RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Preventing harm. Preserving dignity. Reducing restriction.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
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OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to the use of restrictive physical intervention. It explains the principles, expectations, responsibilities and arrangements that ensure any use of restrictive intervention is lawful, necessary, proportionate, person-centred and firmly embedded within the school's wider Positive Support approach. It also sets out how the school seeks to prevent and reduce restrictive practice through proactive planning, effective communication, co-regulation, reasonable adjustments and reflective review.

At Riverside Bridge School, we believe that every pupil has the right to be supported with dignity, respect and compassion and to learn in an environment that promotes safety, communication, emotional regulation and positive relationships. Restrictive physical intervention is never regarded as a routine response to behaviour, a means of securing compliance or a substitute for effective support. It is an exceptional safety measure that may only be used when necessary to prevent immediate harm and when less restrictive approaches are not sufficient or reasonably practicable.

Our approach is grounded in the understanding that behaviour communicates need. As a specialist school for pupils with complex SEND, we recognise that communication differences, sensory processing needs, emotional regulation, medical conditions, physical needs and difficulties understanding or communicating risk can influence how pupils respond during periods of distress. Adults therefore have a responsibility to understand the individual pupil, recognise early indicators of dysregulation and adapt communication, environments and support before restrictive intervention is considered.

Restrictive physical intervention forms one small part of Riverside Bridge School's wider Positive Support approach. Through positive relationships, Total Communication, co-regulation, environmental adaptation, reasonable adjustments, structured teaching, therapeutic input, individual planning and proactive risk assessment, we seek to prevent situations from escalating and continually reduce the need for restrictive practice. This preventative approach is already central to the policy.

Where restrictive physical intervention becomes necessary, the welfare, safety, rights and dignity of the pupil remain paramount. Any intervention must be lawful, reasonable, necessary and proportionate to the immediate risk, use the least restrictive option available and continue for the shortest possible time. Staff must continually reassess the situation and end the intervention as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

We recognise that restrictive intervention can have a physical and emotional impact on pupils, staff and others. Every significant incident is therefore recorded, reviewed and used as an opportunity for learning. Pupils and staff receive appropriate post-incident support, families are informed in accordance with statutory requirements, and individual plans, risk assessments and wider practice are reviewed to identify how future restriction can be prevented or reduced.

Our arrangements are continually reviewed against current legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements and evidence-informed practice. Through strong leadership, effective training, transparent recording, robust monitoring and partnership with families and professionals, Riverside Bridge School is committed to reducing restrictive practice whilst ensuring that pupils, staff and others remain safe.

Our responsibility to pupils, families and the school community

Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to ensure that any use of restrictive physical intervention is safe, lawful, necessary, proportionate and firmly embedded within a wider approach that prioritises prevention and positive support.

Our responsibility to pupils, families and the school community

In delivering this responsibility, we will:

- prioritise prevention, communication, co-regulation and environmental adaptation before restrictive intervention is considered;
- understand each pupil's individual communication, sensory, emotional, physical and medical needs;
- ensure restrictive intervention is never used as punishment, retaliation, for staff convenience or simply to secure compliance;
- use the least restrictive intervention necessary for the shortest possible time;
- protect the dignity, rights, physical safety and emotional wellbeing of pupils throughout any intervention;
- ensure staff who may use restrictive interventions receive appropriate accredited training and maintain their competence;
- develop and review individual risk assessments, Positive Support Plans and Individual Regulation Plans where restrictive intervention is reasonably foreseeable;
- record, report and review significant restrictive interventions in accordance with statutory requirements;
- inform and work collaboratively with parents and carers following significant incidents;
- treat inappropriate, excessive or disproportionate restrictive intervention as a safeguarding concern;
- monitor patterns and trends to identify opportunities for improved support and organisational learning;
- continually seek to reduce the frequency, duration and restrictiveness of interventions across the school.

Through these commitments, we aim to ensure that restrictive physical intervention remains an exceptional measure of last resort and that every pupil is supported through approaches that strengthen communication, regulation, participation, safety and independence.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
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APPROVED BY: Governing Board

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Section 01

POSITIVE SUPPORT AND RESTRICTIVE PRACTICE

Prioritising prevention. Understanding need. Reducing restriction.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and therapeutic learning environment in which every pupil is supported to communicate, participate and achieve their potential.

As a specialist school for pupils with complex learning, communication, sensory, physical and medical needs, we recognise that some pupils may, on rare occasions, experience periods of significant dysregulation during which there is an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others. Our approach is founded on the understanding that behaviour communicates an underlying need and that adults have a responsibility to understand, support and reduce that need through proactive planning, effective communication and positive support.

Restrictive physical intervention is never viewed as a behaviour management strategy or a consequence for behaviour. It is a safety measure of last resort which may only be used where it is lawful, reasonable, necessary and proportionate to prevent serious harm or significant damage to property.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Relationships and Positive Support Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct.

This policy reflects the statutory guidance:

- Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force in schools (DfE, April 2026)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025.

At Riverside Bridge School, restrictive physical intervention forms one small part of a wider Positive Support approach. The emphasis throughout this policy is on prevention, communication, co-regulation, environmental adaptation, reasonable adjustments and proactive planning so that restrictive intervention becomes increasingly unnecessary.

Section 02

RATIONALE

Understanding behaviour. Reducing risk. Protecting wellbeing.

