

WHOLE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION AND USE OF REASONABLE FORCE GUIDANCE 2026

ADDENDUM

1ST APRIL 2026

This Addendum must be read in conjunction with the school Behaviour Policy, brought to the attention of those currently employed or volunteering in the school and shared with those individuals upon induction to the setting. It must be available to parents and displayed on the school website.

Document Control			
Document Author:	M. Unstead	Role:	Director of Inclusive Learning
Policy Type	Statutory	Version:	Version 1
Approval Body:	Operational	Date:	23/03/2026
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Review Frequency:	Review in line with and amalgamate into Behaviour Policy		
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For Use By:	All staff		

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Version	Date	Author	Reason for change
1	23/03/2026	M. Unstead	Draft Version
2	26/03/2026	S, J. Underhill	Finalised Version by School

This is an interim addendum and should be incorporated into the individual School Behaviour Policy upon next review. This replaces any reference to restrictive physical interventions as stated in the current behaviour policy.

The use of reasonable force in schools will be governed by new guidance from 1st April 2026.

The **“Use of reasonable force, Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, July 2013”** has been replaced by **“Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools, Guidance for schools in England 2026”**.

A copy of the new “Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools, Guidance for schools in England 2026” can be accessed via the link below: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6943dad6501cdd438f4cf5aa/Restrictive_interventions_including_use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools.pdf

Our On-Going Commitment to Your Child's Safety

Our school is committed to keeping all children safe, supported, and respected. This includes supporting children and young people when they are upset, anxious, or struggling to manage their emotions.

In very rare situations, staff may need to take action to prevent a child or young person or others from being harmed. The government provides clear guidance for schools on how this must be done, and this information explains what that means for you and your child.

In line with Trust strategy, our school follows the Norfolk STEPS approach in relation to supporting every learner. All staff have been trained in the Norfolk STEPS approach and the use of non-restrictive interventions; alongside restrictive physical interventions where and if appropriate.

What is Norfolk STEPS?

Norfolk Steps takes a holistic approach to supporting individual needs and wellbeing with the aim of all CYP flourishing and achieving their unique potential including:

- *All behaviours are communicative.*
- *Understanding the needs, experiences, feelings, and what makes the CYP an individual can shape consistent, inclusive support plans.*
- *Staff and CYP relationships, underpinned by positive interactions and trust, are pivotal for positive outcomes.*
- *Staff must use proactive responses whenever they can and reactive responses only when reasonable, proportionate and necessary.*
- *All responses must be supportive including those that manage behaviours that challenge or harm.*
- *Norfolk Steps recognises that behaviours can escalate, and risk of harm can arise due to unmet needs.*

- Norfolk Steps prioritises the health and safety of CYP and staff through the management of these situations, drawing upon risk-assessed techniques and evidence-based principles.
- All actions taken to manage behaviours that challenge or harm must be in the best interests of the CYP, considering their individual needs.

It is important to note that the changes relate to change in reporting requirements for schools. There is no change to the practice being undertaken.

This updated guidance changes what schools are now required to record and share with parents and carers, leaders and trustees.

Under the new guidance, our school will inform parents/carers any time your child is guided when any reasonable force is used. This includes the use of reasonable force through:

- Seclusion
- Restrictive Intervention

This may mean you hear from the school more often. It does not always mean that your child has been restrained. In many cases, it simply reflects a low-level intervention used to safely redirect or support them during a difficult moment.

What are restrictive interventions?

A **restrictive intervention** is any action that limits a child's movement or choices.

Examples include:

- Holding a child or young person to stop them hurting themselves or someone else
- Preventing a child or young person from leaving a room when it would be unsafe for them to do so

Restrictive interventions are:

- Only used as a last resort
- Only used to keep people safe
- Never used as a punishment

Our school will always endeavour to prevent situations reaching this point by supporting children and young people early and using calm, caring strategies of the Norfolk Steps approach to help them regulate their emotions.

Preventing the Need for Restrictive Interventions

Many situations are managed **without any physical contact**.

Staff are trained to:

- Recognise when a child is becoming anxious or overwhelmed
- Use calming strategies, distraction, reassurance, and time to talk
- Adapt routines and environments to reduce stress

- Work closely with families to understand what support helps each child
- There should always be a strong focus on early support and deescalation.
-

When Might Reasonable Force Be Used?

Reasonable force may only be used if it is necessary to:

- Prevent a child or young person from hurting themselves
- Prevent a child or young person from hurting someone else
- Prevent serious damage that could cause harm
- Prevent disorder among children and young people at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

If reasonable force is ever needed:

- The least amount of force is used
 - It lasts only as long as necessary
 - It stops as soon as it safe to do so
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What Is Seclusion?

