Restrictive Intervention and Reasonable Force Policy

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This policy is based on an original template produced by The National College. Burscough Village Primary School has reviewed, adapted and amended the content to ensure it reflects the school's own context, practice and statutory responsibilities.	

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Statement of intent

Burscough Village Primary School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary.

The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

Restrictive interventions will be avoided wherever possible through early support, prevention and de-escalation. Where intervention is necessary, staff will use the least restrictive effective response, no more force than necessary and for the shortest possible time, maintaining the pupil's dignity and taking account of individual needs. An emergency may require immediate action to prevent harm without first attempting alternatives that would be unsafe or impracticable.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

1. [Updated] Legal framework

This policy covers physical and non-physical restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. It has due regard to the following legislation and guidance. The recording and reporting duties are legal requirements; the wider DfE advice supports prevention, safe practice and oversight.

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, particularly 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 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (April 2026) Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026; accessed 6 November 2026)
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- HM Government 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. [Updated] Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Notifying the headteacher that the Behaviour Policy should include the power to use reasonable force.
- Evaluating, on an annual basis, instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on an **annual** basis.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

[Updated] The headteacher is responsible for:

- Arranging appropriate PRICE training and retraining for staff designated to use physical restraint, taking account of pupil needs and risk assessments, and maintaining an up-to-date record of staff training and the techniques they are trained to use.
- Ensuring all staff understand prevention, de-escalation and how to obtain assistance from PRICE-trained colleagues. Only staff with current, appropriate PRICE training may use the PRICE restraint techniques covered by their training.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- Overseeing restrictive intervention records on Behaviour Smart and evaluating their use termly, including follow-up actions, training needs and changes to pupil support.
- Ensuring staff record required incidents on Behaviour Smart, including the information specified in section 8, and that records are checked for completeness and followed up.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy sets out the circumstances in which force might be used.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

- **[New]** Carrying out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils can use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions as safely as possible, if and when required.
- Identify safeguarding-related training needs and arrange appropriate PRICE training and retraining for designated staff; specialist restraint training will be delivered by appropriately qualified trainers.
- Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual risk assessments for pupils with SEND or medical conditions that are agreed with the pupil's parents, and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the headteacher.

[New] All staff members will be responsible for:

- Avoiding restrictive interventions wherever possible and only using reasonable force as a last resort.
- Only using reasonable force in certain circumstances, including to prevent or stop a pupil from:
    - Causing injury to themselves or others.
    - Committing a criminal offence.
    - Damaging property.

    - Causing disorder among pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

- Understanding the unacceptable uses of force and the legal implications of using force in this way.

3. [Updated] Definitions

[Updated] Restrictive intervention: An action or measure used to prevent, limit, or control the movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body. Within this policy, restrictive intervention is used as an umbrella term encompassing both physical and non-physical interventions intended to restrict a pupil's movement or behaviour.

[Updated] Reasonable force: A legal term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the statutory power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable force refers to the minimum level of force necessary, applied for the shortest possible duration, and proportionate to the specific circumstances of the incident.

[Updated] Significant incident: Any incident in which the use of force exceeds appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes situations where physical force is used to carry out or support a non-physical restrictive intervention.

[New] Seclusion: A non-disciplinary intervention involving the confinement of a pupil to a space away from others, with their freedom to leave restricted. This may be achieved through physical obstruction, blocking exits, or actions that lead the pupil to believe they will face negative consequences if they attempt to leave.

[Updated] Restraint: A term used in legislation to describe a non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or restricts their movement. Restraint may involve direct physical contact or indirect actions. Examples include holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing an item that enables mobility, such as crutches.

4. [New] Avoiding physical intervention and reducing risk

The school will expect staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention.

Where possible, the school implements an approach of prevention, where staff will be trained in recognising warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour,

communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli.

Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class, and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs.

Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first questioning whether there is a need to use physical intervention. Staff will question whether:

- **It is necessary:**
    - Staff will consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
    - Staff will 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 will communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.
- **It is proportionate:**
    - Staff will use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce relevant risks.
    - If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff will reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
    - Staff will consider the personal circumstances of the pupil, e.g. medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics, e.g. age and size, and relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.
- **The pupil's welfare:**
    - Staff will consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken.
    - Staff will maintain respect for a pupil's dignity.
    - Where possible, staff will clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.