The safety, dignity and wellbeing of every pupil remain the school's highest priority.

The majority of pupils at Riverside Bridge School have complex Special Educational Needs and Disabilities which may affect communication, emotional regulation, sensory processing, understanding of risk and their ability to respond safely during periods of distress. Some pupils may therefore present with behaviours that place themselves or others at immediate risk of harm.

Our first responsibility is always to understand why behaviour is occurring and to respond in ways which reduce anxiety, increase predictability and support successful regulation.

The school therefore adopts a preventative model of Positive Support in which adults seek to:

- understand the function and meaning of behaviour;
- adapt environments to reduce barriers;
- provide accessible communication;
- teach regulation and coping strategies;
- promote independence;
- reduce known triggers;
- develop trusting relationships;
- use co-regulation before considering restrictive intervention.

Restrictive physical intervention must never be used because a pupil refuses an instruction, damages relationships, displays distress, or as a punishment or deterrent.

Restrictive intervention may only be considered where there is an immediate and genuine risk of:

- injury to the pupil;
- injury to another person;
- serious damage to property where this presents a risk to safety;
- committing a criminal offence where intervention is necessary to prevent harm.

Where restrictive intervention is required, staff will always seek to:

- use the least restrictive option available;
- use the minimum force for the shortest possible time;
- preserve the pupil's dignity;
- continually assess whether intervention remains necessary;
- end the intervention immediately once the risk has reduced.

Following every significant incident, the focus returns to learning rather than blame. Staff will review the circumstances surrounding the incident, identify any unmet needs or environmental factors and consider whether additional support, reasonable adjustments or amendments to the pupil's Positive Support Plan, Individual Regulation Plan or risk assessment are required.

The school recognises that reducing restrictive interventions depends upon continually improving practice. Incident analysis therefore forms part of the work of the Positive Support Team and contributes to individual planning, staff development, safeguarding oversight and whole-school quality assurance.

Section 03

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

Maintaining safety. Preserving dignity. Using least restriction.

At Riverside Bridge School, the welfare, safety and dignity of every pupil are central to all decisions relating to restrictive intervention.

We expect all staff to promote a culture in which positive relationships, effective communication and proactive support reduce the likelihood that restrictive intervention will ever be required.

Restrictive physical intervention must always be:

- lawful;
- reasonable;
- necessary;
- proportionate;
- the least restrictive option available;
- used for the shortest possible time;
- carried out in a manner that preserves the dignity, safety and wellbeing of everyone involved.

The school expects all staff to:

- understand each pupil's individual communication profile, sensory needs and regulation needs;
- implement Positive Support Plans, Individual Regulation Plans and risk assessments consistently;
- use preventative strategies and co-regulation before considering restrictive intervention wherever it is safe to do so;
- continually assess whether intervention remains necessary throughout any incident;
- stop the intervention immediately once the risk has reduced;
- report, record and review every significant restrictive intervention in accordance with statutory requirements;
- participate in reflective practice and post-incident learning.

Prevention

The most effective restrictive intervention is the one that never becomes necessary.

The school therefore prioritises prevention through:

- positive and trusting relationships;
- total communication approaches, including AAC, symbols, signing and visual supports;

- structured teaching and predictable routines through BridgeWorks;
- appropriate curriculum planning;
- sensory regulation and environmental adaptations;
- co-regulation and emotional support;
- individual Positive Support Plans and Individual Regulation Plans;
- proactive risk assessments;
- appropriate staffing levels;
- therapeutic advice from Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Educational Psychology and other professionals;
- partnership working with parents and carers;
- regular review of behaviour patterns and incident data.

Staff are expected to recognise the early indicators that a pupil may be becoming dysregulated and intervene at the earliest opportunity using agreed preventative strategies.

Restrictive Intervention as a last resort

Restrictive intervention must only be considered where there is an immediate risk of harm that cannot safely be managed through less restrictive measures.

Staff should always consider:

- whether additional time would reduce the risk;
- whether changing the environment would reduce the risk;
- whether communication can be adapted;
- whether another trusted adult should take over;
- whether increasing personal space would reduce anxiety;
- whether removing other pupils from the area would be safer than restraining the pupil.

Only where these approaches are not sufficient, or where circumstances make them impracticable because of the immediate level of risk, should restrictive physical intervention be used.

Definition of a significant incident

For the purposes of this policy, a significant incident is any incident in which force or another restrictive intervention goes beyond ordinary, everyday physical contact such as guiding, comforting, prompting or providing first aid.

This includes incidents involving restrictive physical intervention; restraint; seclusion; restrictive interventions without physical force; any other intervention meeting the threshold set out within the Department for Education statutory guidance. All significant incidents must be recorded, reported, reviewed and monitored in accordance with this policy and current statutory requirements.

Section 04

REASONABLE RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Assessing risk. Acting proportionately. Ending restriction promptly.

At Riverside Bridge School, physical contact is often an important and appropriate part of supporting pupils. Many pupils require physical guidance, assistance with personal care, moving and handling, therapy programmes, reassurance or support to access learning safely. Such contact is not considered restrictive physical intervention.

Restrictive physical intervention occurs when reasonable force is used to prevent a pupil from causing harm to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, or causing significant damage to property where there is an associated risk to safety. The use of restrictive physical intervention must always be:

- lawful;
- reasonable;
- necessary;
- proportionate to the level of risk presented;
- the least restrictive option available;
- used for the shortest possible time;
- continually reviewed throughout the incident.

