St. John the Baptist R.C. Primary School

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Love One Another

St John the Baptist RC Primary School is a place of

learning in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil their own unique potential.

We try always to remember that everyone is special and should be treated with respect.

Our Catholic faith touches every part of our school life and we try to be a community which has Jesus at the heart of all we do.

Approved by: Governing Board	
Last reviewed on:	October 2026
Next review due by:	October 2027

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1. Aims and scope

St John the Baptist RC Primary School (with Nursery) is a safe, secure and supportive environment for all pupils and staff, in line with the school's mission, Love One Another.

There are times when the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, is lawful and necessary to keep people safe. The school recognises that the use of restrictive interventions can have a significant impact on pupils, staff and parents and carers. They are only ever considered as a last resort, once all other prevention and de-escalation strategies have been tried or are not appropriate.

This policy applies to all pupils, including children in Nursery and Reception, and to all staff, including lunchtime supervisors and any adult working on behalf of the school, on the school premises and on school trips and visits. It sits alongside section 7.5 of the behaviour policy.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Help staff to feel confident in knowing how to use restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully, when they are necessary
- Set out clearly the steps for recording and reporting incidents of reasonable force, seclusion and restraint
- Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all pupils and staff, and help to create a positive and safe place for everyone at school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) guidance Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026). The recording and reporting sections of that guidance are statutory and the governing board must have regard to them. The rest of the guidance is non-statutory. The policy also meets the requirements of:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which gives staff the power to use reasonable force
- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Sections 550ZA and 550ZB of the Education Act 1996
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)
- DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation

In this policy, 'must' describes a legal requirement and 'should' describes what the school follows unless there is a good reason not to.

3. Definitions

The terms in this policy are based on the DfE guidance on restrictive interventions (see section 2).

- Restrictive interventions are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term for physical and non-physical actions aimed at restraining pupils in different ways.
    - Examples include supervised seclusion, passive physical contact (such as a member of staff blocking a pupil's path if the pupil is running towards a busy road, or standing between pupils to prevent a fight) and the use of reasonable force.
- Reasonable force covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain pupils, using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time. How it is applied depends on the circumstances.
    - Examples include guiding a pupil to safety by the arm, breaking up a fight between pupils, or restraining a pupil to prevent injury to the pupil or others.
- Restraint is a form of non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. It may or may not include direct physical contact.
    - Examples include holding a pupil's arms to their sides when the pupil is attempting to harm themselves or others, or removing a pupil's crutches.
- Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. See section 3.2.
- A significant incident is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. This includes when physical force is used to carry out a non-physical restrictive intervention. See section 3.1.

3.1 Appropriate physical contact with pupils

The school does not have a 'no contact' policy and will not grant any requests by parents or carers, or staff, not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not raise any question about the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions. Examples include:

- Providing first aid, or helping a pupil with personal care in Nursery or Reception
- Guiding or escorting a pupil through the school building or on a school trip by holding their hand
- Comforting a pupil who is upset
- Offering congratulations or praise, such as a pat on the back or a handshake
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument, or exercises and techniques in PE

In deciding whether physical contact is appropriate, staff use their professional judgement and have regard to:

- The school's child protection and safeguarding policy
- The circumstances, such as whether other adults are present
- The pupil's age, any known vulnerabilities (including special educational needs and disabilities, SEND), and whether an alternative that does not involve physical contact can be used

3.2 Seclusion

The school does not use seclusion as a behaviour management technique. Seclusion is only ever a safety measure, used when a pupil is experiencing very high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and there is a risk of harm. It is not used as a threat or punishment, and it is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. Section 8 of the behaviour policy sets out how the school responds to misbehaviour.

If a pupil ever has to be confined to keep the pupil or others safe, this is seclusion. During seclusion:

- The pupil is in a safe place that does not feel threatening or intimidating e.g the sensory room. The pupil is supervised at all times by at least one member of staff,
- The pupil is allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced

The incident is recorded and reported in line with section 12.

3.3 What is not seclusion

The following are not seclusion because the pupil is not confined or prevented from leaving:

- Sensory circuits, which are run each week by a teacher
- A short time in a calm space, such as the sensory room, with an adult, so that a pupil can regulate their emotions before returning to the classroom. The pupil is accompanied or supervised by an adult, is not prevented from leaving, and returns to the classroom when ready. This is a support, not a sanction
- Movement breaks

Think Time is never seclusion. It is a restorative group session at lunchtime, led by a member of SLT, in which pupils are never confined or left alone. Removing a pupil from the classroom as a sanction is a separate disciplinary measure, covered in the behaviour policy (section 8). It must never be used to confine a pupil.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is the employer and is responsible for:

