



ORCHARD
— Community Trust —
Courage - Unity - Equity



Physical Intervention, Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Last Approved: February 2026

Review Date: February 2027

1. Introduction

At St Mark's CE Primary School, we are committed to a positive behaviour approach that teaches and encourages children to make safe, respectful and responsible choices. We recognise that on rare occasions children may behave in a way that presents a significant risk of harm to themselves or others, damage to property, or serious disruption.

In these exceptional circumstances, staff may need to use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, as a last resort to keep people safe. This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, and should be applied consistently with it.

Principles

- Restrictive interventions (including reasonable force) will be used only, when necessary, as a last resort, and when de-escalation and other strategies have been attempted or are not appropriate.
- Any physical contact will be the minimum necessary, for the shortest time, and proportionate to the risk.
- Interventions will be carried out in ways that maintain the safety, dignity, and welfare of all involved.
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Headteacher (Mrs D. Sadler) or, in her absence, a Deputy Headteacher (Mrs S. Goodwin / Mrs V. Bradbury) as soon as practicable.
- Parents/carers will be informed in line with the recording and reporting expectations within this policy.

2. Key terms

- Restrictive intervention: an action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty and/or freedom to act independently, including physical interventions and seclusion (see below).
- Reasonable force: physical contact used to prevent harm, serious disruption or damage, where the force used is reasonable in the circumstances (minimum necessary and proportionate).
- Restraint: restricting a pupil's movement. This may include restraint without direct physical contact, for example removing or preventing access to equipment (such as a walking aid) where required to prevent injury.
- Seclusion: keeping a pupil confined away from others and preventing them from leaving. Seclusion is not a disciplinary sanction and must only be used as a safety measure to prevent harm to others.

3. Legal framework and guidance

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 permits school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing an offence
- damaging property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline

This policy is informed by current Department for Education guidance on restrictive interventions including the use of reasonable force, and by statutory requirements relating to the recording and reporting of seclusion and restraint.

4. Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies in school. These include:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs Disability Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Allegations made against members of Staff

5. Authorisation and roles

- Teachers and any member of staff who has control or charge of pupils in a given lesson/activity have permanent authorisation to use reasonable force when lawful, necessary and proportionate.
- Other staff (including site and administrative teams) may also use reasonable force in an emergency where immediate action is required to prevent harm, serious disorder or damage.

Training

Members of staff trained in Safety Intervention are authorised to use the techniques taught within that programme. Where possible, safety intervention trained staff should be called if physical restraint is likely to be required. Safety intervention trained staff should attend refresher training every 12–15 months to maintain competence and certification.

6. Minimising the need for restrictive interventions

We are committed to creating a calm, safe environment which reduces the likelihood of incidents requiring restrictive intervention. This is done through:

- a strong whole-school behaviour curriculum (including PSHE and teaching of emotional regulation)
- consistent routines, expectations and positive reinforcement
- early identification of need and reasonable adjustments (particularly for pupils with SEND)
- de-escalation strategies including calm communication, reduced language demands, use of safe spaces, planned movement breaks and structured support
- individual planning (behaviour support plans / risk assessments) where a foreseeable risk exists

Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks of not intervening outweigh the risks of intervening.

No “no contact” policy: The school will not operate a blanket “no contact” approach. Staff may need to use reasonable force or restrictive interventions to keep pupils and others safe.

7. Decision-making: necessary, proportionate, and least restrictive

It is not possible to list every circumstance in which reasonable force may be appropriate. Staff will exercise professional judgement within the law and this policy, acting consistently with the Behaviour Policy.

Staff must consider:

- **Necessity:** Is there an immediate risk that cannot be managed safely through de-escalation or other strategies?
- **Proportionality:** Is the response the least restrictive option and the minimum force required?
- **Duration:** Can the intervention end as soon as the risk reduces?
- **Welfare and dignity:** Have SEND needs, trauma, communication difficulties, and vulnerability been taken into account?

Staff are not expected to place themselves at risk of injury. Where needed, staff should seek assistance and follow agreed safety procedures.

8. Use of physical restraint (reasonable force)

Physical restraint should be used as an act of care and control with the intention of:

- preventing harm, serious disruption, or damage
- re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible
- enabling the pupil to regain self-control

Physical restraint must never be used as punishment, or simply to secure compliance.