- For pupils with communication difficulties or EAL, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies will be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff will seek to understand the pupil's feelings and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Reasonable force will only be used in situations where it is needed to stop a pupil from causing harm to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder among pupils. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating.

Some emergencies require immediate action, for example where a pupil runs towards a busy road or pupils are fighting. Staff will assess the risks as rapidly as possible and use only necessary and proportionate intervention. The same recording, reporting, safeguarding and post-incident review arrangements apply to emergency interventions.

Staff will seek to re-establish communication and support the pupil to regain self-regulation as soon as possible. Force must never be used as punishment. Any use must be necessary and proportionate to the lawful purpose identified; a pupil's distress or refusal alone does not remove the need for this assessment.

Safety safeguards

Staff must not restrain a pupil in any way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation. Staff will monitor the pupil's welfare throughout, stop or change an intervention if it creates additional danger, and obtain urgent medical assistance where needed. This policy does not provide instructions for restraint techniques or replace appropriate training.

PRICE training and staff authorisation

The school uses PRICE training and retraining for physical restraint. PRICE restraint techniques will only be used by members of staff who have received current, appropriate training in those techniques and are acting within the scope of that training. Training does not remove the requirement to assess necessity, proportionality, the pupil's individual needs and the shortest possible duration on every occasion.

Staff who are not appropriately PRICE-trained must not undertake planned restraint or attempt PRICE restraint techniques. They should use prevention and de-escalation strategies, summon

trained assistance promptly, and help keep others safe. This school restriction on specialist techniques does not remove the existing legal power to use reasonable force in an unforeseen emergency; any immediate action must remain necessary, proportionate and subject to this policy's recording and reporting requirements.

Appropriate, non-restrictive physical contact, such as first aid, comforting a distressed pupil or supporting an agreed care need, is distinct from reasonable force. The school does not operate a blanket no-contact approach; contact must remain appropriate to the pupil's needs, circumstances and safeguarding arrangements.

5. [New] Seclusion

The school will recognise seclusion as a non-disciplinary measure that may be used, in exceptional circumstances, to reduce risk and avoid the need for physical intervention when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent.

The school will ensure that seclusion is used only as a safety measure to protect the pupil or others from harm and will not use seclusion as a consequence or through the threat of punishment.

Where seclusion is used, the school will ensure that:

- The space used will be safe, suitable, and not intimidating or threatening to the pupil.
- The pupil will be appropriately supervised at all times.
- The restriction will last only for as long as the immediate risk of harm remains.
- The pupil will be allowed to leave as soon as it is safe to do so.

The school will record and report any incident involving seclusion in accordance with the procedures set out in the recording and reporting incidents section of this policy.

Seclusion will not be used as a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. The school will use appropriate disciplinary measures, such as removal from the classroom, in line with the Behaviour Policy.

6. [Updated] Pupils with SEND

[Updated] The school will have due consideration to how pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to

themselves and others. Staff members will be trained on understanding triggers and how pupils that find communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions.

[New] The school will seek to minimise the potential disproportionate use of restrictive interventions used on pupils with SEND by understanding underlying triggers of challenging behaviour and providing proactive support.

The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

[Updated] The school 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. **[Updated]** The school will also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

[New] De-escalation strategies may include:

- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress.
- Changing body language, facial expression, or tone of voice.
- Supporting the pupil to express their emotions before they become 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.

Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil with SEND will be applicable to other pupils with SEND.

[Updated] Where appropriate, staff will work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of communication and regulations plans. These plans will outline any adjustments and methods to communicate their needs effectively. Communication and regulation plans will also detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. Any communication and regulation plan will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident.

Where there is an identified risk of restrictive intervention, the school will put individual risk assessments and prevention strategies in place. Where a plan anticipates physical restraint, it will identify appropriate PRICE-trained staff and techniques within their current training, taking account of the pupil's SEND, medical and communication needs. Plans will be reviewed after significant incidents and when needs change.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

7. [Updated] Post-incident support

[New] The school will 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 staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in the future.

Where appropriate, pupils and staff involved will receive a medical assessment and treatment for injuries as soon as possible. Any immediate safeguarding concerns will be referred to the DSL and handled under the school's safeguarding and allegations procedures.

[Updated] Follow-up conversations will be used to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. Such conversations will be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and seek to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved. This process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident, with input from an additional person to ensure impartiality and support.