Restrictive physical intervention must never be used as a punishment, to secure compliance with an instruction, because a pupil refuses to participate, or simply because behaviour is difficult to manage.

Circumstances where restrictive physical intervention may be used

Restrictive physical intervention may only be used where staff reasonably believe it is necessary to prevent:

- injury to the pupil;
- injury to another pupil, member of staff or another person;
- serious damage to property where this presents a risk to safety;
- the commission of a criminal offence;
- behaviour which is placing the good order and safety of the school at immediate risk and where no less restrictive option is available.

Staff must always balance the foreseeable risks of intervening against the foreseeable risks of not intervening.

Decision making during an incident

Before using restrictive physical intervention, wherever circumstances allow, staff should consider:

- whether additional communication or processing time may reduce the risk;
- whether co-regulation strategies remain appropriate;
- whether environmental changes could reduce the likelihood of harm;
- whether another trusted adult could support the pupil more effectively;
- whether other pupils can safely be moved away from the situation;
- whether the identified risk is immediate and significant.

Once restrictive physical intervention has commenced, staff must continually assess whether it remains necessary. The intervention must stop immediately once the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

Principles for safe practice

Where restrictive physical intervention is necessary, staff will:

- use the minimum force necessary;
- avoid causing pain wherever possible;
- protect the dignity of the pupil;
- communicate calmly and respectfully throughout the incident;
- monitor the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing continuously;
- summon assistance where appropriate;
- end the intervention as soon as it is safe to do so.

Only restrictive intervention techniques that form part of the school's current accredited TeamTeach training programme and which staff have been trained and authorised to use may be used.

Acceptable physical intervention

Examples of reasonable physical intervention may include:

- guiding or escorting a pupil safely;
- blocking a pupil's path where necessary to prevent immediate harm;
- separating pupils involved in physical aggression;
- removing a dangerous object where this can be done safely;
- disengagement techniques to protect staff or pupils from injury;
- restrictive intervention techniques taught through the school's current accredited TeamTeach programme where all other appropriate options have been exhausted or are not reasonably practicable.

These examples are not exhaustive. Every incident will depend upon the individual circumstances and the professional judgement of staff at the time.

Withdrawal and recovery

The school recognises that many pupils may require supported withdrawal from busy, demanding or overstimulating environments as part of their planned communication, sensory or emotional regulation support.

Where a pupil remains free to leave the area and the purpose of the withdrawal is to support regulation, wellbeing or access to learning rather than to restrict the pupil's liberty, this does not normally constitute seclusion or a restrictive intervention.

Supported withdrawal should always be delivered in accordance with the pupil's individual needs and may form part of a Positive Support Plan, Individual Regulation Plan or other agreed support strategy.

Where staff intentionally prevent a pupil from leaving an area for non-disciplinary reasons in order to manage an immediate risk of harm, this constitutes seclusion as defined within current Department for Education guidance and must only be used where it is lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate. Any such intervention must be managed, recorded and reviewed in accordance with this policy.

Staff safety

The school recognises that staff have a duty of care towards pupils but are not expected to place themselves at unreasonable risk of injury.

Where physical intervention would place a member of staff at unacceptable risk, staff should seek assistance, remove other pupils from danger where possible and follow the school's emergency procedures.

Following any incident involving restrictive physical intervention, staff will receive appropriate support, debrief and supervision in accordance with this policy.

Section 05

UNWARRANTED OR PROHIBITED RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Preventing misuse. Protecting rights. Maintaining dignity

Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that all pupils are treated with dignity, respect and compassion. Any restrictive intervention that is excessive, unnecessary, punitive or likely to cause avoidable pain or distress is prohibited.

Staff must never use restrictive physical intervention as:

- a punishment;
- a consequence for inappropriate behaviour;
- a means of securing compliance where there is no immediate risk of harm;
- a response to verbal abuse, refusal or non-compliance alone;
- a demonstration of authority or control;
- retaliation or frustration.

Any use of force must always be objectively reasonable, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances at the time.

Prohibited practices

The following practices must never be used except where explicitly permitted by law in exceptional life-threatening circumstances:

- corporal punishment;
- deliberately inflicting pain to secure compliance;
- striking, punching, kicking or slapping a pupil;
- pulling a pupil by their hair or ears;
- holding or pulling a pupil by the neck or collar;
- restricting, obstructing or interfering with a pupil's breathing;
- placing pressure on a pupil's neck, throat, chest, abdomen or back;
- forcing limbs against joints or applying pressure to joints;
- forcing a pupil into a face-down (prone) restraint;
- sitting, kneeling or otherwise placing body weight on a pupil;
- using physical intervention in a manner that humiliates, intimidates or degrades a pupil;
- using any intervention that is not taught within the school's current accredited TeamTeach training programme unless required in an unforeseeable emergency to prevent immediate serious harm.

Seclusion

The school recognises that seclusion is a highly restrictive intervention and will only be used in exceptional circumstances where it is lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate to prevent an immediate risk of harm. The school does not operate planned or routine seclusion.

Seclusion must never be used as a punishment or behaviour management strategy.

Where a pupil's liberty is restricted by preventing them from leaving an area for reasons of immediate safety, this will only occur in accordance with this policy, the statutory guidance and the school's safeguarding procedures.

