



Restrictive Interventions Policy Including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion April 26

Date Approved by The Governors	September 2026
Date reviewed:	01.09.26
Date to review:	01.09.27
Reviewer:	J Hardwick

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe. Taken from the DfE April 2026 Guidance.

This policy sets out Little Digmoor School's approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. Little Digmoor Primary School recognises that restrictive interventions can have a significant physical and psychological impact on pupils and staff. They should therefore only ever be used when necessary, proportionate and lawful, and where less restrictive measures have been attempted or assessed as inappropriate in the circumstances.

Little Digmoor Primary School is committed to:

- ▪ safeguarding the welfare, dignity and human rights of pupils
- ▪ preventing and minimising the need for restrictive interventions
- ▪ supporting staff to manage behaviour safely and confidently
- ▪ meeting statutory recording and reporting duties
- ▪ using data to continuously improve practice

This policy should be read alongside the

- ▪ Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- ▪ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ▪ SEND Policy
- ▪ Health and Safety Policy
- ▪ Complaints Policy.
- ▪ DfE guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)
- ▪ Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025 and 2026)

Definitions

- **Restrictive intervention:** a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance 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.
- **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.
- **Seclusion:** A non-disciplinary safety measure involving keeping a pupil in 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.
- **Significant incident:** Any incident where force goes beyond everyday physical contact and requires formal recording and reporting. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff.

We prioritise prevention and de-escalation by adopting proactive strategies that support positive behaviour and minimise the need for restrictive interventions, including:

- Strong and positive relationships with our children.
- Consistent routines and expectations
- Provision adaptations, when needed
- Effective communication
- Positive behaviour strategies
- Individual support may include, risk assessments, behaviour support plans, reasonable adjustments, sensory strategies and joint working with parents and external professionals.

Staff Training

Little Digmoor Primary School recognises that staff training is a critical component of preventing the need for restrictive interventions. Those who are working with children on a 1:1 basis will have a risk assessment and the SENDCo has received Team Teach Training.

Together and in line with the April 2026 DfE guidance, prevention and de-escalation strategies and behavior support will be provided through the relevant training. The training will reflect the principles of this guidance and will support staff to assess necessity and proportionality, understand risks to physical and psychological wellbeing, recognise the impact of trauma and SEND, and make defensible professional judgements, including in situations where decisions must be taken quickly.

Little Digmoor Primary School will ensure that training needs are informed by its pupil cohort, patterns and trends in incidents, and risk assessments.

The decision to use a restrictive intervention is a matter of professional judgement and must always be based on the specific circumstances at the time. Before using, or continuing to use, a restrictive intervention, staff must, wherever practicable, consider the following factors, which are drawn directly from the guidance:

Necessity -

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.

Proportionality -

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.

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 be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

SEND – Some pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may display behaviours of distress when they experience anxiety, pain, sensory overload, communication difficulties, or unfamiliar situations. Schools should recognise that behaviour is often a form of communication and seek to understand the underlying cause rather than focus solely on the behaviour itself. The school will take a proactive approach to supporting pupils with SEND by identifying triggers, making reasonable adjustments, and implementing preventative strategies to reduce the likelihood of behaviours escalating to a level where restrictive intervention may be considered.

Strategies may include:

- Adapting the environment to reduce sources of distress.
- Using communication approaches that meet the pupil's individual needs.
- Supporting pupils to identify and express their emotions.
- Providing access to sensory, calming, or regulating activities.
- Using distraction, redirection, and other de-escalation techniques.

Where appropriate, individual behaviour support plans and risk assessments will be developed in partnership with the pupil, parents/carers, and relevant professionals. These documents will identify known triggers, effective support strategies, reasonable adjustments, and agreed responses to reduce risk and promote positive outcomes. The existence of a behaviour support plan does not automatically justify the use of restrictive interventions. Any restrictive intervention must always be necessary, reasonable, proportionate, and used only in response to the specific circumstances at the time

Equality implications - Staff must consider relevant duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the need to avoid discrimination, make reasonable adjustments and ensure that responses do not disproportionately impact pupils who share protected characteristics. Restrictive interventions must never be used as a punishment, as a disciplinary sanction, or for the purpose of compliance or convenience. They must only be used as a last resort safety measure and must cease as soon as the immediate risk has reduced. Following any restrictive intervention, staff must ensure that appropriate post-incident actions are taken in line with this policy, including recording and reporting, medical checks where appropriate, reflection and review.

