

NORMAN STREET

Appendix to Behaviour Policy – September 2026

Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force (from 1 April 2026)

Draft status: *this appendix was updated in September 2026 to align with the Department for Education's final guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' (published December 2025, effective from 1 April 2026), which replaces the 2013 'Use of reasonable force in schools' guidance. It remains a draft pending review and adoption by the Headteacher and Governing Body.*

Introduction

This appendix sets out the school's approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in alignment with the Department for Education's guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' (December 2025, effective from 1 April 2026). In that guidance, a restrictive intervention is defined as a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. It is used as an umbrella term covering both physical and non-physical actions that restrain pupils in different ways, and includes reasonable force, restraint, and seclusion. Restrictive interventions are recognised as significant actions that must be carefully governed, minimised, and monitored. The school's ethos prioritises prevention, relational practice, early intervention, and the creation of emotionally safe environments for all pupils and staff.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The school's approach is rooted in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, particularly sections 93 and 93A, which give all members of school staff the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from: causing injury to themselves or others; committing a criminal offence; damaging property; or causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

From 1 April 2026, the school's recording and reporting duties for the use of force are set out in statutory guidance issued under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and its duties for recording and reporting seclusion and restraint (including restraint without physical contact) are set out in the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025. Further detail is set out in the 'Recording and Reporting Duties' section below.

The school also acts in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and international conventions such as the UNCRC, ensuring that any intervention upholds children's rights, dignity, and equitable treatment.

The school explicitly prohibits corporal punishment and any use of force that is punitive, intentionally painful, coercive, humiliating, or designed to force compliance. Staff must act within the boundaries of necessity, proportionality, and professional accountability, as set out in 'Determining When Restrictive Intervention is Appropriate' below.

Terminology

For clarity, and in line with the DfE's guidance, this appendix uses the following definitions:

- **Restrictive intervention:** a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This is the umbrella term for both physical and non-physical actions used to restrain pupils, and includes reasonable force, restraint, and seclusion.
- **Reasonable force:** a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, depending on the circumstances.
- **Significant incident:** any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate everyday physical contact between pupils and staff (see 'Other Physical Contact with Pupils' below). This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.
- **Seclusion:** a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.
- **Restraint:** a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not involve direct physical contact — for example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides, or removing a pupil's crutches or other mobility aid, would both be considered forms of restraint.

These terms are defined for completeness and should not be read as an endorsement of their use; seclusion and restraint in particular will not be relevant to the great majority of situations at this school.

Preventative Behaviour Culture and Early Intervention

A primary focus of the school's behaviour philosophy is the prevention of escalation through relational practice and early identification of unmet needs. Staff are expected to develop strong, positive relationships with pupils, understand individual communication styles, and recognise early indicators of distress or dysregulation. The school uses trauma-informed and attachment-aware practices to ensure pupils with past or ongoing emotional vulnerabilities receive appropriate support.

Whole-school measures to minimise the need for restrictive interventions include: consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive; shared best practice for whole-class behaviour management and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and the playground; training staff in effective communication strategies, including tone of voice and empathy, to aid de-escalation; developing working staff-pupil relationships and trust; and recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning.

For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the school recognises that behaviours may represent communication attempts, sensory overload, or anxiety responses rather than deliberate misconduct. Staff are trained to identify triggers, adapt expectations, deploy supportive strategies, and collaborate with SENCOs and external professionals in developing proactive plans to reduce risk and improve wellbeing (see 'Consideration for Pupils with SEND' below).

Who Can Use Reasonable Force

In law, all members of school staff have the power to use reasonable force in the circumstances set out above. At Norman Street, we expect this power to be exercised only by staff who have been trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies, in line with the DfE's expectation that schools base training decisions on their own context and needs.

Supply teachers may use restrictive interventions only once they have been fully briefed and trained. Volunteers, students on placement, and visitors are not authorised to use restrictive interventions as

a matter of school policy, and should summon a trained member of staff in any situation where one may be needed.