Any use of seclusion must:

- be necessary to prevent immediate harm;
- be continuously supervised;
- end immediately once the risk has reduced;
- be fully recorded and reported in accordance with statutory requirements.

Searches

Restrictive physical intervention must not be used solely for the purpose of carrying out a search of a pupil or their belongings. Where a search is considered necessary, staff will act in accordance with the current Department for Education guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation. Any use of force during a search must be lawful, reasonable, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances, and only used where permitted by legislation and statutory guidance. The safety, dignity and welfare of the pupil will remain paramount throughout any search. Searches will be carried out with due regard to the pupil's age, understanding, communication needs, special educational needs and disabilities, and any known medical or sensory needs. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure the search is conducted safely and respectfully. Where the use of force during a search results in a significant restrictive intervention, the incident will be recorded, reported and reviewed in accordance with this policy.

Safeguarding concerns

Any restrictive intervention that appears unnecessary, excessive, disproportionate or inconsistent with this policy will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Such incidents will be reported immediately to the Headteacher or designated safeguarding lead and managed in accordance with:

- the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- the school's staff disciplinary procedures, where appropriate;
- statutory safeguarding procedures.

The welfare of the pupil will remain the school's primary consideration throughout any investigation.

Section 06

RISK ASSESSMENT, POSITIVE SUPPORT PLANNING & INDIVIDUAL REGULATION PLANS

Anticipating risk. Planning proactively. Reducing restriction.

At Riverside Bridge School, the need for restrictive physical intervention should be anticipated wherever reasonably foreseeable. Proactive assessment and planning enable staff to understand individual needs, reduce foreseeable risks and minimise the likelihood that restrictive intervention will become necessary. Where a pupil presents with behaviours that may place themselves or others at risk of harm, an individual risk assessment will be completed alongside a Positive Support Plan and, where appropriate, an Individual Regulation Plan.

The purpose of assessment and planning is not to predict behaviour, but to understand the circumstances that increase risk, identify proactive strategies and ensure that the least restrictive approaches are consistently implemented.

Risk assessment

Risk assessments will be person-centred and proportionate to the level of identified risk.
They will consider:

- the pupil's strengths, communication profile and protective factors;
- known triggers, antecedents and patterns of behaviour;
- sensory processing differences;
- medical conditions that may influence behaviour or increase risk during intervention;
- physical disabilities or mobility needs;
- previous incidents and identified learning;
- environmental factors;
- staffing levels and staff competence;
- risks to the pupil, other pupils, staff and visitors;
- the foreseeable risks of intervening and of not intervening;
- reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010.

Risk assessments will clearly identify preventative strategies, early intervention approaches and any circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention may become necessary.

Positive Support Plans

Positive Support Plans form part of the school's graduated approach to supporting communication, participation, emotional regulation and learning. They are designed to reduce barriers, promote independence and minimise the likelihood that restrictive physical intervention will ever become necessary.

Positive Support Plans are proactive, person-centred documents that focus on understanding the reasons behind behaviour and identifying strategies that enable pupils to regulate safely and participate successfully.

Restrictive physical intervention is never the purpose of a Positive Support Plan. Where its use is identified as a foreseeable possibility, it will only form one element of a wider proactive plan aimed at reducing future reliance on restrictive practices.

Positive Support Plans will normally include:

- the pupil's strengths and protective factors;
- communication strategies;
- environmental adaptations;
- preferred methods of co-regulation;
- sensory supports;
- proactive strategies to reduce anxiety;
- known early indicators of dysregulation;
- agreed responses for staff;
- post-incident recovery strategies;
- arrangements for monitoring and review.

Positive Support Plans will be developed collaboratively with parents or carers and, where appropriate, with therapists and other professionals to ensure consistency across environments.

Individual Regulation Plans

Where appropriate, Individual Regulation Plans will identify personalised strategies that support the pupil to recognise, communicate and manage their emotional regulation.

These plans complement, rather than replace, Positive Support Plans and risk assessments and provide staff with consistent approaches for supporting regulation throughout the school day.

Multi-disciplinary planning

Risk assessments, Positive Support Plans and Individual Regulation Plans may be developed or reviewed in collaboration with:

- parents and carers;
- the Positive Support Team;
- Speech and Language Therapists;
- Occupational Therapists;
- Educational Psychologists;
- healthcare professionals;
- social workers;
- other relevant professionals.

Where concerns remain significant or incidents become more frequent or complex, the matter may be referred to the school's Communication, Participation and Regulation (CPR) Panel to consider additional assessment, intervention or support.

Review

Risk assessments, Positive Support Plans and Individual Regulation Plans will be reviewed:

- following any significant restrictive intervention;
- where new risks emerge;
- following significant changes in presentation or circumstances;
- after advice from external professionals;
- following changes to medical needs;
- at least annually as part of the school's ongoing review processes.

The purpose of every review is to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies;
- identify opportunities to strengthen communication, environmental and sensory support;
- reduce reliance on restrictive intervention wherever possible;
- ensure support remains proportionate, person-centred and responsive to the pupil's changing needs.

The school is committed to continually reviewing its practice to reduce restrictive interventions through improved understanding, proactive planning and collaborative working with families and professionals.

Section 07

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Assessing rapidly. Acting safely. Using least restriction.

The safety and welfare of pupils, staff and visitors is the school's highest priority. In rare and unforeseen circumstances, staff may need to make immediate decisions to prevent serious harm where there is insufficient time to implement planned preventative strategies.

