



ST MARY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Agreed by Governing Board September 2026

Policy will be reviewed by September 2027

St Mary's RC Primary School

Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

1. Our Commitment

At St Mary's RC Primary School, our approach is guided by our mission: "Our Family, Our School, Modelled on Christ."

At St Mary's RC Primary School, we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child is valued, respected and encouraged to flourish. Guided by our Catholic ethos, we seek to build positive relationships based on dignity, compassion, reconciliation and love.

We recognise that children communicate through their behaviour and that all members of our school community have the right to feel safe. Our approach is rooted in understanding, prevention and positive support. Restrictive intervention will only ever be considered as a last resort when it is necessary to prevent harm and when all appropriate preventative strategies have been exhausted or are inappropriate due to an immediate risk.

Our aim is always to reduce the need for restrictive intervention through trauma-informed practice, positive relationships and inclusive support.

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- safeguard pupils, staff and visitors;
- promote positive behaviour through proactive and preventative approaches;
- ensure that any use of restrictive intervention is lawful, reasonable, proportionate and necessary;
- reduce the likelihood of situations escalating to physical intervention;
- ensure all incidents are appropriately recorded, reported, monitored and reviewed;
- promote the dignity, welfare and rights of every pupil.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based upon:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- DfE: Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools (effective 1 April 2026);

- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Human Rights Act 1998.

3. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention: A restrictive intervention is any intentional act that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may be physical or non-physical.

Restrictive interventions **may** include:

- physical restrictive intervention, including reasonable force;
- guiding or escorting where movement is intentionally restricted;
- blocking access to prevent harm;
- environmental restrictions used to reduce immediate risk;
- seclusion in exceptional circumstances where necessary to prevent imminent serious harm.

Reasonable Force: Reasonable force means the minimum amount of force necessary, used for the shortest possible time, to prevent harm or serious disruption.

Any use of force must always be:

- necessary;
- proportionate;
- reasonable in the circumstances;
- the least restrictive option available.

Staff must take account of:

- the pupil's age;
- stage of development;
- understanding;
- SEND;

- medical needs;
- communication needs;
- any known trauma or vulnerabilities.

4. Prevention and De-escalation

At St Mary's we believe that the most effective intervention is prevention. As a trauma-informed school, we understand that behaviour is communication. We seek to understand the reasons behind behaviour and respond with compassion, consistency and high expectations.

Staff use the knowledge and skills developed through trauma-informed practice including:

- *The PACE Approach*: Staff use the principles of: playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy to develop trusting, secure relationships which reduce anxiety and prevent escalation.
- The 3Rs Approach: Drawing upon the work of Dr Bruce Perry and 'Reaching the Learning Brain', staff recognise that children experiencing dysregulation, before they are able to think, reflect and learn effectively, require support through the sequence of:
 - ✓ Regulate
 - ✓ Relate
 - ✓ Reason

Additional preventative strategies include:

- Clear routines and consistent expectations;
- Positive relationships;
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND;
- Individual Behaviour Plans and Individual Teaching and Learning Plans where appropriate;
- Individual risk assessments;
- Calm verbal intervention;
- Offering choices wherever possible;
- Distraction and diversion;
- Strategic withdrawal of pupils or others from situations;
- Support from the Inclusion Hub Team;
- Advice from our in-house Play Therapist through Kangaroo Family Nurturing;
- Support from senior leaders;
- Partnership working with parents and external professionals.

Restrictive intervention will only be considered where these approaches have been ineffective or where there is an immediate risk that makes preventative strategies inappropriate.

5. Decision Making

Before using any restrictive intervention, staff will consider the following questions as outlined in appendix A - *Guidance for Staff: Decision-Making Flowchart for Restrictive Intervention*:

- Is intervention necessary?
- Is there an immediate risk?
- Is this the least restrictive option available?
- Is it proportionate to the risk?
- Will it preserve the pupil's dignity?
- Can the intervention stop as soon as the risk has reduced?

During any intervention, staff must continually assess whether it remains necessary. The intervention must be reduced or ended immediately once the risk has passed.

6. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Reasonable force may be used to:

- Prevent a pupil injuring themselves;
- Prevent injury to another person;
- Prevent serious damage to property;
- Prevent behaviour seriously disrupting good order and discipline;
- Prevent a pupil leaving a place where doing so would place themselves or others at immediate risk.

Examples include:

- Preventing a child running into a road;

- Separating pupils involved in a fight;
- Preventing serious self-harm;
- Stopping dangerous objects being thrown;
- Preventing a pupil climbing into an unsafe area.

All school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Other adults authorised by the Headteacher may also exercise this power where appropriate.

7. Seclusion

St Mary's RC Primary School does not routinely use seclusion. Where *exceptional circumstances* require a pupil to be temporarily prevented from leaving an area in order to prevent imminent serious harm:

- It will only be used for the shortest possible time;
- The pupil will be continuously supervised;
- The restriction will end immediately once the risk has reduced;
- It will never be used as punishment or for staff convenience;
- The incident will be fully recorded and reviewed.

8. Restrictive Intervention Must Never Be Used

Restrictive intervention will never be used:

- As punishment;
- To secure compliance where there is no risk of harm;
- Because of staff frustration, anger or convenience;
- In a manner intended to cause pain;
- To humiliate, intimidate or degrade a pupil.

Staff must never deliberately:

- Restrict breathing;
- Apply pressure to the neck or throat;
- Apply pressure to the chest or abdomen that could impair breathing;
- Cover a pupil's mouth or nose;
- Use techniques that compromise circulation or communication.

Any intervention must preserve the safety and dignity of the pupil.

9. Pupils with SEND or Additional Needs

Some pupils may have needs which increase the likelihood of distress or dysregulation. Where there is a foreseeable risk, the school will:

- Work closely with parents and carers;
- Seek advice from relevant professionals;
- Complete individual risk assessments;
- Develop Behaviour Support Plans where appropriate;
- Identify known triggers;
- Identify preferred de-escalation strategies;
- Identify effective communication approaches;
- Review arrangements regularly.

Reasonable adjustments will be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

10. Recording and Reporting

Any restrictive intervention must be reported immediately to the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. All incidents will be recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible.

Records will include:

- Date, time and location;

- Pupils involved;
- Staff involved;
- Witnesses;
- Antecedents and circumstances;
- Known triggers;
- De-escalation strategies attempted;
- Why restrictive intervention was considered necessary;
- The type of intervention used;
- The degree and duration of force used;
- SEND or medical considerations;
- Outcome of the incident;
- Any injuries sustained;
- Post-incident support provided;
- Follow-up actions.

Parents or carers will normally be informed on the same day, in writing or verbally, as soon as reasonably practicable unless exceptional safeguarding circumstances apply.

11. Post-Incident Support

Following any incident, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will:

- Check for injuries;
- Ensure the wellbeing of everyone involved;
- Provide appropriate emotional support;
- Undertake restorative conversations where appropriate;
- Review Behaviour Plans and risk assessments;
- Consider safeguarding concerns;
- Identify learning to reduce future incidents.

Pupils should be given the opportunity to reflect upon the incident once fully regulated.

12. Training

The Headteacher will ensure staff receive guidance and training appropriate to their role.

Training may include:

- Trauma-informed practice refresher training;
- De-escalation;
- Behaviour support;
- SEND awareness;
- Safer restrictive intervention techniques.

Where individual pupils present identified risks, relevant staff may receive additional specialist training. Training does not remove the responsibility of all authorised staff to act reasonably in an emergency.

13. Monitoring and Governance

The Headteacher will report recorded incidents of restrictive intervention to the Governing Body and will be supplied to them termly.

Monitoring will include analysis of:

- Frequency of incidents;
- Pupils involved;
- Equality considerations;
- Patterns and triggers;
- Effectiveness of preventative strategies;
- Staff training needs;
- Lessons learned.

This information will be used to continually reduce the need for restrictive intervention and strengthen inclusive practice.

14. Linked Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Policy Statement

"St Mary's RC Primary School is committed to ensuring that every child is treated with dignity, compassion and respect. Restrictive intervention will only ever be used in exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to protect people from harm. Our priority is always to build trusting relationships, understand behaviour, promote emotional regulation and ensure every member of our school family feels safe, valued and able to flourish."

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Approved by: Governing Body on:

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