Seclusion means **preventing a child or young person from leaving a space.**

This might include:

- Blocking a doorway to stop a child or young person running into danger
- To prevent harm to themselves or others

Seclusion:

- Is only used to keep a child or young person safe
 - Is never used as a punishment or threat
 - Always involves continuous adult supervision
 - Is time limited and carefully recorded
-

What Does Not Count as Restrictive Intervention?

Every day, caring physical contact is **not** considered restrictive when it is appropriate and welcome.

This includes:

- Giving first aid
 - Holding hands or guiding children
 - Helping a child or young person move to a quiet space they have chosen
 - Comforting a distressed child or young person
 - Congratulating a child or young person (for example, a handshake or pat on the back)
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Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

Children and Young People with SEND may need **additional support.**

Restrictive interventions are considered carefully alongside:

- Individual support plans
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Risk assessments

- *Advice from specialists*

The aim is always to understand the **underlying needs** behind a child or young person's behaviour and provide the right support.

Recording and Monitoring Incidents

If a significant restrictive intervention is used, our school will:

- Record the incident on the same day using the school's behaviour recording system
- Include what happened, why it was necessary, and what support was offered
- Review the incident to help prevent it happening again

All incidents should be reviewed by senior leaders to ensure practice is safe, appropriate, and focused on improvement.

Informing Parents and Carers

If your child is involved in a significant incident, the school must:

- Inform you as soon as possible
- On the same day if practicable

You will be told:

- When and where the incident happened
 - Why the intervention was necessary
 - What type of intervention was used
 - Whether your child was hurt or needed medical attention
 - Initially via an alert on MCAS. An email will be sent if you do not have access to MCAS.
 - A member of staff will follow this up with a phone call.
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Working in Partnership with Families

If you have:

- *Questions about this information*
- *Concerns about your child*
- *Ideas about what helps your child when they are upset*

Please contact the school in the usual way.

In Summary

- *Restrictive interventions are **rare** and only used to keep children safe*
- *They are **never used as punishment***
- *Schools should focus on **prevention, care, and understanding***
- *Parents are **informed and involved***

Information for Parents and Carers

This information must be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy Addendum dated 1st April 2026.

Restrictive intervention, including use of force, in schools.

DfE April 2026

Information for families

This updated guidance changes what schools are now required to record and share with parents and carers. In the past, staff did not always have to record situations where they used a non-restrictive physical intervention, such as guiding a child out of a room when they were becoming distressed.

Under the new rules, the school must let you know any time your child is guided when any force is used. This may mean you hear from the school more often. It does not always mean that your child has been restrained. In many cases, it simply reflects a low-level intervention used to safely redirect or support them during a difficult moment.

Our Commitment to Your Child's Safety

Our schools are committed to keeping all children safe, supported, and respected. This includes supporting children and young people when they are upset, anxious, or struggling to manage their emotions.

In very rare situations, staff may need to take action to prevent a child or young person or others from being harmed. The government provides clear guidance for schools on how this must be done, and this information explains what that means for you and your child.

What are restrictive interventions?

A **restrictive intervention** is any action that limits a child's movement or choices.

Examples include:

- Holding a child to stop them hurting themselves or someone else
- Preventing a child from leaving a room when it would be unsafe for them to do so

Restrictive interventions are:

- Only used as a last resort
- Only used to keep people safe
- Never used as a punishment

Schools must try to prevent situations reaching this point by supporting children early and using calm, caring strategies to help them regulate their emotions.

Preventing the Need for Restrictive Interventions

Many situations are managed **without any physical contact**.

Staff should be trained to:

- Recognise when a child is becoming anxious or overwhelmed
- Use calming strategies, distraction, reassurance, and time to talk
- Adapt routines and environments to reduce stress
- Work closely with families to understand what support helps each child

There should always be a strong focus on early support and de-escalation.

When Might Reasonable Force Be Used?

Reasonable force may only be used if it is necessary to:

- Prevent a child from hurting themselves
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This includes:

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Restrictive interventions are considered carefully alongside:

- Individual support plans
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Risk assessments
- Advice from specialists

The aim is always to understand the **underlying needs** behind a child's behaviour and provide the right support as we would for all children.

Working in Partnership with Families

If you have:

- Questions about this information
- Concerns about your child
- Ideas about what helps your child when they are upset

Please speak to staff in your child's school.

In Summary

- Restrictive interventions are **rare** and only used to keep children safe

- They are **never used as punishment**
- Schools should focus on **prevention, care, and understanding**
- Parents are **informed and involved**