The school carries out risk assessments for staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required, in line with our duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Determining When Restrictive Intervention is Appropriate

Restrictive intervention may only be used when no less restrictive option is available and where immediate risk is present. Situations may include preventing harm to the pupil or others, stopping dangerous behaviour, preventing serious damage to property, or protecting the learning environment when disruption threatens safety. In every case, staff must consider:

- **Is it necessary?** Staff should consider whether there are more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation, and whether a restrictive intervention is likely to reduce risk or would instead escalate the situation or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- **Is it proportionate?** Staff should use the least amount of force, or the least restrictive intervention, necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the risk, taking into account the pupil's medical conditions, SEND, other vulnerabilities, age, and size, and any relevant Equality Act 2010 implications.
- **Have you considered the pupil's welfare?** Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall wellbeing, seek to maintain their dignity (including the location in which any intervention takes place), and, where possible, calmly explain what is happening and why.

Staff must continually assess risk throughout the intervention and must cease it immediately once the risk has diminished. This list of factors is not exhaustive, and training will equip staff to judge when a restrictive intervention is appropriate, including where quick decisions are needed.

Other Physical Contact with Pupils

The school does not operate a 'no contact' policy, and will not agree to a request from a parent or member of staff that reasonable force or other restrictive interventions never be used, as this could leave staff unable to protect pupils when it is reasonable to intervene. There are everyday circumstances in which physical contact with pupils is appropriate and does not raise any question of restrictive intervention, including: to give first aid; to guide or escort a pupil, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front or back of a line, walking together around the school or on a trip, or helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to self-regulate; to comfort a distressed pupil; to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake; to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument; or to demonstrate exercises or techniques in PE or sports coaching.

In deciding whether physical contact is appropriate, staff should use their judgement and have regard to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the circumstances (including whether other adults are present), the pupil's age, whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities, and whether an alternative, non-physical strategy could be used instead.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave. It is not a response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour — where that kind of response is needed, staff should use a disciplinary measure such as removal from the classroom under the school's Behaviour Policy, not seclusion.

Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent. It must never be implemented through a threat of punishment. The space to which a pupil is confined must be safe and must not feel threatening or intimidating. The pupil must be supervised at all times, and must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

Every incident of seclusion must be recorded and reported in line with 'Recording and Reporting Duties' below.

Withdrawal, by contrast, is a supportive, non-restrictive measure designed to help a pupil regain calm, regulate emotions, or reduce sensory overload, and does not prevent the pupil from leaving. Withdrawal spaces are supervised and nurturing, and are used as part of the school's graduated support approach; because it is not restrictive, withdrawal does not trigger the recording and reporting duties that apply to seclusion.

Restraint

Restraint is a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement, and may or may not involve direct physical contact. Examples include holding a pupil's arms to their sides, or removing a pupil's crutches or other mobility aid. Where a restraint incident also amounts to a significant use of force (see 'Terminology' above), staff should follow the recording and reporting procedure for use of force; where it does not — for example, the removal of a walking aid without any physical hold — staff must still record and report it under the separate procedure for seclusion and restraint (see below).

Prohibited and Unsafe Practices

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. The school strictly prohibits corporal punishment and any form of restraint intended to cause pain, punish, intimidate, or degrade a pupil; mechanical restraint; prolonged unsupervised seclusion; locking pupils in rooms; and placing pupils in unsafe or unsuitable spaces.

Pupils must never be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing, or circulation — for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen. The use of force is particularly dangerous where it occurs on the ground: if a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff must release their hold or reposition to a safer or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil (and any staff member involved) should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible.

Historical case reviews have demonstrated significant physical and psychological harm associated with the misuse of restrictive interventions. The school therefore adopts a zero-tolerance approach to practices that fall outside these lawful and ethical boundaries.

Consideration for Pupils with SEND

Some pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations with behaviours that can be harmful to themselves or others, triggered by pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations, or fear and anxiety. Pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express need, discomfort, or confusion through their actions, which can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to restrictive interventions. The school works to understand underlying triggers, create an inclusive environment, and use staff who know individual pupils well to identify risk and develop proactive strategies — for example, removing distressing stimuli, adjusting body language, tone or facial expression, supporting a pupil to express emotions before they become overwhelmed, or redirecting attention with a familiar activity.

