Learning Community Trust

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

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1. Aim and Scope

At Burton Borough School we strive to create a safe, secure and supportive environment for all our pupils and staff.

There are times when the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, is lawful and necessary to keep people safe. However, we understand that the use of restrictive interventions can have a significant impact on pupils, staff and parents/carers. In our school, they are only ever considered as a last resort, once all other prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Help school staff feel confident in knowing how to use restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully, when they are necessary
- Clearly set out the steps for recording and reporting incidents of reasonable force, seclusion and restraint
- Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all pupils and staff, and help create a positive and safe place for everyone at school

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools. It also meets the requirements of:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Section 550ZA and section 550ZB of the Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Paragraph 16A of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (inserted by The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025)

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

The terms we use in this policy are defined as follows. These definitions are based on the Department for Education's guidance on restrictive interventions (linked to in section 2 of this policy).

- **Restrictive interventions** are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

In the Learning Community Trust's specialist and mainstream settings, examples of restrictive interventions may include:

- Supportive physical prompting to guide a pupil away from an unsafe situation (e.g., guiding an arm or shoulder).
- Use of a safe, low-stimulation space when a pupil is experiencing acute dysregulation and cannot safely remain within a classroom.
- Using staff positioning to block access to unsafe areas (e.g., exits leading to roads, kitchens, or workshops).
- Short-term supportive holds, taught through accredited training, to prevent immediate harm to the pupil or others.

- **Reasonable force** refers to the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain children, using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Examples within LCT settings may include:

- Guiding a pupil to a safe space following a dysregulation episode.
- Interrupting or separating pupils engaged in a physical altercation.
- Preventing a pupil from striking another person, self-injuring, or causing significant property damage by using the least restrictive physical intervention available.
- Briefly holding an item that poses a risk (e.g., scissors being waved in a threatening way) while ensuring the pupil's dignity and emotional needs remain central.

- **Restraint** is a form of non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.

  Within LCT settings, restraint may include:

- A trained staff member holding a pupil's arms to their sides to prevent hitting or self-injury.
- Preventing a pupil from absconding into a dangerous environment (e.g., roads, workshops) when risk of harm is immediate.
- Using an accredited and approved hold as part of a pre-agreed, reviewed risk assessment for a pupil whose needs require occasional physical safety support.

- **Seclusion** is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they

leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

In LCT, examples include:

- A calm regulation room or sensory room within specialist settings.
- A wellbeing space that is low-stimulation, supervised, and designed to reduce anxiety or emotional overload.
- A quiet room used only when the risk of harm is immediate and the pupil cannot safely remain in communal areas.

See section 3.2 of this policy for more information on seclusion.

- A **significant incident** is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

  See section 3.1 of this policy for more information on appropriate physical contact.

3.1 Appropriate physical contact with pupils

Our school does not have a 'no contact' policy. We do not grant any requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions.

Examples include:

- Providing first aid to a pupil
- Providing personal intimate care to a pupil
- Providing specific therapeutic to a pupil eg a sensory story
- Guiding or escorting a pupil through the school building or on a school trip by holding their hand
- Comforting a pupil who is upset
- Offering congratulations or praise, such as with a pat on the back or handshake
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- When demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- When supporting a pupil in a hydrotherapy session

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, staff should use their professional judgement, and have regard to:

- Our school's child protection and safeguarding policy and behaviour policy
- The specific circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- Factors including, but not limited to:
  - The pupil's age
  - Any known vulnerabilities, including whether the pupil has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

- Whether any alternative strategies that don't involve physical contact can be used

3.2 Seclusion

As defined above, seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

We only use seclusion as a safety measure when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is not used as a threat or punishment. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. Please see our behaviour policy for information on our response to misbehaviour.

During seclusion:

- The pupil will be secluded in a safe place that does not feel threatening or intimidating to them, for example a wellbeing room or calm space

The pupil will be supervised at all times by at least one trained member of staff, typically:

- A pastoral lead, Senior Leader or SEND keyworker/SEND lead
- A behaviour support / therapeutic support practitioner, or
- A member of staff trained in accredited restrictive intervention approaches (as designated by the Headteacher).

As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave.

