgent action.

When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Restrictive interventions may only be used when:

- There is a risk of injury to a pupil or others;
- There is a risk of serious damage to property;
- A pupil's behaviour seriously compromises safety or good order;
- De-escalation strategies have failed or are not appropriate in the circumstances.

Any intervention must be:

- Necessary;
- Reasonable;
- Proportionate;
- The minimum force for the shortest time possible.

Staff must undertake a continuous dynamic risk assessment throughout any restrictive intervention and adjust or cease the intervention immediately if the level of risk changes or reduces.

The intervention must cease immediately once the risk of harm has reduced.

Force must never be used:

As a punishment or disciplinary sanction;

- To cause pain, humiliation or degradation;
- To enforce compliance;
- In response to low-level disruption;
- In any way that restricts breathing or circulation.

5. Prohibited Practices

The school will not use:

- Prone (face-down) restraint;
- Mechanical restraint;
- Any intervention that deliberately restricts breathing;
- Pain-inducing techniques, compliance-based holds, or any method designed to cause discomfort in order to secure compliance;
- Deprivation of basic needs such as access to food, drink or toilet facilities.

6. Authorised Staff

All school staff have the legal authority to use reasonable force where necessary.

Staff who may need to use restrictive interventions will receive appropriate training in:

- Safe and lawful use of force;

- Prevention and de-escalation;
- Safeguarding responsibilities.

Planned physical intervention should only be undertaken by trained staff. In an emergency, any member of staff may act to prevent immediate harm.

7. Pupil Welfare and Dignity

The welfare and dignity of the pupil are paramount.

When considering or using restrictive intervention, staff must take account of:

- The pupil's individual needs and vulnerabilities;
- Any medical conditions (diagnosed or undiagnosed);
- Sensory impairments;
- Communication needs;
- Trauma or adverse experiences.

Staff should:

- Communicate clearly and calmly;
- Adapt communication to the pupil's understanding;
- Monitor the pupil's physical and emotional state;
- Reduce or cease the intervention at the earliest safe opportunity;
- Consider the location and impact on dignity, including exposure to peers.

Any injury to a pupil or member of staff must be recorded in accordance with the school's accident reporting procedures. Where appropriate, consideration will be given to safeguarding referral requirements and statutory reporting obligations, including RIDDOR.

8. Pupils with SEND

Some pupils with SEND may display behaviours that present a risk to themselves or others when experiencing distress, anxiety, sensory overload, pain, unfamiliar environments or communication difficulties.

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately subject to restrictive interventions and is committed to reducing this risk.

The school will:

- Identify and understand behavioural triggers;
- Work collaboratively with pupils, parents and relevant professionals;
- Develop Co-Regulation plans where appropriate;
- Make reasonable adjustments to reduce distress;
- Implement risk assessments where there is identified risk.

Co-Regulation plans will:

- Identify known triggers;
- Outline preventative and de-escalation strategies;
- Detail agreed adjustments;
- Specify any circumstances where increased physical contact may be appropriate;
- Be reviewed regularly and following any significant incident.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), restrictive intervention practice and Co-Regulation planning will support and align with the needs and provision identified within the plan. Detailed preventative and risk management strategies will be recorded within the pupil's Co-Regulation plan and reviewed regularly.

9. Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving restrictive intervention, restraint or seclusion must be recorded as soon as practicable and normally on the same day.

Records must include:

- Names of pupil(s) and staff involved;
- Date, time, location and duration;
- Relevant pupil needs, including SEND status where applicable;
- Antecedents and de-escalation strategies attempted;
- Reason the intervention was assessed as necessary;
- Type and degree of force used;
- Any injuries sustained;
- Post-incident support provided.

Parents/carers will be informed in writing as soon as practicable, normally by the end of the same school day. They will be offered the opportunity to discuss the incident and review any Co-Regulation plans where appropriate.

Records will be stored securely and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on CPOMs.

Monitoring of incidents will include analysis by protected characteristics and identified vulnerability groups, including SEND status, to identify and address any disproportionality.

10. Post-Incident Support

Following any restrictive intervention:

- The pupil will be supported to reflect and repair relationships;
- Staff will be offered debrief and appropriate support;
- Risk assessments and Co-Regulation plans will be reviewed;
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed where required.

11. Monitoring and Governance

The Headteacher will:

- Monitor incidents termly;
- Analyse patterns and trends;
- Identify training needs;
- Report anonymised data to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body will ensure oversight of practice and compliance with statutory duties.

12. Staff Training

The school will ensure:

- All staff understand this policy;
- Relevant staff receive accredited physical intervention training;
- Training includes de-escalation, safeguarding and legal responsibilities;
- Refresher training is provided at appropriate intervals.