When restraint becomes necessary – guidance for staff

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why (where this is safe and feasible)
- Use minimum force for the shortest time
- Involve another member of staff if possible (and ensure oversight)
- Tell the pupil what they need to do for restraint to end (repeat calmly if needed)
- Use simple, clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint where possible (e.g., above the elbow)
- Reduce/release restraint in response to reduced risk / the pupil calming

DON'T

- Act in anger (seek support if you feel you may lose control)
- Engage in a prolonged verbal exchange
- Involve other pupils
- Touch/hold in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate
- Twist limbs, force joints, bend fingers, pull hair
- Restrict breathing/circulation (e.g., pressure to neck/chest/abdomen)
- Use pain compliance techniques
- Slap, punch, kick, trip, or deliberately inflict pain
- Use restraint/intervention as punishment

Safety note: Any hold that impacts airway, breathing or circulation is prohibited. If a pupil ends up on the floor unintentionally, staff must move to a safer position as quickly as possible and seek medical attention where necessary.

9. Seclusion and restraint without physical contact

Seclusion is a highly restrictive measure and will be used only where necessary to prevent harm to others, and only for as long as the immediate risk remains.

When seclusion is used:

- it must not be presented as a sanction or punishment
- the pupil must be supervised throughout
- the pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the risk reduces
- incidents must be recorded and reported in line with this policy

Restraint without physical contact (e.g., preventing access to equipment) must be treated as a restrictive intervention and recorded/reported as required.

10. Actions after an incident (debrief, recording and support)

Following any restrictive intervention, staff must ensure:

- the pupil is safe and supported to regulate
- staff and pupils receive appropriate emotional support
- injuries (however minor) are assessed and first aid/medical treatment provided where necessary
- the incident is debriefed as soon as practicable, once the situation has stabilised
- the incident is recorded on CPOMS by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable (school expectation: no later than the same day, where possible)
- the Headteacher/Deputy is notified as soon as practicable

11. Recording and reporting: significant incidents involving the use of force

Recording (staff duty)

What needs to be recorded (minimum expectation):

- Name of pupil and staff directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code.
- Time, date, location and appropriate duration of the intervention
- Brief account of the incident, including what lead up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- When and how parents were notified
- Follow-up actions/review

Reporting to parents/carers (school duty)

Parents/carers must be informed as soon as practicable after a significant use of force. School expectation is to endeavour to do so no later than the same day, and to provide information in writing.

What must be reported (minimum expectation):

- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- Brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Brief account of what force was applied, and the degree of force

Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

Reporting exceptions: Reporting may be different only where statutory exceptions apply (e.g., where reporting would be likely to cause serious harm). In such cases, leaders will follow the required reporting route.

The requirement to report applies even where restrictive interventions are included in a pupil's behaviour support plan.

12. Recording and reporting: seclusion and non-force restraint

Incidents of seclusion and restraint (including restraint without physical contact) must be recorded as soon as practicable (endeavour same day) and reported to parents as soon as practicable (endeavour same day), with information provided in writing.

What should be recorded (minimum expectation):

- Names of pupil and staff directly involved
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- Brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse health impacts

Parents/carers are invited in for follow-up discussion where appropriate, including:

- triggers/warning signs
- whether behaviour support plans were followed
- de-escalation used and effectiveness
- what could be done differently next time

The school may update risk assessments and behaviour support plans following review.

13. Pupil report and storage of records

All incidents must be recorded on CPOMS. Records must be completed fully to identify patterns and inform support planning.

Records will be stored securely within the pupil's record on CPOMS for leadership oversight, monitoring and risk assessment updates

A member of SLT will contact parents/carers as soon as practicable after an incident (school expectation: normally the same day) to explain the action taken and offer the opportunity to discuss it.

14. Risk assessments and individual planning

Where we become aware that a pupil may present a foreseeable risk requiring restrictive intervention, we will plan in advance. Planning will include:

- strategies to use before intervention
- identification and reduction of known triggers
- parent/carer involvement and clarity about possible responses
- staff briefing and identification of training needs
- how additional support will be summoned
- duty of care to pupils and staff
- review cycle following incidents (including multi-agency input where appropriate, e.g. Early Help)

15. Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact (not force) is proper and necessary including:

- To give first aid
- To guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of the child 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
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

Staff should be mindful of possible misinterpretation and of cultural/gender considerations, and where possible ensure contact is visible and accountable (e.g., another adult present).

16. Complaints and allegations

A clear policy shared with staff and parents/carers supports transparency and reduces misunderstanding. Any complaint about the use of force will be considered under the school's complaints procedure and, where relevant, disciplinary or allegations management procedures.

Safeguarding/child protection procedures will be followed when dealing with allegations against staff.

17. References

- Department for Education: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 93
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

18. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, and also following any significant legislative update or identified learning from incident monitoring

Signed.....

Headteacher

Signed.....

Co-Chair Local Governing Board

Date: February 2026

Review Date: February 2027