Wolsey House Primary School

Restrictive Intervention and Positive Handling Policy

Policy date: January 2026

Policy review date: January 2027

Together we grow, achieve and thrive.

"There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom." (KCSIE September 2025)

The following policy should be read in conjunction with the DFE guidance - **Restrictive intervention, including use of reasonable force, in schools, April 2026.**

At Wolsey House Primary School, we are committed to a positive behaviour policy, which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. We do however recognise that children sometimes still make the wrong choices. On rare occasions this may result in a situation that requires some form of restrictive intervention by staff. Our policy for restrictive intervention is based upon the following principles:-

- Restrictive intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any restrictive intervention must be necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- Restrictive intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible
- Parents will be informed of each incident

1. The Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows all members of school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:-

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property
- causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

2. Definitions

This policy uses the term **restrictive interventions** as an umbrella term for actions used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement. **Reasonable force** refers to physical restrictive interventions, used only where necessary and proportionate. The school also recognises the definitions of **restraint**, **seclusion**, and **significant incident** set out in the DfE April 2026 guidance.

3. Our approach
At Wolsey House Primary School we aim to avoid the need for restrictive intervention and regard this as a last resort in a tiny minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly when dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all pupils' safety and well-being.
Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

4. Other Physical Contact
Appropriate physical contact is a normal and necessary part of working in a school.

The school recognises that not all physical contact constitutes a restrictive intervention. Staff may use reasonable, appropriate physical contact in line with their professional judgement to support pupils and enable effective teaching and learning.

Examples of appropriate physical contact include, but are not limited to:

- providing first aid or medical assistance
- comforting or reassuring a distressed child (where this is appropriate and welcomed)
- guiding, escorting or prompting a pupil (e.g. holding a hand, guiding an elbow, or positioning for safety)
- demonstrating techniques in PE, sports or practical lessons
- preventing an accident (for example, guiding a pupil away from danger)
- supporting pupils with personal care or mobility, where this forms part of agreed arrangements

Such contact should always:

- be appropriate to the age, stage and individual needs of the pupil
- take account of any known sensitivities, SEND needs or past experiences
- be carried out with respect for the pupil's dignity
- be open and transparent, not secretive

The school does not operate a "no physical contact" policy. Avoiding all physical contact may place pupils at greater risk and may prevent staff from carrying out their duties safely and effectively.

Where physical contact becomes restrictive in nature (for example, preventing movement or controlling a pupil's body), this will be treated as a restrictive intervention and must meet

the legal tests of being necessary, proportionate and reasonable, and be recorded and reported in line with this policy.

5. Use of physical restraint

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. **Physical restraint must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.**

In all circumstances, alternative methods should be used as appropriate with restrictive intervention or restraint, a last resort.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, Wolsey House will, in considering the risks carefully, recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. We will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and our Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour and positive handling plans for more vulnerable children and agreeing them with parents and carers, we can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, members of staff may use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”. These include:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal or controlled drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that staff reasonably suspect has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

When physical restraint becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Hold the pupil on the ground; reposition or release as quickly as possible should this occur
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil
- Use physical restraint or restrictive intervention as a punishment

6. Seclusion

Seclusion refers to the supervised confinement of a pupil in a room or enclosed space from which they are not free to leave.
Seclusion is considered a **restrictive intervention** and is not a disciplinary sanction.

The school's approach is to avoid the use of seclusion wherever possible. It is not used routinely and would be considered only in exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary to prevent a real and immediate risk of serious harm to the pupil or others, and where other strategies have been ineffective or are inappropriate.

Where seclusion is used, the following principles will always apply:

- the pupil will be continuously supervised by a member of staff
- seclusion will be used for the shortest possible time necessary to manage risk
- the pupil's dignity and welfare will be prioritised at all times
- the space used will be safe, suitable and proportionate, and will not be locked or unsupervised
- staff will continue to use de-escalation, reassurance and communication throughout

Seclusion will **never** be used:

- as a punishment or sanction
- to enforce compliance
- as a planned or routine response to behaviour
- in a way that restricts access to food, drink, toilet facilities or medical care

Any use of seclusion will be treated as a significant incident and will be:

- recorded in line with the school's recording procedures
- reported to parents/carers as soon as practicable (normally the same day), with information provided in writing
- reviewed by senior leaders to consider the circumstances, the effectiveness of the response, and any steps required to reduce the likelihood of recurrence

Where a pupil has recurring needs that place them or others at risk, the school will seek to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions through proactive planning, including behaviour support plans, risk assessments, reasonable adjustments and external support where appropriate.