Any incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in section 12 of this policy.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving this policy
- Ensuring that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each:
  - Significant incident involving force
  - Seclusion incident
  - Restraint incident
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the procedures for recording and reporting the use of force, seclusion and restraint are followed
- Regularly reviewing and interrogating data on the use of restrictive interventions in our school
- Supporting and challenging school leaders to identify where changes may be needed to practice. For example:
  - If approaches have been used for some time but haven't been effective
  - If there is any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions, including in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics or have SEND or other types of vulnerabilities

4.2 The principal/ headteacher

The principal/headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall implementation and oversight of this policy
- Making sure that appropriate and high-quality training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions is provided for staff who need it, based on our school's individual context and needs
- Ensuring adequate staffing levels to support positive behaviour management
- Monitoring incidents involving restrictive interventions, including regular review of incidents to refine and improve processes
- Ensuring compliance with recording and reporting requirements
- Authorising staff to search a pupil or their belongings if they have good reason to think the pupil has a prohibited or banned item
- Following the procedures set out in our complaints policy to deal with any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions
- Following the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education if an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive intervention is made against a member of staff

4.3 All staff

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Making sure they have read and understood the principles of this policy and any other linked policies
- Using de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour management strategies to try to minimise and prevent the need for restrictive interventions
- Accurately recording every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force that they are involved in
- Reporting these incidents to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- Recording any injuries that occur as part of an incident involving restrictive intervention, and following our health and safety policy to ensure these are reported to the Health and Safety Executive where necessary
- Taking part in training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions, if relevant to their role (this may include additional training appropriate to their responsibilities)
- Engaging in follow-up conversation(s) to debrief and reflect on incidents involving restrictive intervention that they were involved in, to help us understand what happened and why

4.4 Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Reporting every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force to each parent/carer of the pupil involved
- Making sure records are kept securely and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures

- Contacting the local authority in cases where informing a pupil's parent/carer of the use of reasonable force, seclusion or restraint on their child would put that child at risk of significant harm (see sections 12.2 and 12.3 of this policy)

4.5 Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Working with pupils, parents/carers and relevant school staff to develop and review behaviour support plans and risk assessments for any pupils with SEND where it's been identified that there is an increased likelihood of the need to use restrictive interventions
- Ensuring staff are aware of individual pupil needs and associated behaviour support strategies
- Working with staff who know pupils well, to identify and manage risk (such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur)
- Working with pupils, parents/carers, staff and other relevant professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Advising on reasonable adjustments for any pupils with disabilities when considering prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Participating in the review of restrictive intervention incidents involving any pupil with SEND
- Providing advice and support on the application of this policy for pupils with SEND
- Contributing to staff training on SEND and behaviour management, including the use of restrictive interventions

    - If approaches have been used for some time but haven't been effective
    - If there is any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions, including in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics or have SEND or other types of vulnerabilities

5. Acceptable Uses of Force

All our school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain situations.

Staff can use reasonable force to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Hurting themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils, in or out of lessons

While all staff have this power, some staff, especially those who work closely with pupils who might show challenging behaviour, are more likely to need to use it than others.

We will ensure staff are adequately trained and that risk assessments are carried out where necessary. See section 11 of this policy for information on training and risk assessments.

Any significant incident involving the use of force will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in section 12 of this policy.

6. Unacceptable Uses of Force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. We never use force as a sanction, threat or deterrent.

Our staff understand that any form of force or restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, so we always avoid using these measures where possible.

The following uses of force are **never acceptable**:

- Staff using force for the purpose of punishment
- Staff restraining a pupil in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example by covering their nose and/or mouth or applying pressure to their neck or abdomen
- Staff using force on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their hold or move into a safer position as quickly as possible

Section 5 of this policy sets out the instances where staff may use reasonable force. Section 9 of this policy provides guidance for staff on what to consider before using it.

7. Using reasonable force to search pupils

The headteacher and any member of staff authorised by the headteacher have a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance) or an item banned under our school rules.

They **can** use reasonable force to search for prohibited items (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance), such as knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs. They **cannot** use reasonable force to search for items that are banned under our school rules only, such as mobile phones.

The decision to use reasonable force to carry out a search should be made carefully, on a case-by-case basis and taking into consideration the level of risk to pupils and staff. Please see our behaviour policy for more information on how we conduct searches.

