Emerson Park Academy

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

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RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

Emerson Park Academy
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Approved by	J Luff
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1. Purpose of this policy

This policy sets out the school's approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force. The school is committed to providing a safe, calm, inclusive and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and staff can work safely.

The school recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil's behaviour presents an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, or where intervention is necessary to prevent serious damage or significant disruption.

The school will always seek to prevent the need for restrictive intervention wherever reasonably possible.

2. Definitions

Restrictive intervention — An intervention used to prevent, restrict or limit a pupil's movement, freedom or liberty. This may include physical intervention, mechanical restriction, medication used for behavioural control and seclusion.
Reasonable force — The use of physical contact by staff where this is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances. What is reasonable depends upon the circumstances and means using no more force than necessary for the least amount of time.
Physical restraint — The use of physical force to prevent, restrict or limit a pupil's movement. It should only be used where necessary and proportionate and for the shortest time necessary.
Seclusion — Deliberately isolating a pupil in a room or space from which they are prevented from leaving. This is different from a pupil voluntarily choosing to move to a quiet space or being directed to work elsewhere.
De-escalation — Strategies intended to reduce distress, agitation, conflict or risk of harm before restrictive intervention becomes necessary. Examples include calm communication, reducing demands, allowing time and space, offering choices, reducing sensory stimulation and using a trusted adult.

3. Core principles

Prevention comes first. Staff should use reasonable and proportionate strategies to prevent situations escalating.

Restrictive intervention is a last resort. Physical intervention must not be used simply because a pupil is refusing to follow an instruction, being rude, verbally challenging, disruptive, refusing work or displaying behaviour that is inconvenient to manage.

Necessity: staff must consider whether intervention is necessary to prevent harm, protect people, prevent serious damage or deal with another situation where the use of force is lawful.

Proportionality: any intervention must be proportionate to the risk presented.

Least restrictive approach: staff should use the least restrictive intervention that is reasonably necessary.

Minimum duration: intervention should last for no longer than necessary.

Dignity and respect: pupils must be treated with dignity and respect before, during and after an incident.

Child-centred practice: the school will consider individual circumstances, needs and vulnerabilities.

4. When may reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force may be used where staff judge it necessary and proportionate to prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or another person; prevent a pupil committing an offence; prevent serious damage to property; prevent behaviour causing serious disruption where intervention is necessary; protect a pupil or another person from immediate harm; or maintain safety where other strategies have failed or are inappropriate.

The school's approach must not become a blanket 'no contact' policy. Appropriate physical contact can sometimes be necessary to protect pupils and staff.

5. When should force not normally be used?

Staff should not use physical intervention simply to punish a pupil, force compliance, demonstrate authority, obtain obedience, prevent minor disruption, respond to verbal abuse or rudeness, enforce a routine instruction, or remove a pupil simply because they refuse to leave a classroom.

Staff should consider whether the situation can safely be managed through de-escalation, support and other non-restrictive approaches.

6. Prevention and de-escalation

Staff should know pupils' individual support plans and known triggers; use consistent routines; provide clear expectations; use calm and respectful language; avoid unnecessary confrontation; offer appropriate choices; provide processing time; reduce environmental stimulation; seek assistance early; move other pupils away where appropriate; use known calming strategies; and involve pastoral/SEND staff where appropriate.

For pupils at increased risk of requiring restrictive intervention, the school should consider an individual behaviour/support plan.

7. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities

The school recognises that restrictive interventions can have particular implications for pupils with SEND, autism, communication difficulties, sensory processing difficulties, mental health difficulties, trauma or adverse childhood experiences, physical disabilities, medical conditions, or previous experiences of restraint or abuse.

Staff should consider whether behaviour may be communicating distress, pain, sensory overload, anxiety, fear, unmet communication needs or another unmet physical or emotional need.

Where a pupil has an EHCP or other support plan, staff should consider relevant information when planning how behaviour should be managed. The aim should always be to reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention being required.

