



Restrictive Interventions Policy

Statutory

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Introduction

Odyssey Educational Trust believes that pupils need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of pupils will the use of a physical intervention be needed and only if other strategies (e.g. distraction and de-escalation) have not worked. The vast majority of pupils behave appropriately and respond well to the school positive behaviour ethos and policy which emphasizes the use of preventative strategies for tackling unsafe behaviour.

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to understand what challenging behaviours might be communicating. This Policy aims to help staff proactively minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and when necessary, to feel more confident in knowing how to use any restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

Parents also need to know that their children are safe in school and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Definition of Terminology

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

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables 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:

- **committing a criminal offence** (this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility)
- preventing a child from **injuring self or others**
- **preventing or stopping a child from causing serious damage to property** (including the child's own property)
- stopping the child from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

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 term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate at Odyssey Educational Trust

Restrictive Physical Interventions MAY be used when all other strategies have been exhausted and therefore only ever as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary as a first response, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency such as a fight or impending accident or other emergency. The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

The Education Act 1996 provides the Head Teacher and staff they authorise with the statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil. Prohibited items include:

- an article to which section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies (knives and blades etc)
- an offensive weapon
- alcohol and controlled drugs
- a stolen article
- an article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person

Who may use restrictive physical intervention at Odyssey Educational Trust

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

To prevent or stop a pupil from.

- **committing a criminal offence**
- preventing a child from **injuring self or others**
- **preventing or stopping a child from causing serious damage to property** (including the child's own property)

- stopping the child from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions will be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. At Odyssey Educational Trust, Team TEACH is our recognised provider for training in the safe and appropriate use of restrictive interventions.

ALL staff are authorised to have control of pupils, and must be aware of this Policy and its implications. However, non-inclusion on this list does not mean that an adult is necessarily barred from using physical intervention. If the Executive Head has lawfully placed an adult in charge of children then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention where appropriate and necessary in keeping with this policy.

Staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other pupils and themselves from high risk situations may be best course of action in some circumstances, particularly where colleagues are not available to support.

Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions at Odyssey Educational Trust

Staff will use the minimum force necessary in order to maintain safety in all situations

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows: -

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the criteria for its use are met
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupil's best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion.
- Pupils will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable/unsafe behaviour
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or observers
- The Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed as soon as it is safe to do so, to allow the pupil to regain self-control
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, (e.g. a playground fight) and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy

- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be considered in developing Positive Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system in school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved
- A written report will be completed for any intervention using reasonable force, which will be completed using the online recording system for Leicester City Council

Other physical contact with pupils

“Schools should not have a ‘no contact’ policy. Additionally, schools should not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a ‘no contact’ policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils.” *DfE restrictive Interventions including use of reasonable force in schools, April 2026*

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
- to gently direct or guide a pupil – e.g. holding the hand of a pupil on a school trip or when walking into assembly
- when first aid is required or when trying to establish if first aid is necessary;
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama, etc);
- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils;
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.

In all situations where, physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the school's child protection policy and safer working practice guidance
- the pupil's age and level of understanding;
- the pupil's individual characteristics and history;
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving and 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. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion is not a threat or form of punishment. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil will be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the

immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting duties'. Seclusion, as defined in this guidance, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom. Staff should refer to the Behaviour Policy guidance for further information on these and other disciplinary measures.

Developing a positive behaviour plan

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Behaviour Plan and Risk Assessment (see Appendix 1) for that child will be completed, usually with support from the Social, Emotional & Mental Health Team, SEMH and the SENDCO. This Plan will help the pupil and relevant adults understand the factors that influence behaviour and identify the early warning signs that indicate behaviour that may be escalating.

The plan will include: -

- involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific actions and interventions the school may take, when and why
- detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- a record to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict and praise points, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil and understand their needs
- ensuring a system to summon additional support where needed

Behaviour support plans should be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil.

Guidance and training for all staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area so that the best possible practice is adopted at Odyssey Educational Trust. Appropriate training will be provided for all staff at a number of levels including:

- Awareness of issues for Trustees and parents/
- Behaviour management techniques for all staff
- Team Teach training for identified staff

Training in the appropriate practical techniques of physical intervention may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the pupils that they are working with. Where there is an identified need for such training, staff will undertake 'Team Teach' training. Team Teach training remains valid for 3 years, we aim to ensure that staff training is up to date.

(NB there is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques and staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training. However, they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).

Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and they should know this option is available to them. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, each member of staff should consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.¹⁴

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should continue to be applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also consider all other relevant factors. If an assessment has been made to use restrictive interventions, staff should be supported in their decision making.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions. Staff should seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support and create an inclusive environment

School will seek to 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. They should also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies may include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Pupil and staff support

Staff should evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided

in future, for example by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan. If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Incidents in which a member of staff uses reasonable force or seclusion on a pupil must be recorded as described in 'Recording and reporting duties' in this policy. In addition, any injuries should be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

Where appropriate, a follow-up conversation to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing will take place after an incident. This conversation should be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

Recording the use of force

All incidents using force or physical restraint must be recorded. The member of staff must ensure that the appropriate form is filled in, with statements from witnesses including other members of staff. The recording should take place as soon as is practicable and the Executive headteacher must be informed about the event as soon as is reasonably possible.

The process for recording is to use the online form which can be accessed through Leicester City Council extranet. There are 5 pages (sections A-E) to complete, at the end of which the form is automatically emailed to the SEMH Team when 'submitted'. There is also the option to add in email addresses of school leaders and DSLs. Staff must also print hard copies of the form for school files or save it as a PDF to an electronic file which will be handed to the Executive Head who will keep a hard copy on file as part of the legal requirement for schools to keep records of all significant incidents. All records are regularly reviewed by the leadership team and reported to Trustees as part of ongoing analysis of incidents and to inform future training, staffing and planning.

Recording the use of seclusion

As outlined in this policy, an incident of restraint may occur with or without direct physical contact. For restraint incidents that occur without direct physical contact, for example, the use of seclusion or a non-physical intervention, these must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff members involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

The process for recording nonphysical contact restrains such as inclusion is as follows.

Using the school recording form (available online in the Information for all staff folder) staff will be asked to make a record of

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention

- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has identified SEND
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Reporting incidents, Seclusion and Physical Intervention

Parents must be informed by phone or in person as soon as is reasonably possible after a significant incident and not later than the same day. A report of the incident should be made to the parent including the following information. Whilst a phone call may be the most immediate way of contacting a parent, it should be followed up in writing through parent mail with the following information provided in writing.

- The time, date and location and duration of the intervention
- Any attempts at de-escalation strategies that were used, if appropriate, prior to physical intervention
- An account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- An account of what type of force was used, if it was used, and for how long
- Details of any physical injuries sustained if applicable
- Any particular triggers for the incident occurring
- Whether any behaviour support plans were followed
- Next steps moving forwards and any further support that may be offered by the school or signposting to any external agency support where appropriate

Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and Trustees informed we can avoid the need for complaints. However, any dispute which arises about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with through the Trust Complaints Policy

Appendix 1 – Example Positive Behaviour Plan

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR PLAN

Name:	DOB:
Start Date of Plan:	
Review Date:	
Trigger situations	
Behaviour – what does it look and sound like?	
Preferred support strategies: e.g. partner work, sense of humour	
Praise points:	
Medical and emotional conditions to consider	
Follow up for child:	
Follow up for staff	
Staff involved	