



Riverside Community Special School

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

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This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents/carers about this policy when their children join our school.

This policy will be reviewed in full (by the Governing Body) on at least an annual basis.

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

The culture of a setting is critical in enabling good practice to flourish. How children's behaviour is supported and their personal development nurtured will be reflected in the environment surrounding them. An open and enabling culture is one where staff carry out effective risk assessment that balances a child's need to explore and learn new skills with the need to keep them safe. (DfE Ofsted Guidance : Positive environments where children can flourish)

This policy should be read alongside our Positive Behaviour Policy and Statement of Behaviour Intentions: Understanding Behaviour Approaches at Riverside School.

Values and Principles (see Positive Behaviour Policy appendix 1: Understanding Behaviour Approaches at Riverside School)

We work hard to support pupils to regulate, learn to manage and where appropriate, take responsibility for their own behaviour through a combination of approaches including positive role modelling, setting and reinforcing appropriate and safe boundaries and expectations and by teaching an interesting, meaningful, relevant and challenging curriculum. Over time, we help pupils develop the skills they need to understand and respond constructively to their own feelings and behaviour. At times, our pupils may still become distressed or dysregulated and pose a risk either to themselves or to others. In these circumstances, we may use restrictive physical intervention to keep them and others safe.

What is Restrictive Physical Intervention?

Restrictive physical intervention is when a member of staff uses force to intentionally restrict a pupil's movements against their will. This is only used in specific circumstances and always with the aim of restoring calm and safety. Restrictive physical intervention is intended to support, and to restore and maintain, physical safety and we always aim to balance physical safety with the impact on a pupil's emotional wellbeing. The decision about whether a pupil needs restrictive physical intervention to keep them and others safe is dependent on factors that will be part of a wider support plan around the pupil and the dynamic risk assessment and professional judgement of the staff concerned.

Who can use reasonable force?

All staff have a duty of care to keep pupils safe. For this reason, we do not take a 'no contact' approach to our pupils which could pose a risk of placing a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil or prevent them taking action needed to keep a pupil safe or prevent them causing harm. All staff have a duty of care towards

pupils and failing to act, including a failure to use reasonable force, may in some circumstances breach that duty.

Many staff are additionally trained in Team Teach which focuses on positive behaviour support, including the safe use of physical intervention when it is deemed reasonable, proportionate and necessary. When considering physical support, staff carefully recognise, and risk assess specific vulnerabilities including mental health needs and specific disabilities or medical conditions.

Our staff work positively and confidently with pupils and are skilled at finding the least intrusive way possible to support and empower them and keep them safe. This policy assumes the DfE's foundation of good practice in working with children, and we are dedicated to

- protecting and promoting our pupil's rights
- recognising that staff have a responsibility to understand our pupil's needs
- building relationships of trust and understanding
- understanding triggers and finding solutions, and
- knowing enough about our pupils and positive behaviour support techniques to defuse situations and/or distract and redirect pupils wherever possible

Whilst restraint is sometimes necessary, it is used for the shortest time possible and only when there is no other alternative to keep pupils and staff safe. It is not used routinely and is always used proportionately. Where possible, staff are aware of any additional needs of pupils when in physical contact with them and we recognise some pupils may find physical contact more challenging for their mental wellbeing, for example, those with specific disabilities, those with a history of adverse childhood experiences, or those from some faith communities and ethnic or religious groups. In such situations, we plan accordingly to meet individual pupil's needs and continue to prioritise safety, paying careful attention to issues of gender and privacy, and to specific requirements of our families. When deciding whether to use restrictive physical intervention, we will always use a dynamic risk assessment that includes balancing the impact of restraint on a pupil with the original risk. Parents and carers are made aware of our Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy and other relevant policies when their child is registered with the school.