7. Recording and Reporting

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. **The Headteacher should be informed of any incident as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural SEND Support Plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENDCo. This may require additional support from, other services, for example the LA Social Emotional Mental Health Team. Post-incident support will take account of any physical, emotional or psychological impact on the pupil.

In some circumstances a referral to Early Help (single assessment) may be appropriate to help identify an additional need for a particular child.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

The school has a duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil.

All incidents **must** be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. The incident should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

All incidents must be recorded immediately on the Leicester City Council Electronic Physical Intervention Form, found at:
https://my.leicester.gov.uk/service/Physical_Intervention_Record
All sections of this report should be completed, this will include:

- Names 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 approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and the details of any physical injuries sustained.
- A 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.

Incidents should also be recorded on the pupil's SEN Support Plan (behaviour) as soon as possible, where relevant.

In the event of any future complaint or allegation this record will provide essential and accurate information and will inform individual and school risk assessments.

A member of staff will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

Follow up written communication of the incident will be shared with parents detailing:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- A brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- The details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

The reporting requirements above apply even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

8. Risk Assessments
If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises **(Appendix 1 Individual Positive Handling Plan**). Such planning will address:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)

- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff

9. Complaints and Allegations
A clear restrictive intervention policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under the complaints, disciplinary or allegation management procedures.

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be made in accordance with our normal complaints procedure.

Any concerns about physical contact should be raised in line with the school's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures.

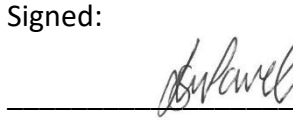
It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

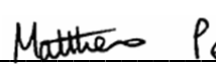
10. Monitoring Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions
Use of Restrictive intervention in school will be monitored by termly scrutiny of the records logged on the Council's electronic form. Restrictive interventions, as part of a Positive Handling Plan, will also be recorded separately (**Appendix 3**) and held on file by the SENDCo, Mrs Julie Cooper-Marsh. Feedback from monitoring will be used to help staff learn from experience, determine what specialist help is needed for children and to assess the appropriateness of the child's placement at the school. Information on trends and emerging problems will be shared within the school. Monitoring information will be reported on a regular basis to school governors.

11. Staff Training
Training in physical intervention methods, such as Team Teach, that are acceptable within school is available and the school will publish details of training opportunities when they arise. **Individual teachers and support staff have been TEAM-TEACH trained with certification valid until 31st January 2027. Specific records are kept in the Deputy Headteacher's office.**
Staff involved in implementing Positive Handling Plans will be provided with training in the range of intervention techniques they are expected to use in their day-to-day work.

We will review this policy on an annual basis.

Signed:


_____ (Head teacher) January 2026


_____ (Chair of Governors) January 2026

Reviewed: January 2026

Next review: January 2027

Appendix 1

POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

NAME:	CLASS:	YEAR:
EHCP Y / N	REVIEW DATE:	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
eg Medical Data: known medication/Asthma/Nose bleeds etc

TRIGGER BEHAVIOURS: (Describe situations/behaviours which are known to have led to Positive Handling being required)

TARGET (S):

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

PREFERRED SUPPORTIVE STRATEGIES: (Underline/Describe strategies which, when and where possible, should be attempted before positive handling techniques are used).

Verbal advice/support	Planned positive distractions,	what?
Reassurance	Positive touch	who?
Tactical ignoring		
Negotiation/Partial agreement	Time out offered/directed	
Transfer adult	Choices/limits/consequences	

Others:
i.e. Classroom organisation.