Understanding restrictive interventions. Who can use reasonable force?

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

To prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. significant disruption where there is an immediate risk of harm
4. damaging property
5. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or off-site
6. safely guide or escort a child away from danger

Appropriate physical contact (for example, first aid, comfort, guiding or PE instruction) is lawful and sometimes necessary. Staff must use professional judgement and consider safeguarding context, pupil age, vulnerability and alternative strategies.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Headteachers and staff have the authority to search a pupil or their possessions where there is reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil may have a prohibited item.

Unacceptable use of restrictive intervention

Restrictive interventions must never be used as a punishment, a disciplinary sanction, or for the purpose of compliance, convenience or to manage behaviour where there is no immediate risk of harm. Any use of force or restrictive practice for these purposes is unlawful. Staff must not use any techniques or approaches that may restrict or interfere with a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation. This includes, but is not limited to, applying pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen, covering the mouth or nose, or positioning a pupil in a way that compromises respiration. Such practices present a serious and potentially fatal medical risk and are strictly prohibited.

Any incident involving unacceptable practice, or where there is concern that an intervention may have compromised a pupil's safety, must be reported immediately in line with Little Digmoor Primary School Safeguarding and Child protection policy.

Seclusion

Seclusion is an emergency safeguarding measure of last resort and must only be used where there is a serious and immediate risk of harm. It must never be used as a punishment, consequence, planned behaviour intervention, or response to non-compliance.

A pupil in seclusion must be continuously supervised by a member of staff. Supervision must be active and allow staff to monitor the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing and respond immediately if concerns arise. The environment used for seclusion must be: safe and suitable, non-threatening, appropriate to the pupil's age, needs and vulnerabilities and free from physical or psychological risks. The intervention must last only for the shortest time necessary to manage the immediate risk. Once the risk has reduced, the pupil should be supported to leave the area and safely reintegrate.

Seclusion must never be used as punishment

A pupil must not be secluded because they are refusing instructions, displaying low-level disruptive behaviour, or as a consequence for misbehaviour. Using seclusion as a disciplinary response would be inappropriate and potentially unlawful.

All incidents involving seclusion or restraint without physical force must be recorded and reported. This includes incidents where restrictive interventions are used in line with an agreed behaviour support plan. Records must be completed as soon as practicable and no later than the same day wherever possible. Where an incident of restraint also constitutes a significant use of force, Little Digmoor will follow the significant incident reporting procedure set out above. The same information will not be reported twice. Where an incident involves seclusion or restraint without physical force and does not constitute a significant use of force, the reporting duties under the 2025 Regulations will apply.

Recording and Reporting of any incident involving non-force related restraint and seclusion

Report to a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible.

Log the incident on CPOMS following and outlining the information required. If this is not possible, please use the papercopy, as seen in the appendix below.

Communicate to parents or carers on the same day whenever possible. Exceptions to the requirement to report are where the pupil is aged 20 or over or it appears to the staff member that doing so would likely result in serious harm to the child

Records will include:

- name 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 an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- the events leading to the incident;
- strategies used to de-escalate the situation;
- the reason intervention became necessary;
- the type and duration of intervention used;
- any injuries sustained;
- actions taken following the incident.

Post-Incident Support

Following any incident involving restrictive interventions:

- the child will be supported through conversations when appropriate; identifying whether any pastoral/medical support is needed;
- staff involved will have the opportunity to debrief;
- parents or carers will be informed;
- any Behaviour Support Plan or Risk Assessment will be reviewed if necessary;
- further support or training will be considered where appropriate.
- The purpose of the review is to identify learning that may reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring in the future.

Recording the use of force (significant incidents)

Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

As a minimum the following records should be recorded:

- Names of pupils and staff directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need to disability and their SEN status code
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- 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 (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Any post post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or adverse impacts.
- Witness accounts
- How and when parents were notified.