We build staff skills and confidence to effectively support pupils by understanding the impact of a pupil's history on their behaviour, including any past trauma. We are skilled at supporting our pupils' varied special educational needs and seek additional specialist help when necessary. Our staff are confident in keeping our pupils safe in ways that promote their rights, respect their dignity and help equip them for the future.

Other physical contact with students

This focus of this policy is on the need for physical contact as a preventative measure. It does not refer to general physical contact that may occur throughout the school day for example when physically guiding a pupil during PE, when providing intimate care or when giving first aid or emotional support to a pupil who is hurt or distressed.

When might reasonable force be used?

Using restrictive physical intervention is not our preferred way of supporting pupil behaviour, however it is sometimes necessary and is only used in specific circumstances. These circumstances might include but may not be limited to:

- preventing a pupil from being physical aggressive towards another pupil or member of staff
- preventing a pupil leaving the classroom where staff have made a dynamic risk assessment that allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the safety and behaviour of others, leading to elevated risk
- preventing a pupil behaving in a way that is unsafe and causes disruption to a school event, trip or visit
- to physically separate a fight where this is safe to do so
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves or others

We would not normally use restrictive physical intervention when a pupil does not respond to requests or instructions unless them doing so puts them or others at risk of harm. This is because we cannot be sure our pupils have understood instructions even when these are supported with appropriate visuals and because our pupils may not carry out instructions for other reasons, for example, if they need extended processing time to respond successfully to what is being requested or is expected of them.

Our duty of care means staff might use restrictive physical intervention if a pupil attempts to leave the school site and they have made a dynamic risk assessment that the pupil would be unsafe if they did so. This duty of care also extends beyond our site boundaries and there may be situations where we need to use restrictive physical intervention when we have control or charge of pupils off-site, for example, on educational trips or visits.

Restrictive physical intervention may also be justified where a pupil is:

- committing an offence or when it is judged that this is highly likely to happen (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)

- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person or when it is judged that this is highly likely to happen (including the pupil themselves) or
- causing significant disruption to the education of other pupils

We acknowledge there are times when restrictive physical intervention may be justified as a reasonable, proportionate and necessary response to prevent damage to property or to maintain good order and discipline, however, we would not usually use restrictive physical intervention where there are no immediate concerns about safety, injury or exceptional damage to property, and other approaches would normally be tried in circumstances when the education of other pupils is being disrupted. Our priority is always to ensure the safety of pupils and staff and to restore a calm environment and staff respond in a calm, consistent, fair, and proportionate manner so pupils feel safe.

Known de-escalation techniques in line with a pupil's Individual Support Plan will be used to help prevent further escalation of behaviour and staff may use techniques such as non-judgemental, pre-agreed scripts and phrases to help restore calm. Additional approaches may also be used, such as supporting other pupils away from a situation that has been risk assessed as likely to escalate to allow them to continue their learning elsewhere and with minimal disruption. We consider all other options available before using restrictive physical intervention to restore order and minimise disruption to learning. For some pupils, restrictive physical intervention can cause them to feel further dysregulation and their behaviour to escalate to a more unsafe level. We consider other available options and use restrictive physical intervention only if it is in the best interest of the pupil and is consistent with our duty of care towards them and others.

Relationship to other policies

This policy is consistent with and should be read alongside the following policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Complaints Policy

Relevant legislation and Government Advice Informing This Policy

This policy is based on advice and the principles of legislation from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2013)
- [Positive environments where children can flourish - GOV.UK](#)

- [*Reasonable force restraint and restrictive practices in alternative provision and special schools.pdf](#)
- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2024](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- Sections 88 to 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which requires schools to regulate pupils' behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, and gives schools the authority to confiscate pupils' property.

Principles for the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restrictive physical intervention is never used as a form of punishment, and it would be unlawful of any member of staff to use it as so. When we 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 to maintain safety, and we use this for as short a period as possible. The decision on whether to physically intervene and the level of force necessary to restore safety is down to the professional judgement of the staff involved. This should always be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and will depend on the circumstances. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent and the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result of restoring safety. Senior leaders are supportive of staff when they have acted lawfully to prevent harm.