Emergency situations require staff to exercise professional judgement based on the information available at the time, whilst continuing to act lawfully, reasonably, necessarily and proportionately.

Responding to an emergency

Where an immediate and significant risk of harm exists, staff should:

- remain calm and communicate clearly;
- assess the nature and seriousness of the risk;
- summon assistance where practicable;
- use de-escalation and co-regulation strategies where time and circumstances allow;
- consider whether other pupils or adults can be moved to safety;
- use the least restrictive intervention necessary to prevent harm;
- continually assess whether the intervention remains necessary.

Any restrictive intervention used in an emergency must cease as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

Unplanned restrictive intervention

Whilst the school places significant emphasis on proactive planning, it is recognised that not every situation can be anticipated.

Where restrictive physical intervention becomes necessary in circumstances not identified within an existing Positive Support Plan or risk assessment, staff may use reasonable force where it is lawful to do so in order to prevent immediate harm.

Following such an incident:

- the incident will be fully recorded;
- parents or carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable;
- the incident will be reviewed by senior leaders;
- risk assessments and Positive Support Plans will be updated where appropriate;
- additional training or support for staff will be considered where required.

Medical emergency

If, during or immediately following a restrictive intervention, there are any concerns regarding a pupil's physical wellbeing, staff will seek immediate medical assistance.

Emergency services will be contacted without delay where a pupil:

- experiences difficulty breathing;
- loses consciousness;
- has a seizure where this is unexpected or prolonged;
- sustains a significant injury;
- becomes unresponsive;
- displays any other signs of medical distress.

Staff will continue to monitor the pupil until appropriate medical support arrives.

Dynamic risk assessment

Throughout any emergency, staff are expected to undertake a continual dynamic risk assessment.

This includes considering:

- whether the level of risk has changed;
- whether the intervention remains necessary;
- whether a less restrictive option has become available;
- whether additional assistance has arrived;
- whether it is now safe to end the intervention.

The use of restrictive intervention must never continue simply because it has already begun.

Learning following an emergency

Every emergency incident involving restrictive intervention provides an opportunity for learning.

Following the incident, the school will review:

- the circumstances leading to the incident;
- whether earlier preventative strategies could have been implemented;
- whether communication or environmental adjustments are required;
- whether further staff training is needed;
- whether amendments are required to the pupil's Positive Support Plan, Individual Regulation Plan or risk assessment;
- whether wider organisational learning should be shared across the school.

The objective of every review is to reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring in the future and to continually reduce the need for restrictive intervention.

Section 08

SECLUSION

Restricting only when necessary. Protecting safety and dignity.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to using the least restrictive practices necessary to keep pupils and others safe. The school recognises that preventing a pupil from leaving an area is a highly restrictive intervention and must only occur in exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to prevent immediate harm.

The school does not operate planned or routine seclusion. Any use of seclusion is an exceptional safety measure used only to manage an immediate risk of harm and will end as soon as that risk has reduced.

Seclusion must never be used as a punishment, a behaviour management strategy, for staff convenience, or because a pupil refuses to comply with instructions.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, seclusion is the supervised confinement of a pupil in a room or area where they are prevented from leaving.

This includes situations where:

- a door is locked or otherwise secured;
-
- staff physically prevent a pupil from leaving;
- a pupil is prevented from leaving through the positioning of staff;
- any other restriction results in the pupil being unable to leave freely.

The school recognises that seclusion represents a significant restriction of liberty and will only be used where lawful, necessary and proportionate.

When seclusion may be used

Seclusion may only be considered where:

- there is an immediate and significant risk of serious harm;
- other less restrictive strategies have been attempted where reasonably practicable or would clearly be ineffective;
- restrictive physical intervention alone would present a greater risk of harm;
- the intervention is necessary to protect the pupil or others;
- the period of seclusion is the shortest possible to manage the immediate risk.

The decision to use seclusion must be based on the individual circumstances of the incident and not on predetermined routines or blanket approaches.

Supervision during seclusion

A pupil who is secluded must never be left unsupervised.

During any period of seclusion:

- continuous observation must be maintained;
- staff must monitor the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing;
- communication and reassurance should continue wherever appropriate;
- staff must continually assess whether the seclusion remains necessary;
- the pupil must be permitted to leave immediately once the risk has reduced sufficiently.

Environment

Where seclusion is necessary, the environment must:

- protect the safety and dignity of the pupil;
- be free from avoidable hazards;
- allow continuous supervision;
- not expose the pupil to unnecessary distress;
- be appropriate for the pupil's age, needs and medical requirements.

The use of any room or space for seclusion must not compromise the safety of the pupil or others.

Recording and notification

Every incident involving seclusion will be treated as a significant restrictive intervention.

The school will:

- complete a full written record in accordance with statutory requirements;
- notify parents or carers as soon as reasonably practicable;
- review the circumstances leading to the incident;
- update the pupil's Positive Support Plan, Individual Regulation Plan and risk assessment where appropriate;
- consider whether referral to the Communication, Participation and Regulation (CPR) Panel is required.

Repeated use of seclusion for an individual pupil will trigger a formal review of the pupil's support arrangements and the effectiveness of current preventative strategies.

Reducing restrictive practice

The school is committed to continually reducing the need for restrictive practices.

