

Reading Early Years Schools Federation



Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy

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Date to be reviewed: June 2028

Nursery School Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy

1. Policy Statement

This nursery school is committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where children are supported through positive relationships, early intervention and de-escalation strategies.

We recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances where restrictive interventions, including the lawful use of reasonable force, are necessary to prevent harm. Any intervention used by staff will always be:

- lawful
- necessary
- proportionate
- reasonable
- used for the shortest possible time
- in the best interests of the child and others

This policy reflects the Department for Education guidance *Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (April 2026)* and relevant legislation.

2. Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- safeguard children, staff and visitors
- minimise the need for restrictive interventions
- promote positive behaviour support and emotional regulation
- ensure staff understand when and how reasonable force may lawfully be used
- ensure incidents are appropriately recorded, reported and reviewed
- support children with SEND and additional needs through preventative approaches
- protect the dignity, wellbeing and human rights of all children

3. Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

4. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention - Any action intended to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a child or part of their body.

Reasonable Force- Physical intervention that is necessary, proportionate and used for the least amount of time required.

Restraint- An intervention that immobilises a child or limits their movement, with or without direct physical contact.

Seclusion- Keeping a child confined away from others and preventing them from leaving.

5. Prevention and De-escalation

The nursery school prioritises prevention and early intervention strategies to reduce the likelihood of distress and challenging behaviour.

Strategies include:

- maintaining predictable routines
- supporting communication and emotional literacy
- positive behaviour support
- calming and sensory strategies
- use of visual supports
- close partnership working with parents/carers
- adapting environments to reduce sensory overload
- giving children time and space to self-regulate
- distraction and redirection techniques
- staff training in de-escalation and trauma-informed practice

6. Appropriate Physical Contact

The nursery school does not operate a “no contact” policy. Appropriate physical contact is often necessary within early years settings.

Appropriate contact may include:

- comforting a distressed child
- holding hands during transitions or outings
- guiding children safely
- administering first aid
- assisting with personal care
- supporting physical development activities

Staff will always consider:

- the child’s age and understanding
- individual vulnerabilities or SEND
- safeguarding procedures

- whether alternative approaches are available

7. Circumstances Where Reasonable Force May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force only when necessary to:

1. prevent injury to a child or others
2. prevent serious damage to property
3. prevent serious disorder
4. protect the safety and wellbeing of the child or others

Examples may include:

- preventing a child from running into a road
- stopping a child from harming another child
- preventing a child from causing significant self-injury
- moving a child away from immediate danger

The least restrictive option must always be used.

8. Unacceptable Practice

The following practices are prohibited:

- use of force as punishment
- any intervention that restricts breathing or circulation
- pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen
- covering a child's mouth or nose
- prolonged restraint
- humiliating or degrading treatment
- seclusion used as punishment or discipline

9. Seclusion

The nursery school does not use seclusion as a disciplinary measure.

In exceptional situations where a child presents an immediate risk of serious harm, a child may be supported in a quieter supervised space for safety and emotional regulation. Any such intervention:

- must be continuously supervised
- must end as soon as the risk reduces
- must never involve threat or punishment
- must be recorded and reported

10. SEND and Individual Support Plans

The nursery school recognises that some children with SEND may experience distress differently and may require additional support.

Where appropriate:

- behaviour support plans will be developed collaboratively with parents/carers and professionals
- reasonable adjustments will be implemented
- risk assessments will be completed
- individual triggers and calming strategies will be identified
- staff working with the child will receive appropriate guidance and training

Plans will be reviewed regularly and after any significant incident.

11. Staff Training

The nursery school will ensure that:

- relevant staff receive training in behaviour support, de-escalation and safe handling
- staff understand safeguarding and legal responsibilities
- staff are supported following incidents
- risk assessments are in place where foreseeable risks exist

12. Recording Incidents

Any significant incident involving reasonable force, restraint or seclusion will be recorded as soon as practicable and ideally on the same day.

Records will include:

- names of those involved
- date, time and location
- duration of intervention
- antecedents/triggers
- de-escalation strategies attempted
- type of intervention used
- rationale for intervention
- injuries sustained
- post-incident support provided

Records will be stored securely in line with data protection requirements.

13. Informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as practicable following any significant restrictive intervention and usually on the same day.

Communication will include:

- what happened
- why the intervention was necessary
- the type of intervention used
- any injuries or follow-up actions

Where appropriate, a follow-up meeting may be offered to review support strategies and future preventative approaches.

14. Post-Incident Support and Debrief

Following any incident:

- the child's welfare will be checked
- medical attention will be sought if required
- staff wellbeing will be supported
- a debrief and reflective review will take place
- support plans and risk assessments will be reviewed if necessary

15. Monitoring and Governance

The Head of School/Nursery Manager and governing board will:

- monitor incident records
- analyse patterns and trends
- review the effectiveness of preventative strategies
- identify any disproportionate impact on children with SEND or protected characteristics
- ensure compliance with statutory duties

16. Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints regarding restrictive interventions will be managed through the nursery school's complaints procedure.

Allegations against staff will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

17. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy

18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.