[New] The school will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention will also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

8. [Updated] Recording and reporting incidents

The governing board must ensure that procedures are in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil and reporting the incident to the pupil's parents. It must also ensure procedures cover seclusion and non-force related restraint under the 2026 Regulations. The headteacher will oversee implementation and make the procedures known to all staff.

Behaviour Smart is the school's main system for recording restrictive interventions. Staff involved will record every significant use of force and each incident of seclusion or non-force related restraint on Behaviour Smart as soon as practicable, aiming to complete the record no later than

the same day. This applies even where an intervention is anticipated in a behaviour support plan or discussed with parents. Staff must inform the headteacher promptly; entering a record does not replace immediate notification or the separate duty to inform parents.

[New] The school will record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of pupils and staff directly involved.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has SEND, and their SEN status code.
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained.
- A brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Any post-incident support, e.g. details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

The Behaviour Smart record must also include witness accounts where available, the pupil's account using suitable communication support, how and when parents were notified, any safeguarding reason for not informing parents, notification to the local authority where required, and follow-up actions. Where PRICE restraint techniques were used, record the staff involved, their relevant training status and the techniques used. If the system does not have a dedicated field, include this information in the incident account or an associated record.

Behaviour Smart records will inform termly review by the headteacher and SENCO where relevant, and an anonymised termly report to the governing board. The review will identify patterns and necessary changes to pupil support, prevention, staff training and practice.

Each significant use of force will be reported to the pupil's parents as soon as practicable, with a commitment to doing so no later than the same day. If reporting to a parent would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil, the incident must instead be reported to the local authority within whose area the pupil ordinarily resides. The decision, safeguarding rationale, person informed and time of notification will be recorded. For this policy, parents includes carers and others with parental responsibility.

[Updated] A report of the incident made to parents will include the following details as a minimum:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary.
- A brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force.
- The details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

[New] Parents will also be invited to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This may include a discussion about:

- 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.

The headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

[New] Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

The governing board must ensure procedures are in place for recording and reporting each incident of seclusion or non-force related restraint. This applies even where the intervention is included in a communication and regulation plan or agreed with parents. Staff will record these incidents on Behaviour Smart, clearly identifying the type of intervention.

Incidents involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event by the staff members involved and, wherever possible, no later than the same day.

For the purposes of this policy, non-physical restrictive interventions include actions that restrict a pupil's movement without direct physical contact, such as preventing a pupil from leaving a space or removing an item that enables mobility.

The school will record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of the pupil and staff directly involved.

- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including SEND where applicable.
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Any post-incident support provided, including medical or emotional support where relevant.

Parents will be informed of incidents involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention as soon as practicable, and no later than the same day, unless it appears that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. Where parents cannot be informed for this reason, the incident will be reported to the local authority.

Where an incident involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention also constitutes a significant use of force, the school will follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force only, and information will not be duplicated.

Records of all restrictive interventions on Behaviour Smart will be retained and reviewed together. The headteacher, and SENCO where relevant, will review records termly; the governing board will evaluate an anonymised overview termly. Reviews will consider frequency, duration, repeat incidents, injuries, seclusion, SEND and equality implications, prevention, and whether pupil support, PRICE training or retraining, or school practice should change. Identifiable records will be held securely with access restricted to those who need them.

9. [Updated]Complaints

[New] Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

[New] If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force or other restrictive interventions is made against a staff member, the procedures in Keeping children safe in education will be followed, including the provisions regarding suspension of staff.

10.Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an **annual** basis by the headteacher, DSL, SENCO and governing board, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

The governing board will confirm and enter the next scheduled review date when this revised policy is approved. It will be reviewed annually and sooner if legislation, guidance or incident reviews indicate a change is needed.

Restrictive Intervention Log

Behaviour Smart provides the school's main record of restrictive interventions. This log is a contingency aid only if Behaviour Smart is temporarily unavailable; it is not a separate routine recording requirement. Cross-reference any contingency incident form, transfer the information to Behaviour Smart as soon as access is restored, and avoid creating duplicate incident entries. Record parent or local authority notifications and follow-up actions in the main incident record. The headteacher will use Behaviour Smart records for monitoring and review.

Date and time	Name of pupil	Name of staff member	Name(s) of witnesses	Injuries (if any) to pupils or staff	Damage (if any) to property	Intervention type and report reference	Headteacher and parent / local authority notification: date and time	Signed by staff member