- Approving this policy, on the headteacher's recommendation, and reviewing it with the headteacher
- Ensuring that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each significant incident involving force, seclusion incident and restraint incident, and taking all reasonable steps to ensure that it is followed
- Regularly reviewing data on the use of restrictive interventions, while taking care not to draw firm conclusions from very small numbers
- Supporting and challenging school leaders to identify where changes may be needed to practice, for example if approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective, or if there is any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions for pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEND or have other vulnerabilities

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Determining this policy and presenting it to the governing board for approval
- Overall implementation and oversight of this policy
- Making sure that high-quality training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions is provided for the staff who need it
- Ensuring adequate staffing levels to support positive behaviour management
- Monitoring incidents involving restrictive interventions, including regular review to refine and improve practice
- Ensuring compliance with the recording and reporting requirements
- Authorising staff to search a pupil or their belongings where there is good reason to think the pupil has a prohibited item
- Following the school's complaints procedure for any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions
- Following KCSIE if an allegation of inappropriate use of force is made against a member of staff

4.3 Senior leadership team (SLT) and Key Stage Leaders

SLT and Key Stage Leaders are responsible for:

- Supporting staff during and after an incident, and ensuring that incidents are recorded on CPOMS
- Reviewing incidents, triggers and patterns, including at the weekly welfare meeting, and agreeing any changes to support or adjustments for the pupil
- Arranging debriefs for the staff and pupils involved

4.4 All staff

All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are responsible for:

- Reading and understanding this policy and the behaviour policy
- Using de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour management strategies to minimise and prevent the need for restrictive interventions
- Recording accurately, on CPOMS, every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force that they are involved in, and reporting it as set out in section 12
- Recording any injury that occurs during an incident, and following the health and safety policy so that it is reported to the Health and Safety Executive where necessary
- Taking part in training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions, where relevant to their role
- Taking part in the debrief after an incident, to help the school understand what happened and why

4.5 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Being informed of every incident, and considering whether there is a safeguarding concern
- Making sure records are kept securely and in line with safeguarding and data protection procedures
- Advising on whether telling a parent or carer would put the pupil at risk of significant harm, and contacting the local authority where that is the case (see sections 12.2 and 12.3)
- Reporting each incident to parents and carers, or ensuring that it is reported

4.6 The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Working with pupils, parents and carers and staff to develop and review individual plans and risk assessments for pupils with SEND where there is an increased likelihood of restrictive interventions being needed
- Making sure staff are aware of each pupil's needs, triggers and agreed support strategies
- Advising on reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities
- Taking part in the review of any incident involving a pupil with SEND, and contributing to staff training

5. Acceptable uses of force

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. Staff can use reasonable force to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Hurting themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils, in or out of lessons

Reasonable force must only be used where it is necessary and proportionate, and where less restrictive approaches are not appropriate or have not worked. Restraint should be avoided where possible, including seated and standing restraint. Where force is used, it must be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of everyone involved.

While all staff have this power, some staff, especially those who work closely with pupils who may show challenging behaviour, are more likely to need to use it. The school makes sure these staff are adequately trained and that risk assessments are carried out where necessary (see section 11).

Any significant incident involving force is recorded and reported in line with section 12.

6. Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. The school never uses force as a sanction, threat or deterrent. Staff understand that any form of force or restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, so these measures are avoided wherever possible.

The following are never acceptable:

- Using force for the purpose of punishment
- Restraining a pupil in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example by covering their nose and/or mouth or applying pressure to their neck or abdomen
- Using force on the ground. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. Staff avoid any intervention where the pupil would be held on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff release their hold or move into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible
- Using force to take a mobile phone from a pupil, or putting a pupil in a ‘holding’ room until the pupil calms down (this is seclusion)

Section 5 sets out when staff may use reasonable force and section 9 sets out what staff consider before using it.

7. Using reasonable force to search pupils

The headteacher, and any member of staff the headteacher has authorised, has a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil has a prohibited item (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance and in section 3 of the behaviour policy) or an item banned under the school rules.

Reasonable force can be used to search for prohibited items, such as knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs. It cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules only, such as mobile phones.

The decision to use reasonable force to carry out a search is made carefully, case by case, taking into account the level of risk to pupils and staff and the age and needs of the pupil. Section 7.6 of the behaviour policy sets out how searches are carried out. Staff never carry out strip searches.

8. Prevention and de-escalation strategies

Restrictive intervention is used only when necessary. The school aims to minimise its use through both whole-school and individual approaches.