Restrictive physical intervention is only used within the context of our embedded whole-school strategies and frameworks for positive behaviour support, with the possibility of exception for emergency situations.

Staff Training and Team Teach

We work hard to ensure a whole school understanding of the importance of using the Team Teach 95% positive behaviour support strategies to proactively keep pupils safe. We avoid using restrictive physical intervention wherever there is a less intrusive or challenging alternative unless a situation arises that poses an immediate risk of harm in which case, this may be used immediately. Other than in an emergency situation or one which poses the risk of unforeseen, immediate harm, restrictive physical intervention is never used in isolation. Rather, it is supported with other approaches intended to provide pupils with best chance of keeping safe including verbal instructions supported with visuals where appropriate and possible (see Positive Behaviour Policy and appendices). Staff are not advised to use restrictive physical intervention if it is likely to put them at risk, for example, if running into a road is likely to cause them to put themselves in immediate danger.

To be confident in our judgements, we ensure staff are up to date with recent legislation and guidance of good practice in positive behaviour support. The school's Team Teach Intermediate Tutors ensure behaviour and wellbeing training is given to all staff and that Team Teach refresher training is provided within the appropriate timescales to staff who are Team Teach trained. We also offer initial Team Teach training depending on the needs of pupils across the school. Team Teach is an accredited provider in the use of restrictive physical intervention and is accredited through ICM (Institute of Conflict Management)

Whilst we are fully committed to promoting the reduction of physical restraint where this is safer, if the dynamic risk assessment of a situation deems the use of restrictive physical intervention to be appropriate, those staff trained in using Team Teach will be involved where possible. Where possible, a member of Team Teach staff who knows the pupil well will be available to observe or physically support and importantly, to de-escalate and calm the situation as quickly as possible. Our Team Teach training covers both de-escalation and specific physical restraint techniques, with a focus on 95% de-escalation and 5% physical restraint.

Any use of restrictive physical intervention by our staff should be consistent with the Team Teach principle of reasonable force. Staff should not act in ways that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- holding a pupil around the neck or collar or in any other way that might restrict their ability to breathe;
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint; or
- holding a pupil by the hair or ear.

Where we assess staff need specific training in the use of restrictive physical intervention, they receive Team Teach training delivered by the school's Team Teach Intermediate Tutors. This training uses strategies that lower risk, build relationships, minimise physical intervention, and create positive environments. Its positive handling techniques have undergone a medical review carried out by independent medical experts, as required by the Institute of Conflict Management. In addition, Team Teach are certified by the BILD ACT Association of Certified Training, complying with the Restraint Reduction Network Training Standards, a requirement for NHS commissioned services. Training ensures staff have up to date knowledge of legal issues, policy and risk assessment, understanding behaviour and planning for change, and de-escalation techniques. A record of such training is kept and monitored.

Dynamic Risk Assessment - responding to unforeseen emergencies

In an emergency, the following people may also use reasonable force:

- Any teacher or member of staff who works at the school
- any other person whom the Headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils, including:
 - support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as learning support assistants, lunchtime supervisors; and
 - other 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 educational trips or visits).

Individual Support Plans (ISPs) (see Positive Behaviour Policy, Appendix 2)

We work hard to understand our pupils' needs, backgrounds and behavioural triggers, and ensure we are proactive in our approach to reducing the need for restrictive physical intervention. Many pupils have Individual Support Plans in place as a preventative measure that aim to increase feelings of pupil safety and reduce the likelihood of behaviour escalating. In addition, Individual Support Plans also include contextual, sensory and environmental information about a pupil, triggers which might lead to distress or dysregulation, and strategies to de-escalate and calm a situation and help pupils feel safe. Individual Support Plans include