Following any incident involving seclusion, consideration will be given to:

- changes to the environment;

- communication supports;
- sensory adaptations;
- curriculum adjustments;
- therapeutic advice;
- additional staff training;
- alternative proactive strategies that may reduce future risk.

The aim of every review is to reduce reliance on restrictive interventions whilst maintaining the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors.

Section 9

POST-INCIDENT SUPPORT AND REVIEW

Supporting recovery. Reflecting on practice. Learning from incidents.

Every restrictive intervention will be followed by a proportionate post-incident review. The purpose of the review is to support the wellbeing of everyone involved, identify learning, reduce future risk and continually reduce the need for restrictive intervention.

Post-incident support should be timely, reflective and focused on improving future practice rather than attributing blame.

Support for the Pupil

Following any restrictive intervention, the pupil will be supported to recover emotionally and physically. Where appropriate, this will include:

- checking for injury, pain or medical concerns;
- providing reassurance and co-regulation;
- allowing sufficient time for recovery before returning to learning;
- enabling the pupil to communicate their views using their preferred communication methods;
- restoring positive relationships with staff;
- identifying any changes required to communication, sensory or environmental support;
- ensuring the pupil understands that the intervention was used solely to maintain safety.

Support will be provided in a manner that reflects the pupil's age, communication profile, developmental stage and individual needs.

Support for staff

Restrictive interventions can be physically and emotionally demanding.

Following an incident, staff involved will receive appropriate support, which may include:

- an immediate wellbeing check;
- an opportunity to participate in a structured debrief;
- access to advice from senior leaders or the Positive Support Team;
- further coaching or refresher training where appropriate;
- access to occupational health or employee wellbeing services where required;
- ongoing support following particularly distressing incidents.

The purpose of staff debrief is to promote reflection, professional learning and wellbeing rather than criticism.

Support for other pupils

Where other pupils have witnessed or been affected by an incident, staff will consider whether additional support is required.

This may include:

- reassurance;
- opportunities to ask questions in an age-appropriate manner;
- emotional regulation support;
- temporary adjustments to the learning environment;
- additional therapeutic support where appropriate.

Parent and carer communication

Parents or carers will be informed of any significant restrictive intervention as soon as reasonably practicable, in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's recording procedures.

Communication should include:

- a factual account of the incident;
- why restrictive intervention became necessary;
- the type of intervention used;
- confirmation that the pupil is safe;
- any injury sustained by the pupil or others;
- immediate actions taken following the incident;
- any proposed changes to support or planning.

The school will work collaboratively with parents and carers to identify strategies that may reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

Reflective review

Every significant restrictive intervention will be reviewed to determine:

- whether the intervention was lawful, reasonable, necessary and proportionate;
- whether less restrictive options could have been used;
- whether communication strategies were effective;
- whether environmental or sensory factors contributed;
- whether staffing arrangements were appropriate;
- whether additional professional advice is required;
- whether the Positive Support Plan, Individual Regulation Plan or risk assessment requires amendment;
- what learning can be shared to improve future practice.

Reviews should focus on improving support and reducing restrictive practice wherever possible.

Organisational learning

The school is committed to developing a culture of continuous improvement.

Information gathered from post-incident reviews will be used to:

- identify emerging patterns and trends;
- evaluate the effectiveness of Positive Support Plans;
- inform staff training and professional development;
- improve risk assessment processes;
- review environmental and organisational factors;
- support quality assurance and governance;
- contribute to the school's ongoing strategy to reduce restrictive intervention.

Where repeated or complex incidents occur, the case may be referred to the Communication, Participation and Regulation (CPR) Panel for further multidisciplinary review.

Section 10

RECORDING, REPORTING AND MONITORING

Recording accurately. Reporting transparently. Identifying patterns.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to maintaining accurate records of all significant restrictive interventions. Recording supports safeguarding, accountability, reflective practice and the continual reduction of restrictive interventions across the school.
All records will be completed promptly, accurately and objectively.

Recording requirements
Every significant restrictive intervention, including any incident involving restraint or seclusion, must be recorded as soon as reasonably practicable after the incident.
Records should be factual and avoid opinion or unnecessary subjective language.

The written record will normally include:

- the date, time and location of the incident;
- the names of the pupil and staff involved;
- any witnesses;
- the circumstances immediately preceding the incident;
- the identified risks that made intervention necessary;
- preventative and de-escalation strategies attempted before intervention;
- the type of restrictive intervention used;
- the duration of the intervention;
- whether any injury or medical concern occurred;
- any first aid or medical treatment provided;
- the pupil's presentation following the incident;
- actions taken immediately afterwards;
- whether parents or carers were informed;
- any follow-up actions required;
- whether the pupil's Positive Support Plan, Individual Regulation Plan or risk assessment requires review.

Where appropriate, the pupil's views should also be sought using communication methods appropriate to their individual needs.

Reporting to parents and carers

Parents or carers will be informed of any significant restrictive intervention as soon as reasonably practicable.

Information shared should include:

- the reason the intervention became necessary;
- the nature of the intervention;
- confirmation of the pupil's wellbeing following the incident;
- details of any injury sustained by the pupil or others;
- any proposed follow-up actions or review arrangements.

The school will ensure communication is timely, factual and supportive.

Monitoring

Senior leaders will monitor restrictive intervention records regularly to identify:

- patterns involving individual pupils;
- trends across classes or departments;
- repeated use of restrictive interventions;
- repeated use of seclusion;
- injuries to pupils or staff;
- environmental or organisational factors;
- training needs;
- opportunities to reduce restrictive practice.