Whole-school approach

- A calm, nurturing classroom and school environment, with clear routines, visual timetables and consistent expectations that all adults apply, including at lunchtime
- The shared three-step approach to low-level disruption (calm reminder, clear warning, consequence) and the behaviour management guide, with shared scripts and phrases
- Teaching the school's virtues and rules through the behaviour curriculum, and teaching behaviour step by step in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils, and tone of voice and empathy that help to de-escalate
- Recording and analysing behaviour data on CPOMS and ClassDojo to inform improvement
- Regular discussion of pupils' needs at the weekly welfare meeting

Individual approaches

- Working closely with parents and carers to support individual pupils
- Individual support plans and agreed adjustments, including Focus Helper Cards where used
- Sensory circuits, movement breaks and a short time in a calm space, such as the sensory room, to help a pupil to regulate before behaviour escalates
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability, so that they can take part in school life as fully as possible

8.1 De-escalation when a situation arises

When staff face a situation where a restrictive intervention may be needed, they use de-escalation first wherever possible. Techniques include:

- Open body language, and awareness of the pupil's personal space
- Moving the pupil away from an 'audience' and speaking to them privately rather than in front of other pupils or staff
- Using empathy and simple, calm language, with time for the pupil to process and respond. In Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 staff use short phrases, visual cues and gentle, consistent responses
- Distraction, or offering a favourite activity or familiar object
- Offering a calm space, a movement break or the sensory room so that the pupil can self-regulate
- Calling for help from a colleague, SLT or a Key Stage Leader, and keeping other pupils safe by moving them away
- Calm verbal reminders of expectations and the next steps, without threats

9. Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

9.1 Necessity and proportionality

The decision is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the individual circumstances. Staff first consider whether there are other ways to manage the situation, including the techniques in section 8.1 and getting help from a colleague. However, there may be times when staff have no other choice but to use a restrictive intervention to reduce the risk of harm to the pupil or others.

Staff consider:

- Is it necessary? Are there other, less restrictive ways to manage the situation? Is it likely to reduce the risk, or could it escalate the situation or cause more harm than the behaviour itself?
- Is it proportionate? Staff use the least amount of force, or the least restrictive intervention, for the least amount of time. If the intervention is escalating the situation, staff reconsider and try another approach. Staff take account of the pupil's age, size, medical conditions, SEND and other vulnerabilities

9.2 Pupil and staff welfare

The most important consideration is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil involved, as well as that of other pupils and staff. Pupils who have experienced adverse life events, trauma or neglect, or who have medical conditions, sensory impairments, communication difficulties or other needs, may find a restrictive intervention particularly distressing.

Staff always aim to maintain the pupil's dignity, including thinking about where an intervention takes place and who can see it. Wherever possible, they clearly and calmly say what is happening, why, and what the pupil needs to do. They watch how the pupil is feeling and use this to decide whether to continue, reduce or stop. Force is stopped as soon as it is no longer needed.

9.3 Support following an incident

As soon as possible after any use of restrictive intervention, the school evaluates the incident to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns, and how another incident could be avoided. The school makes sure that each pupil and member of staff involved receives the right support, including a medical check and treatment if needed, and a chance to reflect and talk through what happened.

Debriefs are based on separate reflections from everyone involved and aim to repair and rebuild relationships. Wherever possible they are led by a member of staff who was not involved, such as a member of SLT. Support may also be offered to anyone who witnessed the incident. The school continues to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing.

10. Considerations for pupils with SEND

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations in ways that may be harmful to themselves or others. Pupils who have difficulty communicating may show their needs and discomfort through their behaviour. Before applying a consequence, staff check the pupil's individual plan and agreed adjustments, and consider whether anything has changed for the pupil.

Under the Equality Act 2010 the school makes reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, to avoid disadvantage and to help them to take part in school life as fully as possible. The SENCO can be consulted at any stage.

Where there is an increased likelihood that a pupil will need a restrictive intervention, the school carries out a risk assessment and, where appropriate, writes an individual support plan with the pupil (as far as is appropriate to their age and understanding), their parents and carers, and the staff who know them well. The SENCO is involved.

These strategies may include:

- Removing stimuli that may cause distress
- Changing how staff communicate, such as body language, facial expression and tone of voice
- Helping the pupil to express their emotions before they become overwhelmed
- Sensory circuits, calm space and other regulation activities
- Distraction with familiar objects or activities

The plan is reviewed regularly, and after any significant incident, with the pupil's parents and carers. It sets out any adjustments, the best ways to communicate with the pupil and, where appropriate, when increased physical contact with staff might be needed. These are discussed with everyone involved and written down in the plan.

11. Training and risk assessments

The school makes sure that all staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in their safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. Training is part of induction and continuing professional development.

All staff receive annual safeguarding training and are given the behaviour management guide, the behaviour policy and this policy.

The school also has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff. Risk assessments are carried out so that staff who regularly work with pupils whose behaviour may require a restrictive intervention can do so as safely as possible.