Where appropriate, staff will work with pupils with SEND and their parents to co-produce behaviour support plans, which may set out circumstances in which increased physical contact could be appropriate and the parameters around its use. Any behaviour support plan is reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident. Whether a restrictive intervention is appropriate always depends on the circumstances at the time, whether or not it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan.

Post-Incident Support

After any restrictive intervention, the school prioritises the emotional recovery of the pupil involved. This includes time with a trusted adult, opportunities to express their views, and restorative discussions to help rebuild trust and prevent further incidents. The school also evaluates each incident as soon as practicable to understand why it was used, its impact on those involved, any patterns or trends, and how future use might be avoided — for example, by introducing or amending a behaviour support plan.

Staff receive structured debrief opportunities to reflect on the incident, ideally facilitated by a colleague who was not involved, to identify learning points and consider any emotional impact. The school continues to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing afterwards and provides further support, such as additional follow-up conversations or counselling, where needed. Any pupil who witnesses an incident and is distressed by it will also be offered appropriate support.

Recording and Reporting Duties

The school maintains an electronic system for recording and reporting incidents involving restrictive interventions. Because the law now treats the use of force, and seclusion or restraint, as subject to separate (though overlapping) statutory duties, this section sets each out in turn.

Recording the use of force (statutory). Every significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable after the event — the staff member(s) involved should aim to do this no later than the same day. This applies even where use of the intervention in certain circumstances has been agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan. As a minimum, we record: the names of the pupil and staff directly involved; any relevant needs of the pupil, including whether they have an identified SEN or disability and their SEN status code; the time, date, location, and approximate duration; a brief account of the incident, including what led up to it, any known triggers, de-escalation strategies used, the type and degree of force applied, and any injuries; a brief account of why the use of force was necessary; and details of any post-incident support provided.

Reporting the use of force to parents (statutory). Parents are informed of every significant use of force as soon as practicable, and we aim to do this no later than the same day, in writing (for example by email or our messaging system). This report includes the time, date, location and approximate duration; a brief account of why the intervention was necessary; the type and degree of force applied; and details of any injuries. The only exceptions are where the pupil is aged 20 or over, or where a staff member believes that reporting to a parent would be likely to cause the pupil serious harm — in which case the incident is instead reported to any parent to whom it can safely be reported or, if there is none, to the pupil's home Local Authority. We will invite parents to a follow-up discussion where appropriate, to review triggers, whether any behaviour support plan was followed, and what might be done differently.

Recording and reporting seclusion and restraint (statutory). Under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, every incident of seclusion or restraint — including restraint without physical contact — must also be recorded in writing as soon as practicable, and no later than the same day, recording the names of those involved, the

time, date, location and duration, the pupil's relevant needs (including SEN status code), why the intervention was necessary, any injuries, and any post-incident support. As a maintained school, we provide parents with a copy of the written record as soon as practicable and no later than the same day, subject to the same age-20 and serious-harm exceptions that apply to use-of-force reporting above. Where an incident of restraint also amounts to a significant use of force, we follow the use-of-force recording and reporting procedure only, and do not report the same incident twice.

These records enable monitoring, learning, and accountability, and inform the data review carried out by Governors described below.

Guidance for Governors on Using Data

The Governing Body must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force, seclusion, and restraint are complied with. Governors receive regular updates and an annual summary of restrictive intervention data, and will regularly review and interrogate this data to: identify and implement improvements to policy and practice, particularly where an approach has been used for some time without success; identify staff learning and development needs, including for specific year groups or teams; understand repeat patterns and triggers for individual pupils so that behaviour support plans can be established or revised; and identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or have other vulnerabilities. Governors will consider the limitations of the data available and avoid over-interpreting small groups of pupils.

Safeguarding, Complaints, and Allegations

All concerns or allegations relating to the misuse of a restrictive intervention are treated as safeguarding matters. Complaints about the use of restrictive interventions are handled through the school's normal complaints procedure. Where an allegation of inappropriate use of force or another restrictive intervention is made against a member of staff, the school follows the procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, including those on the suspension of staff.

This policy appendix must be read alongside the full Behaviour Policy, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and the Special Educational Needs Policy.