8. Staff responsibilities

All staff are responsible for following this policy; knowing how to summon assistance; using de-escalation wherever appropriate; acting to protect pupils and colleagues; reporting incidents promptly; recording incidents accurately; informing the DSL where safeguarding concerns arise; and participating in post-incident review where required.

Staff must not use restrictive intervention as a form of punishment or retaliation.

9. Staff training

The school will ensure that staff who may reasonably be expected to use restrictive intervention receive appropriate training.

Training should include prevention, de-escalation, recognising escalation, individual pupil needs, legal responsibilities, safeguarding, reasonable force, restrictive interventions, recording/reporting and post-incident procedures.

Where staff are expected to use physical intervention techniques, the school will provide appropriate practical, competency-based training.

Online e-learning alone should not be treated as sufficient practical training in physical intervention techniques.

The school will maintain a record of staff training and refresher requirements.

10. Use of physical intervention

Remain calm and use clear, proportionate communication wherever possible.

Assess the immediate risk to the pupil and others.

Use the least restrictive approach and no more physical contact than is necessary.

Keep the intervention as brief as possible and release the pupil as soon as it is safe.

Monitor the pupil for signs of distress, injury or medical difficulty.

Summon appropriate support as soon as reasonably possible.

Stop the intervention when the risk has reduced.

11. Prohibited practices

The school will not permit restrictive practices that are unlawful, unsafe, degrading or punitive.

Staff must never use physical intervention as punishment; unnecessary or excessive force; humiliating or degrading treatment; interventions designed to cause pain; practices intended to frighten or intimidate; restrictive practices for staff convenience; or restraint simply to enforce obedience where there is no lawful justification.

Any allegation that inappropriate or excessive force has been used must be taken seriously and managed under safeguarding and staff conduct procedures.

12. Seclusion

Seclusion must only be used in circumstances permitted by current DfE guidance and this school's procedures.

A space used for seclusion must be appropriate, safe and suitably monitored.

Staff must consider the pupil's age, SEND, medical needs, emotional wellbeing, risk of self-harm, duration, supervision and environmental risks.

Seclusion must never be used as a routine behaviour-management strategy or for staff convenience.

13. After an incident

Check the pupil for injury or distress and provide appropriate first aid or medical attention.

Allow the pupil time to recover and provide an opportunity to talk when appropriate.

Consider whether additional pastoral or SEND support is needed.

Consider whether other pupils who witnessed the incident require reassurance or support.

Staff involved should have an opportunity to report what happened, receive appropriate support, access a debrief and raise concerns about the intervention.

14. Recording incidents

Every significant incident involving the use of force must be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and current legal requirements.

Records should include: pupil name; date/time; location; staff involved; witnesses; reason for intervention; behaviour immediately before; de-escalation strategies attempted; description and duration of intervention; injuries; medical attention; outcome; parent/carer communication; pupil views where appropriate; staff reflections; follow-up action; safeguarding concerns; and review arrangements.

Please record on the google form of any restrictive intervention incidents.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1U2K2xyIBLSzOgjzIK2z3gc6tT1dfty5bwNTV0Ej5MQI/edit

15. CPOMS and safeguarding recording

Where the incident raises a safeguarding concern, staff should record it on CPOMS in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff should record facts rather than assumptions. Describe what was seen, heard or said, including dates, times, witnesses and actions taken.

CPOMS does not replace an immediate safeguarding response. If a pupil is at immediate risk of harm, staff must seek assistance and report the concern without delay.

16. Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers should be informed of significant incidents involving the use of force in accordance with DfE guidance and the school's procedures.

Communication should be factual, respectful and proportionate. Safeguarding considerations may affect the timing or nature of communication; these should be discussed with the DSL.

17. Safeguarding concerns

A restrictive intervention may itself become a safeguarding concern where there is an allegation or indication of excessive force, unnecessary restraint, inappropriate physical contact, injury, degrading treatment, repeated use without appropriate planning, discriminatory use of force, restraint for punishment, inappropriate seclusion, or failure to report or record an incident.

Any allegation concerning a member of staff must be managed under the school's Managing Allegations Against Staff / Child Protection procedures.