12. Recording and reporting arrangements

The school has a legal duty to record and report all significant incidents involving force, seclusion incidents and restraint incidents (see section 3 for the definitions).

12.1 Recording incidents

Staff record every incident in writing on CPOMS as soon as possible, on the same day wherever possible and inform the DSL and SENCO where relevant. They do this even if the use of a restrictive intervention is agreed as part of a pupil's support plan. Records are kept securely and retained in line with the school's data protection procedures.

For significant incidents involving force, the record includes:

- The names of the pupil and the staff directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether they have an identified SEND, and their SEN status code
- The time, date, location and approximate length of the intervention

- A clear, brief description of what happened: what led up to it, any known or likely triggers, any prevention or de-escalation strategies used, the type and degree of force used, and any physical injuries
- A brief explanation of why using force was judged to be necessary
- Details of any support given afterwards, such as medical help or emotional support

For seclusion incidents and restraint incidents, the record includes the names of the pupil and staff involved, the pupil's relevant needs and SEN status code, the time, date, location and approximate length of the intervention, a brief explanation of why it was judged to be necessary, any physical injuries, and any support given afterwards.

If a seclusion or restraint incident is also a significant incident involving force, it is recorded once, in line with the procedure for significant incidents involving force.

12.2 Reporting incidents to parents and carers

Parents and carers are told about an incident as soon as practicable, and on the same day wherever possible. This applies even if the intervention is agreed in a pupil's support plan. They are given a written report of any significant incident involving force. For seclusion and restraint incidents, they are given a copy of the written record of the incident.

A written report to parents and carers about a significant incident involving force includes:

- The time, date, location and approximate length of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why it was judged to be necessary
- A short description of the type and degree of force used
- Details of any physical injuries

The report does not include identifying details about any other pupil. The school invites parents and carers to a follow-up conversation, where appropriate, to talk about triggers, whether the support plan was followed, what was effective and what might be done differently.

There are two exceptions to reporting to parents and carers:

- The pupil is aged 20 or over. This is unlikely to apply in a primary school
- A member of staff thinks that telling the pupil's parents or carers would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil. The DSL is consulted. The incident is then reported to any parent or carer who can be told without causing significant harm or, if there is none, to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily lives (see section 12.3)

12.3 Reporting incidents to the local authority

Where an incident needs to be reported to the local authority, the report includes everything that would be shared with the parents and carers, and the reasons why it was unsafe to tell them directly.

Where a pupil is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989, or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, the incident is reported to the relevant local authority as well as to the parents and carers, unless it is unsafe to tell the parents and carers (see section 12.2).

13. Complaints and allegations

Any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions is handled through the school's complaints procedure, which is available from the school office and on the website.

The school takes any allegation of inappropriate use of force or other restrictive intervention against a member of staff very seriously, and deals with it in line with KCSIE and the school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

14. Monitoring and review

The headteacher and SLT analyse incident data, including CPOMS records of the use of force, restraint and seclusion, termly by class, year group, time of day and protected characteristic, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils known to children's social care. This is reported to the governing board. The data is used to check that practice is fair and proportionate, and to identify training needs and changes to practice.

This policy is reviewed by the headteacher and the full governing board at least annually, or sooner if needed, in line with the behaviour policy. At each review, the policy is approved by the governing board.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to:

- Behaviour policy, including section 7.5 (restrictive interventions) and section 7.6 (searching, screening and confiscation)
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and safety policy
- SEND policy and the SEN information report
- Intimate care policy

Appendix 1: letter to parents and carers – template

[Date]

Dear [parent/carer name],

Re: [pupil's name, class] – use of [reasonable force / restraint / seclusion] on [date]

We are writing to tell you that it was necessary for a member of staff to use [reasonable force / restraint / seclusion] with [pupil's name] at school. We know this may be worrying to read, and we want you to have the facts and to talk to us about it.

- Date, time and place: [date, time and location]
- How long it lasted: approximately [length of time]
- What happened beforehand: [brief description of what led up to the incident]
- Why it was necessary: [brief explanation of why the intervention was judged necessary to keep the pupil or others safe]
- What was done: [short description of the type and degree of force used or, for seclusion, where and how the pupil was supervised]
- Injuries: [none / details of any physical injuries and any first aid or medical help given]
- Support given afterwards: [for example time with a trusted adult, a calm space, a conversation about what happened]

[For restraint or seclusion: A copy of the written record of the incident is enclosed.]

We would like to talk with you about what happened, what might have triggered it and how we can best support [pupil's name]. Please contact [name and role] on [telephone / email] to arrange a conversation. You may also wish to look at our behaviour policy and our restrictive interventions policy, which are on the school website. If you are unhappy with anything that has happened, you can make a complaint under the school's complaints procedure, and we will explain how.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Job title]