Where monitoring identifies emerging concerns, appropriate action will be taken, which may include:

- reviewing Positive Support Plans;
- updating Individual Regulation Plans;
- revising risk assessments;
- additional staff coaching or TeamTeach refresher training;
- seeking advice from external professionals;
- referral to the Communication, Participation and Regulation (CPR) Panel.

Quality Assurance

The Headteacher, or an appropriately delegated senior leader, will undertake regular quality assurance of restrictive intervention records to ensure:

- statutory recording requirements have been met;
- interventions remain lawful, reasonable, necessary and proportionate;

- appropriate follow-up actions have been completed;
- lessons have been identified and implemented;
- the school continues to reduce reliance on restrictive intervention.

Monitoring information may be reported to governors in anonymised form to support strategic oversight of safeguarding, pupil welfare and staff training.

Confidentiality

All records relating to restrictive interventions will be managed in accordance with:

- the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- the Data Protection Act 2018;
- the school's Data Protection Policy;
- the school's Record Retention Schedule;
- relevant safeguarding requirements.

Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to know.

Section 11

STAFF TRAINING AND COMPETENCE

Building knowledge. Maintaining competence. Strengthening practice.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that all staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to support pupils safely while promoting positive relationships, effective communication and the reduction of restrictive practice. Training is viewed as an ongoing process of professional development rather than a one-off event. Staff are expected to maintain their competence through regular training, reflective practice and the consistent implementation of the school's Positive Support approaches.

Mandatory Training

Staff who may be required to use restrictive physical intervention will receive appropriate accredited training before being expected to undertake such responsibilities. Training will normally include:

- the legal framework governing restrictive intervention;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- understanding behaviour as communication;
- communication and co-regulation strategies;
- de-escalation techniques;
- dynamic risk assessment;
- safe restrictive intervention techniques appropriate to the school's accredited TeamTeach programme;
- reducing restrictive practice;
- recording and reporting requirements;
- post-incident support and reflective practice;
- maintaining the dignity, rights and wellbeing of pupils.

Staff will only use techniques that they have been trained and authorised to use, except in unforeseeable emergency situations where reasonable force is necessary to prevent immediate serious harm.

Refresher training

Accredited training will be refreshed at appropriate intervals to maintain competence and ensure that practice reflects current legislation, statutory guidance and recognised best practice.

Additional training or coaching may be provided where:

- a member of staff requests further support;
- monitoring identifies training needs;

- new responsibilities are introduced;
- practice requires improvement;
- following significant or complex incidents.

Staff responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- implement Positive Support Plans, Individual Regulation Plans and risk assessments consistently;
- use preventative and de-escalation strategies before considering restrictive intervention wherever it is safe to do so;
- maintain professional judgement throughout any incident;
- report and record incidents accurately;
- participate honestly in post-incident reviews;
- contribute to reflective practice and continuous improvement;
- seek advice or support where they are uncertain about any aspect of restrictive intervention.

Staff must never attempt to use techniques outside the scope of their training unless immediate action is required to prevent serious harm and no trained alternative is reasonably available.

Leadership responsibilities

Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring:

- appropriate accredited training is available;
- training records remain accurate and up to date;
- only appropriately trained staff are expected to use restrictive intervention techniques;
- incidents are reviewed to identify learning and training needs;
- newly appointed staff receive appropriate induction;
- regular monitoring informs future professional development;
- the school continues to reduce reliance on restrictive intervention through high-quality practice.

Professional reflection

Following significant restrictive interventions, staff may participate in reflective discussions, coaching or supervision to:

- reinforce good practice;
- identify opportunities for improvement;
- share learning across teams;
- support staff wellbeing;
- continually strengthen the school's Positive Support culture.

Reflection is intended to promote professional learning and continual improvement and should not be viewed as a disciplinary process unless concerns regarding professional conduct arise.

Section 12

MONITORING, GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Evaluating practice. Providing oversight. Reducing restriction.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to continually reducing the use of restrictive intervention through effective leadership, quality assurance and evidence-informed practice.
Monitoring is undertaken not only to ensure legal compliance but also to improve outcomes for pupils, support staff development and identify opportunities to strengthen preventative practice.

Leadership oversight

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that restrictive interventions within the school are lawful, proportionate and consistent with this policy.
Responsibility may be delegated to appropriately trained senior leaders for the purposes of operational monitoring and quality assurance.
Senior leaders will ensure that:

- restrictive interventions remain a measure of last resort;
- incidents are reviewed promptly and consistently;
- statutory recording and reporting requirements are met;
- appropriate support is provided to pupils and staff following incidents;
- Positive Support Plans, Individual Regulation Plans and risk assessments are reviewed where required;
- lessons learned are translated into improvements in practice.

Quality assurance

The school will regularly review restrictive intervention records to evaluate:

- the frequency and type of restrictive interventions used;
- patterns involving individual pupils;
- trends across classes, pathways or departments;
- repeated incidents involving the same pupils or staff;
- use of seclusion;
- injuries sustained by pupils or staff;
- effectiveness of preventative strategies;
- compliance with recording requirements;

- opportunities to reduce restrictive practice.

Where concerns or trends are identified, senior leaders will take appropriate action to address them.