8. De-escalation when a situation arises

When a staff member is faced with a situation where a restrictive intervention may need to be used, they should consider using de-escalation techniques first, wherever possible. Techniques that could be used In LCT specialist and mainstream settings, de-escalation may include:

- Having open body language and being aware of a pupil's personal space
- Taking a pupil away from an 'audience' – speaking to them on their own rather than in front of a group of other pupils or staff
- Verbal warnings – calmly reminding the pupil of the consequences of their behaviour
- Use of emotion coaching and co-regulation strategies
- Offering a calm space for the pupil to go to so they can self-regulate
- Low-stimulus approaches such as reduced verbal input and calm tone
- Giving time and space for the pupil to regulate independently.
- Sensory strategies, such as access to weighted items, sensory toys or movement breaks
- Non-confrontational positioning, including side-by-side communication

- Redirecting to familiar or preferred tasks or areas.
- Distraction techniques
- Visual supports, including now/next boards and regulation prompts

9. Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

9.1 Necessity and proportionality

The decision on whether to use restrictive interventions is down to the professional judgment of the staff member and will always depend on the individual circumstances of each situation.

Staff should always consider whether there are other ways to manage the situation, such as the de-escalation techniques outlined in section 8.1 of this policy and/or seeking assistance from a colleague. However, there may be times when staff have no other choice but to use restrictive interventions, to reduce the risk of harm to the pupil and/or others.

When assessing whether a restrictive intervention is required, staff should always consider:

- **Is it necessary?**
  - Are there other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
  - Is a restrictive intervention likely to successfully reduce the risks, or could its use escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself?
- **Is it proportionate?**
  - Staff should use the **least** amount of force or the **least** restrictive intervention for the **least** amount of time required to reduce the risks
  - If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy
  - Staff should consider the individual circumstances of the pupil, such as their age, size and any medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities

9.2 Pupil and staff welfare

Pupil welfare

The most important consideration when using a restrictive intervention is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil involved, as well as the safety of other pupils and staff. Staff should always consider the potential impact on the pupil's welfare balanced against any actions taken. For example, staff should bear in mind that pupils who have experienced adverse life events, trauma or neglect, or who have diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, communication difficulties or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

If a restrictive intervention is needed, staff should always aim to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This includes consideration of the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.

Staff should, wherever possible, clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and what the pupil needs to do, including using verbal and non-verbal strategies where needed, and giving time for the pupil to process information and respond where appropriate.

Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Support following an incident

As soon as possible after any use of restrictive intervention, our school will evaluate the incident to understand why restrictive intervention was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how another incident could be avoided in the future.

Our school will make sure each pupil and staff member involved get the right support, including a medical assessment and treatment if needed, and an opportunity to reflect on and talk through/communicate about the incident commensurate with their need or ability.

This follow-up conversation(s) will be part of the overall debriefing process to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from all parties involved. Conversations should also aim to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue/ appropriate communication strategies.

Wherever possible, this process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident. It may also include the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support. The school will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed.

Depending on the circumstances, support may also be offered to those who witnessed the incident.

10. Considerations for pupils with SEND

We understand that pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Pupils who have difficulty communicating verbally might show their needs and discomfort through their actions.

Our school is committed to understanding what might trigger challenging behaviour in pupils with SEND, and to providing the right support and an inclusive environment.

We will carry out risk assessments for pupils with SEND, where we identify that there is an increased likelihood of needing to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. Our school is aware of its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities to avoid disadvantage and ensure they can take part in school life as fully as possible.

We will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk, such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. We will also work with the pupil, their parents/carers and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

In LCT these may include:

- Adjusting sensory input (lighting, noise, movement).
- Using visual communication systems such as symbols, PECs or communication boards.
- Pre-warning pupils of routine changes using visual timetables.
- Breaking down tasks into smaller steps.
- Providing sensory regulation activities (e.g., deep pressure, movement, safe squeezing tools).
- Allowing designated safe adults to support transitions or emotional distress.
- Offering structured break-out time to prevent escalation.

Where appropriate, we will create individual behaviour support plans for pupils with SEND. The plan will be reviewed regularly, and following any significant incident, with the pupil and parents/carers to make sure it's still working well.

