ST LEONARD'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL, BRIDGNORTH

Restrictive Intervention Policy

Ratified by the Governing Body: April 2026

Review Date: April 2029

St Leonard's CE Primary School empowers children to be courageous learners in a nurturing, safe and inclusive environment. Inspired by God's love we strive to demonstrate St. Paul's teaching on the fruit of the Spirit and help our children to make the world a better place.

"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"
Galatians 5. 22-23

This policy / addendum should be read alongside the School Behaviour Policy.

1) Purpose and scope

This policy outlines St leonard's School's approach to the use of reasonable force, restrictive interventions and seclusion, in line with the DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools – Guidance for schools in England (April 2026).

Our priority is to provide a safe, calm and supportive environment where pupils can learn and thrive. Staff are trained to use positive relationships, proactive strategies and de-escalation to prevent situations from escalating.

There are rare occasions when a pupil's behaviour presents a significant risk of harm to themselves or others. In these situations, staff may need to take proportionate and time-limited action to maintain safety. This is known as the use of reasonable force.

This policy applies to all staff working with pupils in school or during off-site activities under the school's supervision.

2) Principles

- The safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff is paramount.
- Restrictive interventions are used only when necessary and proportionate, and only for the minimum time required.
- De-escalation and preventative approaches are prioritised.
- All pupils are treated with dignity and respect.
- Staff act in accordance with safeguarding, SEND and equality duties.
- Staff recognise that distressed behaviour may communicate unmet need, trauma, anxiety, sensory overload or difficulties with emotional regulation

3) Key definitions (from DfE Guidance, April 2026)

Restrictive intervention
Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement.

Reasonable force
Using no more force than necessary and for the shortest time needed, in line with the circumstances.

Restraint
An intervention that immobilises a pupil or limits movement, with or without physical contact (e.g., holding arms or preventing movement by removing an item).

Seclusion
Supervised confinement where a pupil is prevented from leaving a space. This is a safety measure only and must never be used as a punishment. Any environment used for seclusion must be safe, appropriately supervised and capable of being exited quickly in an emergency.

Significant incident
Any incident where the use of force goes beyond ordinary physical contact with pupils.

4) Prevention and De-escalation
Staff use a range of strategies to reduce escalation and prevent the need for restrictive interventions. These include calm communication, allowing space or reduced demands, offering reassurance and support, redirecting behaviour and adjusting the environment.

For pupils with SEND or other additional needs, individual support plans and reasonable adjustments are developed and reviewed following any significant incident.

5) Who can use reasonable force
All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force when necessary, under the circumstances set out in the DfE guidance.

Staff more likely to use restrictive interventions receive appropriate training consistent with DfE principles.

6) When use of force may be appropriate
Reasonable force may be used to prevent or stop a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, causing serious damage to property or causing serious disorder.

Staff must consider necessity, proportionality, pupil needs and vulnerabilities, and whether the intervention will reduce rather than escalate risk.

7) Unacceptable uses of force

Force must never be used as punishment. Any action affecting breathing or circulation is prohibited.

If a pupil ends up on the ground, staff must safely reposition them as quickly as possible.**9)**

8) Seclusion

Seclusion may be used only as a short-term safety measure during extreme dysregulation and must never be used as punishment. Pupils must be supervised and allowed to leave as soon as the risk has reduced.

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported.

9) Other physical contact
The school does not operate a no-contact policy. Appropriate physical contact may be needed for first aid, guiding or escorting a pupil, comforting a distressed pupil or demonstrating skills.

10) Recording and reporting duties
School must record the following details as a minimum (in writing as soon as practicable and ideally the same day by staff involved). An optional recording form is included as an appendix below.

- names of pupils and staff directly involved

- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force or seclusion was applied, the degree, and details of any injuries sustained if applicable.
- brief account of why the use of force or seclusion was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- incidents will be recorded securely in line with safeguarding and data protection procedures and, where appropriate, logged on CPOMS

The school will inform parents as soon as practicable and aim to do so on the same day of any incident of seclusion or restraint.

11) Post-incident support

Following any restrictive intervention, the school will ensure:

- Medical and emotional support for the pupil
- Staff debrief and reflective discussion
- Review of behaviour support plans and risk assessments
- Consideration of environmental or systemic changes to reduce recurrence

Restorative approaches will be prioritised to repair relationships and rebuild a sense of safety.

12) Training and competence

Only appropriately trained staff may use restrictive interventions except in emergencies. Training reflects DfE principles and includes prevention, de-escalation and safe practice.

13) Governance and oversight

Leaders and governors monitor incident patterns, staff training needs, any disproportionate impact and the effectiveness of preventative approaches.

14) Complaints and allegations

Complaints follow the school's Complaints Procedure. Allegations follow Keeping Children Safe in Education.

15) Searching pupils

The Headteacher 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, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only. Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

Appendix: Restrictive intervention / seclusion recording form

School:
Pupil Name: _____
Tutor Group / Year: _____
Date of Incident: ____ / ____ / _____
Time of Incident: _____
Location: _____

1. Staff Involved

Lead staff member: _____
Additional staff directly involved: _____
Other witnesses (staff/pupils): _____

2. Pupil Information

SEND status code: _____
Relevant needs or circumstances (medical, sensory, SEMH, communication, triggers, risk factors):

3. Type of Incident
Tick all that apply:

☐ Significant use of reasonable force
☐ Restraint (physical or non-physical)
☐ Seclusion
☐ Removal of mobility aid/device (non-contact restraint)

4. Antecedents / Lead-up to Incident

What happened prior to the incident? Include known triggers.

5. Prevention and De-escalation Strategies Used
Tick and describe:

☐ Verbal calming / reassurance
☐ Redirection
☐ Allowing space / reduced demands
☐ Environmental adjustments

☐ Emotional regulation support
☐ Support from known staff
☐ Use of pupil passport strategies
☐ Other: _____

Notes:

6. Description of Restrictive Intervention / Seclusion

Type of intervention: _____
Degree of force / method used: _____
Duration: _____

Was the pupil on the ground?
☐ Yes (repositioned to a safer/standing alternative as quickly as possible)
☐ No

Reason intervention was necessary (e.g., harm prevention, criminal offence, property damage, serious disorder):

7. Pupil Welfare & Safety Considerations

Communication used to explain what was happening:

Considerations of dignity, sensory, or medical needs:

Signs of distress or trauma observed:

8. Injuries & Immediate Aftercare

Injuries to pupil: _____
Injuries to staff: _____
First aid / medical treatment provided: _____

9. Post-Incident Actions

Pupil debrief completed by: _____
Staff debrief (uninvolved adult): _____
Behaviour Support Plan reviewed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Risk assessment updated? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Restorative work completed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Notes:

10. Parent/Carer Notification (Statutory)
Parents/carers must be informed as soon as practicable and ideally the same day.

Method:
☐ Email / MIS message
☐ Phone call
☐ In-person meeting

Time contacted: _____
Staff contacting: _____

Information shared (required):
☐ Time, date, location, duration
☐ Why intervention was necessary
☐ Type/degree of force (if applicable)
☐ Injuries and post-incident support

Exceptions applied (only if relevant):
☐ Risk of serious harm to pupil

11. Final Sign-Off

Lead staff signature: _____
Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Senior leader reviewing: _____
Date: ____ / ____ / _____