

The Meadows School



Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

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1. Introduction

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. This policy aims to help The Meadows proactively minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and when necessary, to help school staff feel more confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

The policy is aligned with the school's legal duties, including obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and requirements for recording and reporting incidents where staff use force or seclusion on a pupil.

The policy clearly sets out the circumstances in which staff may use reasonable force and seclusion and the procedures for recording and reporting such incidents.

Communicating the school's policy on the use of restrictive interventions to all members of the community is an important way of building and maintaining the school's culture and makes expectations transparent to all.

2. Related Documentation

The DfE guidance 'Restrictive Physical Interventions, including use of Reasonable Force, in schools' 2026 is the principle source of information for this policy.

The principal legislation to which this policy relates are:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Equality Act 2010

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies inclusive of but not limited to:

- the Behaviour Policy
- the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- the Health and Safety Policy

3. Terminology

For clarity, this policy will use the following definitions:

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the

umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

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

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in Section 7: 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this policy. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

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

4. 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. damaging property

4. causing disorder among pupils at school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. The school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have made the decision to use The Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) 'Safety Intervention Programme' as the formal training provision, based on the school's individual context and needs. CPI Safety Intervention is The SLT believe the philosophy of CPI reflects the values of The Meadows School. CPI Safety Intervention is accredited by Bild Association of Certified Training.

CPI Values and Philosophy

CARE

Respect, dignity, empathy, person-centered



WELFARE

Maintaining independence, choice and well-being



SAFETY

Protecting rights and minimising harm



SECURITY

Safe, effective, harmonious and collaborative relationships



Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Therefore, at The Meadows, we carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

The majority of staff who work with students that present challenging behaviours receive a two-day course of Safety Intervention training at Foundation Level. Some staff who work in classes which require more advanced and emergency interventions, complete a further Safety Intervention two-day course. Both at the Foundation Level and the Advanced/Emergency Level, staff members must undertake a one-day annual refresher to remain certified by CPI.

5. Use of reasonable force to search pupils

The Head teacher and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect

that the pupil may have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only.

6. Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. A small number of pupils may require interventions at an Advanced level which includes ground-level restraint. If a pupil is held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

7. Other physical contact with pupils

The Meadows does not have a 'no contact' policy. Additionally, The Meadows will not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils. The Meadows' SLT allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to deliver intimate care
- to administer first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- to comfort a distressed pupil

- to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:

- the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - the school's Personal and Intimate Care Policy
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
 - the individual pupil's SEND and developmental age.

8. Seclusion

Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on Section 13 'Recording and reporting duties'.

Seclusion, as defined in this policy, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom

9. Minimising the need to use restrictive interventions

As much as possible, strategies to prevent and de-escalate must be deployed effectively to minimising the need to use restrictive interventions. Such strategies can be whole-school measures as well as tailored approaches for individual pupils.

Whole-school measures include:

- consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive
- sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds
- training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

Individual approaches can include:

- working closely with parents to support individual pupils
- strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs).
 - giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates

10. Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

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

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.

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

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations. CPI Safety Intervention Training on the use of

restrictive interventions equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It also helps staff understand how to assess whether their response is reasonable under pressure.

If an assessment has been made to use restrictive interventions, staff should be supported in their decision making.

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

Some pupils at The Meadows may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

At The Meadows staff seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support and create an inclusive environment.

The SLT 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. Staff also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies include:

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

Where appropriate, school staff work with pupils with and their parents in the co-production of any necessary BSPs. BSPs outline any adjustments, such as

to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively.

BSPs detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. They are discussed in conjunction with the relevant people, such as teachers, parents, the pupil, the Student Support Team (SST), the Pastoral Team or health professionals, and parameters around its use stated clearly in the plan. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, BSPs include control measures to mitigate risks such as prevention strategies. Whether the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a BSP.

Teachers and the SST review all BSPs with parents periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil.

A BSP is a tool to enable a student to fully participate in the education provided by The Meadows, and that they can enjoy the benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for all its students.

12. Pupil and staff support

The SST 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 future, for example by amending or introducing a BSP.

If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Incidents in which a member of staff uses reasonable force or seclusion on a pupil must be recorded as described in Section 13 'Recording and reporting duties' in this policy. In addition, any injuries should be recorded in accordance with The Meadows' procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

At The Meadows, following an incident, the SST will hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation is framed as part of the overall debriefing process and looks to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and if appropriate,

pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships. By engaging in this process, schools can foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Staff will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

13. Recording and reporting duties

Recording the use of force

The Meadows' SLT ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil – namely the cloud-based SLEUTH platform. Incidents must be recorded on SLEUTH 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. The requirement to record applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's BSP.

The SLEUTH platform ensures staff record the following details:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- 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-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.
 - when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.
 - what follow-up has taken place.

Reporting the use of force

The Meadows' SLT ensure staff report each significant use of force to the parents of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

An exception to this requirement is where it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

A record of the report made to parents must be recorded on CPOMS (The Meadows' cloud-based Safeguarding platform) and must include the following details 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 any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

The requirement to report applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's BSP.

Where appropriate, staff will invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident. This could involve a discussion about:

- any 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

Staff may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

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

An incident of restraint may occur without direct physical contact, for example, the removal of a walking aid.

The Meadows' SLT ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each seclusion or restraint incident without direct physical contact – namely the cloud-based SLEUTH platform. Incidents must be recorded on SLEUTH 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. The requirement to record applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's BSP.

The SLEUTH platform ensures staff record the following details:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Parents will receive a copy of the SLEUTH record of the seclusion or restraint incident.

Parents must be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and schools should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

The Meadows' SLT ensure staff report each use of seclusion and non-force related restraint to the parents of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

An exception to this requirement is where it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

Where appropriate, staff will invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident. This could involve a discussion about:

- any 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

Staff may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

14. The role of The Meadows' governing body

The governing body of The Meadows will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with.

The governing body will regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to ensure the SLT:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics or other types of vulnerability.

The governing body will consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis will be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of people.