18. Restrictive intervention and safeguarding

The use of restrictive intervention must always be considered within the wider safeguarding context.

Staff should ask: 'Why is this behaviour happening?' rather than simply 'How do we stop this behaviour?'

Repeated incidents may indicate unmet SEND needs, communication difficulties, anxiety, trauma, bullying, abuse, exploitation, mental health difficulties, environmental triggers, inappropriate expectations or an ineffective support plan.

Repeated restrictive interventions should trigger review and professional curiosity rather than simply becoming accepted as part of managing a pupil.

19. Reviewing incidents

Following significant incidents, the school should review why the incident occurred; whether warning signs were identified; whether de-escalation was attempted; whether the intervention was necessary, proportionate and least restrictive; whether it lasted no longer than necessary; whether anyone was injured or distressed; whether staff require further training; whether the pupil's support plan needs updating; whether reasonable adjustments are required; whether there are safeguarding concerns; and whether similar incidents are occurring.

20. Monitoring and reducing restrictive intervention

The school will monitor restrictive intervention data to identify frequency, patterns, locations, times, pupils affected, staff involved, triggers, types of intervention, injuries and use of seclusion.

Senior leaders should use this information to identify opportunities for prevention and reduction.

21. Equality and non-discrimination

Restrictive interventions must never be used in a discriminatory manner.

The school will consider whether particular groups of pupils are disproportionately subject to restrictive interventions, including pupils with SEND, disabilities, particular communication needs, mental health difficulties or other protected characteristics.

Where patterns emerge, leaders will investigate and take appropriate action.

22. Whistleblowing

Staff should feel able to raise concerns where they believe restrictive interventions are being used unnecessarily, excessively, repeatedly without review, inappropriately, outside agreed procedures, or without appropriate recording.

Staff should initially raise concerns with the DSL, Headteacher or another appropriate senior leader. Where staff feel unable to raise concerns internally, they should follow the school's whistleblowing procedure.

23. Responsibilities

Governing body / Trust

- Ensure an appropriate policy is in place.
- Ensure leaders comply with relevant guidance.
- Monitor the use of restrictive interventions.
- Ensure appropriate staff training.
- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Headteacher

- Implement this policy.

- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities.
- Ensure incidents are appropriately recorded and reviewed.
- Ensure appropriate training is provided.
- Ensure parents/carers are informed where required.

DSL
- Consider safeguarding implications.
- Ensure relevant concerns are recorded.
- Ensure patterns are identified.
- Liaise with relevant professionals where necessary.
- Ensure allegations concerning staff are managed appropriately.

SENCO
- Support assessment of SEND-related needs.
- Contribute to individual support plans.
- Advise staff on reasonable adjustments.
- Monitor whether restrictive intervention may indicate unmet need.

All staff
- Follow this policy.
- Use prevention and de-escalation.
- Act proportionately.
- Report and record incidents.
- Participate in training and review.

24. Staff quick-reference guide

BEFORE INTERVENTION — STOP • THINK • DE-ESCALATE
- Is anyone at immediate risk?
- Can the situation be safely de-escalated?
- Can other pupils be moved away?
- Can I reduce demands?
- Can I get support?
- Is restrictive intervention genuinely necessary?

DURING INTERVENTION — NECESSARY • PROPORTIONATE • MINIMUM TIME
- Use the least restrictive approach.
- Remain calm.
- Monitor the pupil.
- Stop as soon as it is safe.
- Seek medical assistance if required.

AFTER INTERVENTION — SAFE • REPORT • RECORD • REVIEW
- Check the pupil.

- Check others involved.
- Report to the appropriate senior leader/DSL.
- Record the incident.
- Inform parents/carers where required.
- Review what happened.
- Update support/risk plans if necessary.

25. Key message for all staff

Restrictive intervention is not a behaviour-management shortcut.

Prevent where possible. De-escalate whenever possible. Use force only when necessary and lawful. Use the least restrictive response for the shortest time necessary. Protect the pupil's dignity. Record, report and review every significant incident. Look beyond the behaviour to understand the child.