Reporting the use of force (significant incidents)

Parents must be informed in writing of each significant incident involving the use of force as soon as practicable after the incident, and Little Digmoor Primary School should endeavor to do this no later than the same day, unless a statutory exception applies.

Reports to parents will include, as a minimum:

- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- Brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- Details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

There is a requirement to report even if restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour plan.

Further follow up

Following any restrictive intervention, Little Digmoor Primary School will review the relevant behaviour support plans, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments. Changes will be made where necessary to better support the pupil, address underlying needs, and strengthen preventative measures.

Repairing relationships and reintegration

Little Digmoor Primary School is committed to repairing and rebuilding relationships following incidents involving restrictive interventions. Where appropriate, restorative approaches will be used to support the pupil's reintegration, rebuild trust between pupils and staff, and promote a sense of safety, dignity and belonging.

Monitoring and escalation

Leaders will monitor incidents and post-incident actions to identify patterns, emerging risks or training needs. Where restrictive interventions occur repeatedly or where concerns arise, this will trigger further review, multi-agency engagement where appropriate, and escalation through safeguarding or SEND processes.

Leadership and Management of Restrictive Intervention

The Governors recognise that the use of restrictive interventions is a significant safeguarding matter and will provide appropriate oversight to ensure that practice in Little Digmoor is lawful, proportionate and focused on prevention. In line with statutory duties and the April 2026 DfE guidance, the Governors will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to support the effective implementation of this policy and the associated recording and reporting requirements. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Governors will:

- ensure that this policy is implemented and reviewed regularly
- assure itself that statutory recording and reporting duties are being met
- receive and consider information about the use of restrictive interventions, including emerging patterns or trends
- be mindful of any disproportionate impact on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities or other identified vulnerabilities
- use information from incidents to inform discussion about prevention, training and support
- ensure that staff are appropriately supported and trained
- ensure that learning from incidents contributes to the ongoing development of practice
- Oversight of restrictive interventions will form part of the wider safeguarding and pupil wellbeing responsibilities.

Complaints

Any complaints raised in relation to the use of restrictive interventions will be managed in accordance with Little Digmoor Primary School's complaints procedure.

Appendix 1: Example reporting template

Restrictive Intervention Incident Report Form Use of reasonable force, restraint and/or seclusion

SECTION 1: BASIC DETAILS

School:

Date of incident:

Time incident started:

Time incident ended:

Approximate duration:

Location of incident:

SECTION 2: PUPIL DETAILS

Pupil name:

Date of birth:

Year group:

Identified SEND:

SEND status (SEN Support / EHCP):

Primary need (if known):

Relevant medical, sensory, communication or vulnerability factors:

SECTION 3: STAFF INVOLVED

Name and role of staff member(s) directly involved:

Names of any witnesses:

SECTION 4: DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

Brief factual account of what happened, including context and behaviours of concern:

Known or suspected triggers or early warning signs:

Strategies used before restrictive intervention:

Why these strategies were assessed as insufficient:

SECTION 6: RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION USED

Reasonable force / Holding / Seclusion /

Disengagement

Description of what was done, including degree of force:

Why this intervention was assessed as necessary:

Type of intervention used:

SECTION 7: WELFARE AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

Were there any injuries or physical effects

YES NO

Details

Was first aid or medical support provided?

YES NO

Details

Any emotional distress observed:

YES NO

Details

SECTION 8: SECLUSION (complete if applicable)

Was seclusion used? YES NO

Was the pupil continuously supervised? YES NO

Location of seclusion: YES NO

Duration

How was the pupil supported to exit seclusion?

SECTION 9: POST-INCIDENT ACTIONS

Immediate actions taken:

Follow-up support planned:

SECTION 10: PARENT/CARER REPORTING

Has the incident been reported to parents/carers?

YES

NO

Method:

Date and time reported:

Name of person who reported:

If not reported, state statutory reason:

SECTION 11: REVIEW AND LEARNING

Does this incident indicate the need to review behaviour support, risk assessment, reasonable adjustments, training or environment?

SECTION 12: SIGNATURES

Completed by (name and role)

Signature

Date

Reviewed by (senior leader)

Signature

Date