- what a pupil enjoys and what makes them feel good and be successful
- our understanding of what a pupil is trying to achieve or communicate through their behaviour
- communication strategies in place to support the pupil to make their needs known and to understand expectations

- potential risks
- how we might need to adapt our environment to further meet the pupil's needs
- skills the pupil is working on and how we support and encourage the pupil to use new, more appropriate behaviours
- how adults should respond to high and low-level behaviours of concern using verbal and physical strategies in line with our individual risk assessment of the pupil. These strategies may include the possible use of restrictive physical intervention to manage risk and restore safety

If a pupil's support plan includes restrictive physical intervention, they will also have a Positive Handling Plan which will be read alongside their Individual Support Plan as part of a holistic approach to supporting their behaviour. In most situations, restrictive physical intervention is used within the context of a wider support plan and prior risk assessment. A holistic approach will always include our understanding of what the pupil is trying to communicate through their behaviour.

We use a range of proactive and de-escalation approaches that draw upon expert advice from colleagues in health and other agencies where these support our understanding of a pupil's communication or sensory needs. Where possible and meaningful, we include the pupil's perspective and carefully support them to build skills in managing their own regulation. Where a pupil's Individual Support Plan includes the use of restrictive physical intervention, we use many additional strategies and alternatives to try to distract and redirect. De-escalation techniques vary according to the individual pupil's needs and might include offering choices and a level of control that is considered safe for the pupil, as well as other strategies such as Zones of Regulation toolkits, or access to outside time or sensory if appropriate. We also seek advice from parents and carers who offer invaluable support for helping us support their children to feel regulated.

Individual Support Plans are working documents and are reviewed at least termly by class teachers. Positive Handling Plans are reviewed at least every 6 months and sooner if a pupil's needs or circumstances change or if there are concerns about the frequency of the use of restrictive physical intervention. If a pupil no longer needs an active PHP, this will be kept for reference.

Where a pupil does not have an existing behaviour plan or risk assessment, that is, in an emergency, staff do their best, using reasonable force within their duty of care. These situations are reviewed as soon as possible afterwards and strategies put into place as appropriate.

Information sharing

At transition times, we ensure all support plans are shared with new class teams and schools in advance to reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention being needed when pupils are managing significant changes to their routines.

Seclusion

We do not plan for and do not advise, except in emergency situations, staff to use seclusion. Seclusion is where a pupil is forced to spend time alone in a room against their will. Examples might include

- where a pupil has been escorted to a room to remove them from a dangerous situation and staff members observe them from outside of the room whilst holding the door shut (e.g. through a window), or the door being locked.
- where staff have supported other pupils away from a situation and to prevent the pupil displaying the unsafe behaviour from following, the door is shut so they are prevented from leaving.

If we need to seek further advice around the use of seclusion, other than in an isolated emergency, we will contact the lead Educational Psychologist for further advice and guidance. We carefully consider wider issues around the long-term segregation of children and young people, for example educating pupils away from peers and how these relate to Article 5 of the Human Rights Act (1998). The reasons for any course of such action are clearly explained to the pupil where appropriate and to their family and actions are regularly reviewed.

Recording and Reporting

We record any use of restrictive physical intervention using the recommended Hampshire form in a chronological book as soon as possible after an event, and ideally within 24 hours. This report includes what happened before, during and after the incident as well as details of staff and pupils involved and any actions to support the reduction of risk. Where an incident causes injury to a member of staff, this is recorded on the Hampshire Accident/Incident Reporting forms. Following any restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that where possible, the Headteacher and appropriate senior leaders are informed at the time or immediately following the event. Our governing body ensures procedures are in place for recording incidents of restrictive physical intervention and reporting these as soon as possible to a pupil's parents/carers. Incidents of restrictive physical intervention are reported to parents on the same day wherever possible, if doing so is not risk assessed to cause potential harm to the pupil. This may be via direct contact or a telephone conversation. If a parent is not contactable by phone, an email may be sent and followed up the next day. Records are retained for at least 25 years after the date of birth of the pupil. In rare cases, we may

inform the police, for example, in the case of incidents involving the possession of weapons. This would be in line with our general practice, informed by the DfE Guidance Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools (2018) and Section 45 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (see Positive Behaviour Policy, Appendix 3)

