

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

September 2026

We consider equality implications before and at the time that we develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and we keep them under review on a continuing basis. All policies are approved by the governing board and reviewed annually.



But the plans of the Lord stand firm for ever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

*Psalm 33:11
New International Version*

1. Introduction

Northaw CE Primary School is committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where all pupils can thrive. We recognise that restrictive interventions — including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion — can have significant impact on pupils, staff and the wider school community. As the DfE guidance states, “restrictive interventions... should only be used when they are necessary and proportionate.”

This policy sets out how the school will minimise the need for restrictive interventions and ensure that, when they are used, they are lawful, proportionate, safe, recorded and reported in line with statutory duties.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is written with regard to:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, sections 93 and 93A
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)
- Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention (DfE)

The statutory guidance requires schools to record every significant incident involving force and to notify parents “as soon as practicable and ideally the same day, in writing.”

3. Definitions

- Restrictive Intervention: Any action, physical or non-physical, that restricts a pupil’s movement.
- Reasonable Force: Physical force used to prevent injury, damage, crime or serious disorder. It must involve “no more force than is needed.”
- Significant Incident: Any incident where the use of force goes beyond everyday physical contact.
- Restraint: A non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises or limits movement.
- Seclusion: Confining a pupil alone in a space from which they are prevented from leaving.

4. Principles

Northaw CE Primary School is committed to:

- Minimising the need for restrictive interventions
- Prioritising prevention, early intervention and de-escalation
- Ensuring any intervention is necessary, proportionate and in the pupil's best interests
- Protecting the dignity and welfare of pupils
- Ensuring staff are trained, supported and confident
- Recording and reporting all required incidents in line with statutory duties
- Working closely with parents and carers
- Ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and making reasonable adjustments
- Monitoring for disproportionate impact on pupils with SEND or protected characteristics

5. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

All members of staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

1. Causing injury to themselves or others
2. Committing a criminal offence
3. Damaging property
4. Causing disorder among pupils
5. Leaving a space where doing so would place them or others at risk (as permitted under s.93)

Only the minimum force necessary should be used, for the shortest possible time.

6. Unacceptable Uses of Force

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Using force as a punishment
- Any restraint that affects breathing, airway or circulation
- Pressure on the neck, chest or abdomen
- Prone or ground-based restraint except in an emergency, and then only briefly
- Any action likely to cause injury or humiliation

The guidance states: "Staff must never use any restraint... that restricts a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation."

7. Other Appropriate Physical Contact

The school does not operate a "no contact" policy. Staff may use appropriate physical contact for:

- First aid
- Guiding or escorting pupils
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Demonstrating techniques in PE or music
- Supporting a pupil to self-regulate

Staff must always consider the pupil's age, SEND needs, vulnerabilities and the context.

8. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used:

- As an emergency safety measure
- When a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation
- When the pupil is not acting with intent
- To protect others from harm

The guidance states: "Seclusion... may only be used as an emergency safety measure and must be recorded and reported."

During seclusion:

- The space must be safe and not feel threatening
- The pupil must be supervised at all times
- The pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the risk reduces
- The incident must be recorded and reported in line with statutory duties
- A written report must be provided to parents (statutory requirement)

9. Minimising the Need for Restrictive Interventions

The school will:

- Use whole-school behaviour strategies
- Train staff in de-escalation and communication
- Build strong relationships with pupils
- Adapt the environment to reduce triggers
- Analyse data to identify patterns and reduce incidents
- Work closely with parents and carers
- Ensure risk assessments are in place for pupils with known risks

10. Pupils with SEND

The guidance notes that triggers may include "pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations... or feelings of fear and anxiety."

The school will:

- Understand individual triggers
- Use personalised strategies and reasonable adjustments
- Co-produce behaviour support plans with parents and professionals
- Ensure risk assessments identify:
 - triggers
 - de-escalation strategies
 - agreed forms of restrictive intervention
 - staff responsible
- Review plans regularly and after any significant incident
- Ensure communication is adapted for pupils with communication or sensory needs
- Ensure parental consent is not required for lawful restrictive interventions (statutory clarification)

11. Staff Training

Staff who may need to use restrictive interventions will receive training in:

- De-escalation
- Safe and lawful use of reasonable force
- Risk assessment
- Supporting pupils with SEND
- Recording and reporting requirements

The school will keep a record of staff training, including specialist training.

12. Recording Incidents (Statutory)

The school will record every significant use of force on the same day where possible, including:

- Names of staff and pupils involved
- Relevant pupil needs, including SEND status code (statutory requirement)
- Time, date, location and duration
- What led to the incident and any known triggers
- De-escalation strategies used
- Type and degree of force
- Injuries sustained
- Post-incident support provided

All significant incidents must be reported immediately to:

- The headteacher

- The DSL (where safeguarding concerns may arise)

13. Reporting to Parents (Statutory)

Parents will be informed as soon as practicable, ideally the same day, unless doing so would likely result in serious harm to the pupil.

Reports will include:

- Time, date, location and duration
- Why the intervention was necessary
- Type and degree of force
- Any injuries
- For seclusion or non-physical restraint: a description of the restrictive intervention used and why it was necessary (statutory requirement)
- Reports must be in writing

14. Recording and Reporting Seclusion and Non-Force Restraint

The school will follow the statutory requirements under the 2025 Regulations, including:

- Recording all seclusion and restraint incidents (including those without physical contact)
- Providing written records to parents
- Ensuring continuous supervision during seclusion
- Ensuring all incidents are reviewed by leaders

15. Post-Incident Support

The school will:

- Provide medical assessment where needed
- Offer mandatory debrief conversations to staff and pupils
- Support witnesses
- Review behaviour plans
- Analyse patterns to reduce future incidents

16. Governance and Monitoring

The governing body will:

- Ensure compliance with statutory duties
- Review incident data termly
- Identify patterns and trends

- Monitor for disproportionate impact on pupils with protected characteristics or SEND
- Support leaders to improve practice

17. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints will be handled through the school's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Allegations against staff will follow Keeping Children Safe in Education.

18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- DfE guidance is updated
- Monitoring identifies the need for revision