Data analysis

Restrictive intervention data will be analysed alongside other relevant information, including:

- behaviour and incident records;
- safeguarding information;
- attendance data;
- communication and regulation needs;
- risk assessments;
- staff training records;
- advice from therapists and other professionals.

This information will be used to identify patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and inform strategic decision-making.

Governance

The Governing Board will receive regular anonymised reports regarding restrictive intervention.

Reports may include:

- overall numbers of restrictive interventions;
- trends over time;
- use of seclusion;
- injuries to pupils or staff;
- training compliance;
- significant themes arising from monitoring;
- actions taken to reduce restrictive practice.

Governors will use this information to provide appropriate challenge and assurance that statutory duties are being met and that pupils' rights, welfare and dignity remain central to school practice.

Continuous improvement

The school is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Information gathered through monitoring, quality assurance, staff reflection and governance will be used to:

- strengthen Positive Support practice;
- improve communication approaches;
- develop staff confidence and competence;
- review environmental adaptations;

- improve risk assessment processes;
- inform policy development;
- reduce the future use of restrictive intervention.

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school practice make this necessary.

Section 13

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sharing responsibility. Maintaining accountability. Protecting pupils.

The safe and lawful use of restrictive intervention is a shared responsibility. All members of the school community have a role in promoting positive relationships, reducing restrictive practice and ensuring that pupils are supported with dignity, respect and compassion.

Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that:

- the school has an appropriate policy for restrictive physical intervention that reflects current legislation and statutory guidance;
- appropriate governance and oversight arrangements are in place;
- restrictive intervention is monitored through regular anonymised reports;
- leaders are held accountable for reducing restrictive practice and promoting positive support approaches;
- sufficient resources are available to enable staff training and implementation of this policy; and
- statutory duties relating to safeguarding, equality and health and safety are fulfilled.

Headteacher

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and will ensure that:
- restrictive intervention is only used lawfully, reasonably, necessarily and proportionately;
- a culture of positive relationships, communication and proactive support is promoted throughout the school;
- appropriate systems are in place for recording, monitoring and reviewing incidents;
- staff receive appropriate training and ongoing professional development;
- significant incidents are reviewed and appropriate action taken;
- parents and carers are appropriately informed following significant restrictive interventions;
- governors receive regular monitoring information;
- the school continually seeks to reduce the use of restrictive intervention through quality assurance and service improvement.

Senior Leadership Team

Senior leaders are responsible for:

- promoting consistent implementation of this policy;

- supporting staff during and following incidents;
- reviewing restrictive intervention records;
- monitoring trends and identifying areas for improvement;
- ensuring Positive Support Plans, Individual Regulation Plans and risk assessments are reviewed where appropriate;
- facilitating post-incident reflection and organisational learning;
- ensuring safeguarding procedures are followed where concerns arise.

Positive Support Team

The Positive Support Team will:

- provide advice and guidance regarding proactive support strategies;
- assist with the development and review of Positive Support Plans;
- support staff in implementing preventative approaches;
- contribute to post-incident reviews where appropriate;
- identify opportunities to reduce restrictive intervention;
- work collaboratively with therapists, families and other professionals to improve outcomes for pupils.

TeamTeach Instructors

Accredited TeamTeach Instructors are responsible for:

- delivering and maintaining accredited training programmes;
- supporting staff to develop safe and effective practice;
- providing refresher training where required;
- advising senior leaders following significant incidents where appropriate;
- maintaining awareness of current TeamTeach guidance and developments;
- promoting approaches that minimise the need for restrictive intervention.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- treating pupils with dignity, respect and compassion at all times;
- building positive, trusting relationships with pupils;
- understanding that behaviour communicates an underlying need;
- implementing Positive Support Plans, Individual Regulation Plans and risk assessments consistently;
- using communication, environmental adaptations, co-regulation and de-escalation strategies before considering restrictive intervention wherever it is safe to do so;

- only using restrictive intervention when it is lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate;
- only using techniques for which they have received appropriate training, except where immediate action is required to prevent serious harm;
- reporting and recording incidents promptly and accurately;
- participating in post-incident reviews and reflective practice;
- seeking support where additional guidance or training is required.

Parents and Carers

The school values the important role of parents and carers in promoting consistent support for pupils. Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- work in partnership with the school to support their child's communication and regulation needs;
- contribute to the development and review of Positive Support Plans where appropriate;
- share information that may assist staff in understanding changes in their child's presentation;
- attend review meetings where requested;
- work collaboratively with the school to identify strategies that reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention.

Multi-disciplinary professionals

Where appropriate, therapists, healthcare professionals, educational psychologists, social workers and other professionals will contribute to assessment, planning and review processes to ensure that support remains evidence-informed, person-centred and proportionate.

Section 14

RELATED POLICIES & STATUTORY GUIDANCE

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy has been developed with regard to current legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice relating to safeguarding, pupil welfare, restrictive intervention and the use of reasonable force.

Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with, but is not limited to, the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

Statutory guidance

This policy has been informed by the following statutory guidance and national publications:

- Department for Education. *Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions in Schools* (April 2026).
- Department for Education. *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (current edition).
- Department for Education. *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (where relevant to safeguarding responsibilities).
- HM Government. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2026).
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission. *Technical Guidance for Schools*.

Related school policies

This policy should be read alongside the following Riverside Bridge School policies and procedures:

- Positive Support Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Educational Visits Policy (where restrictive intervention may be required off-site)

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance or school practice make this necessary.