Our behaviour support plans include:

- Key information about the pupil's communication needs.
- Predictable triggers, early warning signs, and known vulnerabilities.
- Step-by-step de-escalation approaches specific to that pupil.

- Any agreed supportive physical interventions, including when they may be used and who is trained to use them.
- Clear risk-reduction strategies linked to the pupil's SEND profile.
- How we will review and update the plan after any significant incident.

11. Training and risk assessments

Our school will make sure that all staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in their safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

We also have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff. Therefore, we carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

12. Recording and reporting arrangements

We have a legal duty to record and report all:

- Significant incidents involving force (see section 3 of this policy for a definition of 'significant incident')
- Seclusion incidents
- Restraint incidents

12.1 Recording incidents

Our school has a clear process in place for recording the incidents listed above. All incidents of significant incidents involving force, seclusion incidents and restraint incidents should be recorded on our Trust wide CPOMs system Child on Child, subcategory physical intervention

Staff must record incidents in writing, as soon as possible after the event, and should do this on the same day. Staff should do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

For significant incidents involving force, we will record:

- The names of the pupil and staff members directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether they have an identified special educational need or disability, and their SEN status code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A clear and brief description of what happened, including:
    - What led up to the incident
    - Any known or potential triggers for the behaviour
    - Any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
    - The type and degree of reasonable force used
    - Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- A brief explanation of why using force was assessed as necessary in that situation
- Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support
- Any witness accounts including those from the pupil

- How and when parents were notified
- Any follow up actions take

For seclusion incidents and restraint incidents, we will record:

- The names of the pupil and staff members directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether they have an identified special educational need or disability, and their SEN status code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support
- Any witness accounts including those from the pupil
- How and when parents were notified
- Any follow up actions take

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will record it in line with our procedure for recording significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be recorded twice.

Completed reports will be kept securely and retained in line with our data protection procedures.

12.2 Reporting incidents to parents/carers

When reporting an incident to parents/carers, we will take the following steps:

- The DSL, Principal, or person designated by the DSL/Principal will contact parents/carers as soon as is practicable and will endeavour to do this on the same day. We will do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.
- This will be done by phone or face-to-face and would under normal circumstances be followed up by an email or letter confirming the key details of the incident in question
- All incidents are reviewed immediately by the DSL and DDSL to ensure correct procedure was followed and whether there are any further actions for both parties
- All incidents are written up on a standard form for review and logged on our safeguarding system (CPOMS) as well as our RPI dashboard for monitoring purposes

There are 2 exceptions to this:

- If a member of staff thinks that telling the pupil's parents/carers would likely result in significant harm to that pupil. In these cases, we will report the incident to any parent(s)/carer(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily resides (see section 12.3 of this policy)

When we report **significant incidents involving force** to parents/carers, we will include the following details:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

When we report **seclusion incidents and restraint incidents** to parents/carers, we will provide parents/carers with a timely written and/or verbal notification outlining the reason for the intervention, a factual description of what occurred, the duration of the incident, any injuries or distress observed, the staff involved, and the follow-up actions or support put in place for their child.

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will report it in line with our procedure for reporting significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be reported twice.

When reporting to parents/carers, we will have regard to data protection requirements when deciding what information to share. For example, we will not include any identifying details of any other pupil.

Following up with parents/carers after an incident

It's best practice to invite parents/carers to have a follow-up discussion about the incident, where appropriate. Insert details of your process/approach, if applicable. For example, the discussion might include:

- Any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- Whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed
- What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- What might be done differently in the future

12.3 Reporting incidents to the local authority

In cases where we have assessed that an incident needs to be reported to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily resides (as outlined in section 12.2), this report will include all the information that we would normally share with the pupil's parents/carers, as well as the reasons why we thought it was unsafe to tell the pupil's parents/carers directly.

In cases where a pupil has parents/carers and is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, we will report the incident to the relevant local authority in addition to the parents/carers (unless we deem it unsafe to inform the parents/carers, as set out in section 12.2 of this policy).

13. Complaints and allegations

Any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled through our school's complaints policy, which you can find on our website.

We take any allegation of inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff very seriously. We will deal with allegations in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL
At every review, this policy will be approved by the LGB

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and safety policy
- SEND policy

Monitoring and review

The trust's Director of Special Education will monitor the implementation of this policy, including making sure that it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the trust and the academies.