Debriefing: Post-Incident Support and Review

We recognise it may be distressing for pupils, staff and observers to be involved in a restrictive physical intervention and ensure there is opportunity to talk through what has happened with the most appropriate person from the staff team in the first instance. Where appropriate and meaningful for a pupil, we may talk to them about what happened and the action taken to keep them safe whilst being mindful that a pupil who has been emotionally dysregulated, can easily loop back into crisis. Where meaningful, pupils have an opportunity to voice whether they feel anything inappropriate has happened in connection with the incident and we may also do the same with pupils who have observed a restrictive physical intervention. First aid, including close monitoring will always be given following any restrictive physical intervention.

Staff who have been involved in a restrictive physical intervention, either actively or as observers, are encouraged to review and debrief any incidents of restrictive physical intervention. This is encouraged in class teams to consider whether an individual behaviour support plan needs to be reviewed to reduce the likelihood of using further restrictive physical intervention.

Monitoring

Team Teach Intermediate Tutors carry out regular reviews of restrictive physical interventions as part of their allocated responsibility for behaviour, allowing patterns to be identified. If patterns emerge, for example about a pupil's needs, these will be followed up. For example, if it is felt a pupil is consistently exhibiting behaviours that might indicate the presence of ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder), this will be followed up with parents and carers and appropriate referrals will be made to the relevant agencies to ensure appropriate support is put in place.

We monitor the use of restrictive physical intervention across the school. Senior Leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for reviewing records half-termly, and more often if the need arises, so that appropriate action can be taken. Records of restrictive physical interventions are checked and reviewed by the Headteacher every week, and these are shared with the Nominated Safeguarding Governor each term. This information is also used by the full governing body when this policy and related policies are reviewed. Our analysis considers equalities issues such as age, gender, disability, culture and religion to make sure there is no potential discrimination. We also consider potential child protection issues. We look for any

trends in the use of restrictive physical intervention across different staff members and classes and these are reviewed in line with our aim to protect pupils, to avoid discrimination and to develop our ability to meet the needs of pupils without using restrictive physical intervention. We report this analysis back to the governing body termly to allow them to oversee incidents and check these have been effectively reviewed and followed up as appropriate.

Concerns and Complaints (see Complaints Policy and Low-Level Concerns Policy)

The use of restrictive physical intervention can be distressing and can lead to concerns, allegations or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use.

Our staff will always seek to avoid injury to pupils, but it is possible that injuries may occur accidentally. This is not necessarily to be seen as a failure of professional technique but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of supporting a pupil to remain safe. Injuries are recorded on accident slips and shared with parents and where appropriate and meaningful, these may also be discussed with pupils. A pupil might complain about the use of restrictive physical intervention during an incident but may, on further reflection, better understand why it happened. In other situations, further reflection might lead a pupil to feel that the use of restrictive physical intervention was inappropriate.

We are careful to ensure that wherever appropriate, meaningful and possible, pupils have a chance to review an incident and for their concerns to be recorded. Any comments or feedback made by pupils during a debrief are recorded as part of the written account of the intervention. If a parent or carer has a concern about the way restrictive physical intervention has been used, our Complaints Policy explains how to take the matter further and how long we will take to respond to these concerns.

Where there is a concern, or an allegation made against a member of staff, the Headteacher is immediately informed, and we follow our Low Level Concerns Policy / Safeguarding Policy.

If the concern, complaint or allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors is made aware. If parents/carers are not satisfied with the way a complaint has been resolved or responded to, they have the right to take the matter further as set out in our Complaints Policy. The results and procedures used in dealing with complaints are monitored by the governing body.