Preferred Handling Strategies: (Described the preferred staff responses/holds)

Technique	Standing/Sitting	Number of staff	Breakaway Techniques

REPAIR AND REBUILD PROCESSES FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT (What care is to be provided? What learning opportunities exist for the child? How will the child be reintegrated back into school?) JCM to complete Looking back – Moving forward activity, along with My positive handling plan***. (Appendix 2)***

RECORDING AND NOTIFICATION REQUIRED

Record of positive handling Y / N

EVALUATION (This section is to be completed during the review)

SIGNATURES:

Head Teacher: …….. Date ……..

Parent / Carer …… Date ……..

Parents/carers will be informed following any incident in line with statutory guidance.

Staff authorised to use techniques

……

Date ……..

Other(s)…….. Date ……

Appendix 2

My positive handling plan (template)

My feelings…….. Sometimes I feel ……

- [e.g. cross or upset……..]

These are the thoughts I have when I'm cross or upset

- [e.g. Its not fair, I don't like it, I hate it, I look stupid, I'm embarrassed, I'm worried]

Sometimes these are my actions

- [e.g. I hit, kick punch and scream]

If this happens I'm not safe and others might not be safe, so an adult will help me

They might hold me because they care enough about me to not let me lose control

They might take me to my safe space/ or I can choose to go there to settle down

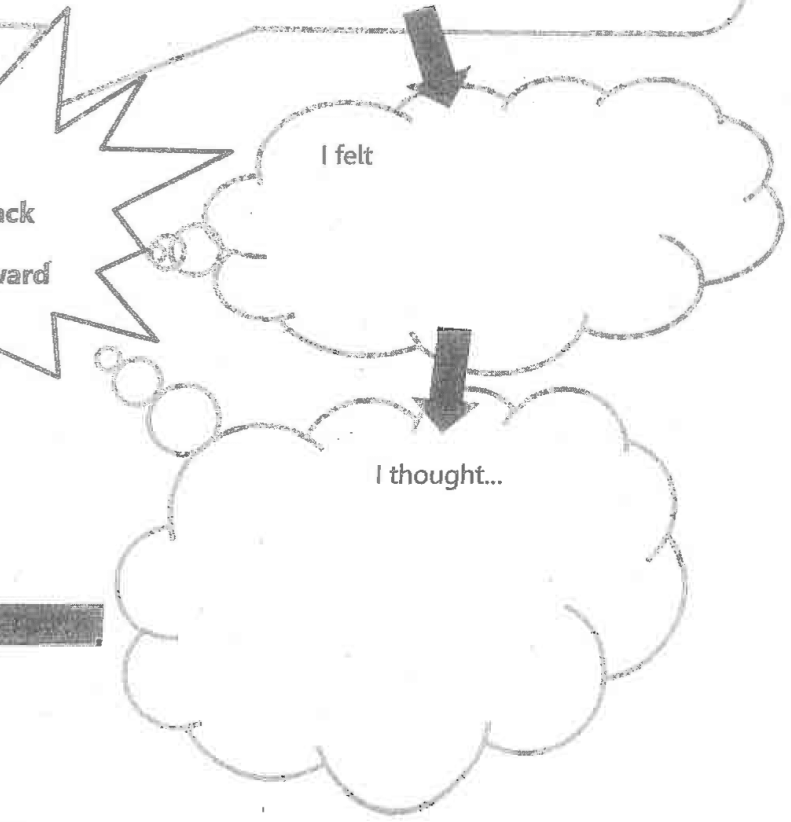
I like it when [e.g adult name] stays with me/waits outside my space

In my safe space I will use [e.g activities] to help me settle myself

Date _____/_____/_____

Leicester
City Council

lid...



ack

ward

Appendix 3

Restraint of pupil – Incident report.

Date of incident:	Time of incident:
Name(s) of staff involved:	
Name(s) of pupil(s) involved:	

Name(s) of staff/pupils who witnessed the incident:
Brief description of the incident: *(Be objective and factual, outlining how the incident began and progressed, details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, steps taken to defuse/calm the situation, degree of force used, how it was applied and for how long)*
Reason that restraint was necessary:
Pupil's response and outcome of the incident:
Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, a member of staff or damage to any property:

Signed (members of staff involved:……

…… Date:…….

Signed:…… (Headteacher)

Date:……