

Oakfield Primary School



Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force Policy

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS	
POLICY TO BE REVIEWED	September 2027

1. Introduction

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. Within our setting, our strategies and practice are encompassed within a framework of shared and consistent principles based on person-centred values within a commitment to a reduction in restrictive intervention.

We understand that behaviour is a form of communication and firmly believe that children who feel safe and happy are better equipped to learn. We understand that all behaviour happens for a reason and that difficult and/or harmful behaviour is not necessarily deliberate or planned. We understand that in situations of need, a child may simply behave in a way that has been successful in the past in protecting them and enabling them to survive that moment.

We know that the first step to understanding a particular behaviour of concern is to try to find out why the behaviour is happening. Our setting reflects the values of the Essex Approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional wellbeing (known as Trauma Perceptive Practice - TPP) and these values run through all our policies and practice.

2. Statutory framework

Our school works in accordance with the following legislation and guidance (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2026)
- Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance (DfE 2026)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2)
- (England) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

3. Restrictive intervention and reasonable force

We all have a legal obligation under our 'duty of care' to keep the children and young people we support safe. Once we have exhausted all other support options to prevent harm, we may have to apply a restrictive intervention. This would always be a 'positive act' and in the best interests of the child/young person or others.

The DfE guidance, *The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force (DfE 2026)* states that all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances – this is to prevent or stop a pupil from:

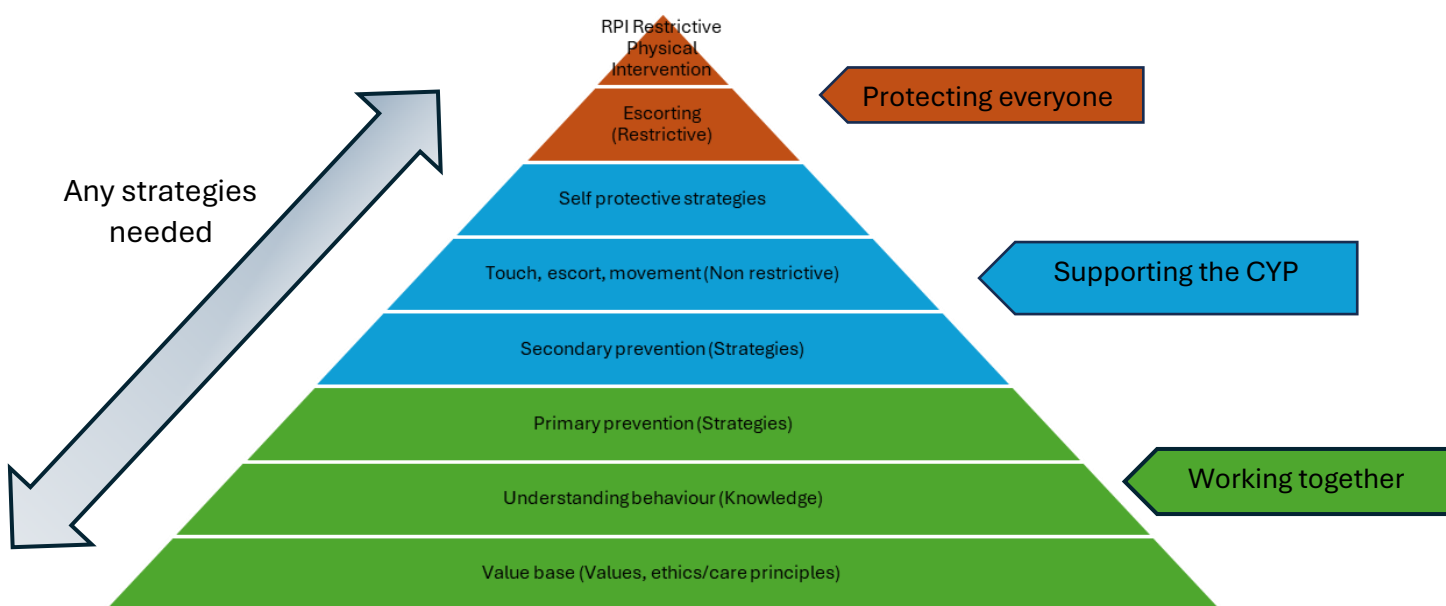
- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property

- causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

At our setting we believe that the use of restrictive intervention, should be used within this framework:

- ✓ protecting people's fundamental human rights and promoting person-centred best interest and therapeutic approaches to support people when they are distressed
- ✓ improving the quality of life of those being restrained and those supporting them
- ✓ reducing reliance on restrictive practices by promoting positive culture and practice that focuses on prevention, co-regulation/de-escalation and reflective practice
- ✓ focussing on the safest and most dignified use of restrictive interventions where required, including physical restraint
- ✓ increasing understanding of the root causes of behaviour and recognising that many behaviours are the result of distress due to unmet needs
- ✓ ensuring a restraint reduction approach is adopted by all
- ✓ force will never be used as a punishment

4. Response to Incidents



Our approach, to supporting children and young people is shown in the diagram above. It clearly demonstrates that our practice is built on the firm foundations of a Human Rights value base and understanding behaviour.

Response Strategies

- Primary Prevention Strategies
Primary Prevention Strategies form the greater part of our approach to harmful behaviour and include everything that is put in place that reduces the likelihood of the incident happening. Even at the most heightened states of arousal there are still non-restrictive strategies that may work.

➤ Secondary Strategies

These are the plans for what to do if the primary strategies do not work and the child becomes more stressed.

➤ Tertiary Strategies (non-restrictive and restrictive)

These are designed to keep the child and those around them safe from harm. They provide a way to react quickly in a situation where the child is distressed and more likely to present harmful behaviour and may include physical intervention.

5. Training

The DfE sets out that 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. As a staff team, we have participated in ongoing training to recognise and respond supportively to behaviours through co-regulation to guide children through stressful situations. In our setting, we use the PRICE 'train the trainer' training. This approach fully complements our values of TPP and is delivered to relevant staff members so they can:

- Identify suitable techniques for different situations
- Identify and minimise potential risk factors
- Identify and minimise the potential impact of a physical intervention on a child/young person.

6. Support Planning and risk assessments

We will always consider the individual child and their specific needs. At our setting we use personalised distress management and adult response planning (developed from the Essex TPP approach) for pupils who require regular support. This is designed to keep everyone safe by enabling our staff to think about, plan for and be confident in safely supporting children and young people.

This support is discussed and agreed through our risk assessment/One Planning process and we always involve the child, where appropriate, and their parent/carer in this process.

- **Step 1:** Identify the stressors being experienced by the child/young person. There are five domains of stress, which are explained later in this document.
- **Step 2:** Complete the 'Warning Signs of Stress', providing personalised detail of what this looks like and means for the child/young person.
- **Step 3:** Complete the 'Stress Mapping' and 'Level of Harm'.
- **Step 4:** If the pupil is assessed to 'always' or 'often' experience stress or the harm is assessed to be of concern, develop both the personalised 'Adult Response Plan' and 'Child's Self-regulation Plan' for the child/young person as part of the One Planning process.
- **Step 5:** Regularly review and update the information in this tool through One Planning.

Support Plans and risk assessments will include:

- ✓ the views of the child or young person in how they want to be supported, where appropriate
- ✓ consideration as to how the child or young person's dignity may be compromised and how might staff manage that
- ✓ communicating behaviours that present as conflict, aggression and anxiety
- ✓ primary and secondary prevention strategies used to co-regulate and defuse potential incidents
- ✓ any personal, sensory or environmental needs for the child/young person
- ✓ a recovery plan/restorative approach

7. Reporting and recording

At our setting we record incidents where:

- It has been necessary for a staff member to use force on a child
- It has been necessary for a staff member to use seclusion
- It has been necessary for a staff member to use a non-force related restraint (with or without direct physical contact)

Any such incidents will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event by the staff member(s) involved and we endeavour to do this no later than the same day. We will record the following details as a minimum:

- ✓ names of pupil and staff directly involved
- ✓ time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- ✓ any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- ✓ 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

Where appropriate, we also invite parents / carers to have a follow-up discussion about the incident and to review the risk assessment and support plan. This discussion will consider:

- any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- whether agreed support plans were followed
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- what might be done differently in the future

8. Oversight and governance

Our governing body has oversight of our procedures, reporting and recording for use of force and seclusion in our setting. They receive regular reports on the number of incidents and use it to identify and implement improvements to policies and practices. They will:

- identify areas of learning and development for school staff
- understand repeat patterns and triggers to consider the effectiveness of pupil support measures
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.