

Restrictive Interventions Policy

This incorporates St Teresa of Calcutta MAC and ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL policy on the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions.

Policy Details	
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Version	Date	Author	Note of Revisions
1.0	June 2025	St Teresa of Calcutta MAC	
2.0	March 2026	St Teresa of Calcutta MAC	<p>Change of policy name to restrictive intervention policy</p> <p>Updated to reflect DfE Restrictive Interventions Guidance, April 2026.</p> <p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inclusion of reference to seclusion -Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate -Pupil & staff support -recording and reporting arrangements

Introduction

'The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.' DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England April 2026

At ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all pupils, staff, and visitors. This Positive Handling Policy outlines our approach to promoting positive behaviour, preventing incidents that might require the use of reasonable force and seclusion, and safely managing situations where restrictive interventions may become necessary.

This policy is aligned with our mission to uphold the dignity and wellbeing of every individual and complies with the Department for Education guidance on the use of reasonable force in schools.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide all practice and decision-making in relation to physical intervention:

Behaviour as Communication: All behaviour is a form of communication. A child or young person's distressed or challenging behaviour often signals unmet needs. School staff must make every effort to understand and respond to those underlying needs through appropriate support, rather than through punitive or restrictive responses.

Respecting the Child's Voice: Every child and young person has the right to be heard. Their views, wishes, and feelings must be sought, listened to, and considered in any decisions made about them, including decisions relating to behaviour and intervention strategies.

A Right to Safety and Protection: All children, young people and staff have the right to be protected from harm, to feel safe in their learning environment and working environment, and to have their wellbeing and development prioritised. This includes protection from harmful or excessive use of restraint and seclusion.

Non-Routine and Proportionate Use: Physical intervention or restraint is not to be used routinely, and should never be part of a standard support plan unless based on an individualised risk assessment and subject to regular review. They should only be used:

- In the context of positive relationships, preventative approaches, and a culture of wellbeing;
- As a last resort, where a child or young person is non-compliant and there is an immediate risk of injury to the child or young person, or to others, and no less restrictive alternative is viable;
- For the shortest duration necessary, and in the safest, least restrictive way possible;
- Only by appropriately trained staff, except in true emergencies;
- In a way that does not degrade, humiliate, or punish, nor unlawfully restrict liberty.

Aims of this Policy

To ensure that all members of the school community feel safe and respected.
To minimise the need for the use of reasonable force or restrictive interventions.
To promote positive relationships and proactive strategies for de-escalation.
To support pupils in developing self-regulation and positive behaviour strategies.
To ensure that any use of force is lawful, necessary, proportionate, and used as a last resort.

Terminology

For clarity, this policy will use the following definitions:

Reasonable force: Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.

Restrictive interventions: Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include use of equipment seclusion/isolation . Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

Restraint: A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

As noted within the definitions, these terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories.

Use of Reasonable Force

In line with DfE guidance, reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from:

- Hurting themselves or others;
- Damaging property;
- Causing disorder.

Use of force is always a last resort and will be:

- **Reasonable:** Using no more force than is necessary;
- **Proportionate:** To the situation and risk presented;
- **Legal:** In accordance with DfE and school guidance.

Use of Reasonable Force to Search Pupils

Headteachers and authorised staff have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions if they have reasonable grounds to suspect the presence of a prohibited item (as defined by law).

A member of staff may use reasonable force when searching for legally prohibited items, but not when searching for items only banned under school rules. The use of force will always be decided on a case-by-case basis, considering the specific context and level of risk.

Unacceptable Uses of Force

Staff will never use force for the purpose of punishment.

Under no circumstances will a pupil be deliberately restrained in a manner that could compromise their airway, breathing, or circulation. This includes:

- Covering the mouth and/or nose
- Applying pressure to the neck or abdomen

Ground restraints pose a particular risk and will be avoided wherever possible. If a pupil is unintentionally taken to the ground during an incident:

- Staff will release holds or reposition to a safer alternative (preferably standing) as quickly as possible
- A medical assessment will be sought promptly for the pupil, and any injuries will be treated without delay
- Even when restraint is seated or standing, it carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, and its use will always be a last resort

Who Can Use Reasonable Force

Under section 93 of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from:

- Committing a criminal offence;
- Causing injury to themselves or others;
- Causing damage to property;

causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise⁶

Other Physical Contact with Pupils

In accordance with DfE guidance, ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL does not have a 'no contact' policy. Furthermore, ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL will not agree to any requests from parents or staff to avoid using reasonable force or other restrictive interventions where appropriate. A 'no contact' policy can prevent staff from taking necessary and reasonable actions to safeguard pupils effectively.

There are circumstances where physical contact with pupils is appropriate and does not raise concerns regarding the use of reasonable force or restrictive practices. The appropriateness of such contact depends on the context, but common examples include:

- Providing first aid
- Guiding or escorting pupils, for example:
- Holding a pupil's hand at the front or back of the line when walking to assembly or around the school
- Supporting a pupil in moving to a designated self-regulation space
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Offering praise or congratulations, such as a pat on the back or a handshake
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument
- Teaching techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

When considering whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, staff will exercise professional judgement. Staff will take into account:

- The school's child protection and safeguarding policies
- The specific circumstances, such as the presence of other adults
- The pupil's age and developmental stage
- Any additional needs or vulnerabilities the pupil may have, including SEND
- Physical contact should always be respectful, proportionate, and in the best interests of the pupil and staff.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving and is only used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion is not implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

The place to which the pupil is confined is safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil will be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave.

An incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with this policy and in line with DfE recording and reporting duties.

Seclusion, as defined in this policy, is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom which will be outlined in our school's behaviour policy.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for promoting positive behaviour and using de-escalation strategies. Staff receive annual training in positive behaviour and in using de-escalation strategies.

Designated staff receive enhanced training in positive handling techniques.

The Senior Leadership Team monitors the use of reasonable force and ensures accountability.

Prevention and De-escalation

At ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL we believe that prevention and early intervention are key to reducing the need for restrictive practices. As such, we:

- Promote a whole school ethos of positive behaviour, respect, and emotional literacy.
- Use a clear, consistent behaviour policy that includes restorative practices.
- Train all staff in de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour support.
- Foster strong relationships between staff and pupils to build trust and understanding.
- Regularly monitor behaviour trends to identify early signs of distress or escalating behaviour.

Whole School Measures to Minimise the Need for Reasonable Force

The following proactive strategies are embedded throughout the school:

Clear Expectations: Communicated regularly through assemblies, lessons, and displays.

Behaviour Curriculum: Taught explicitly through PSHE and tutor time.

Staff Training: All staff receive annual training de-escalation and safeguarding.

Safe Spaces or Staff: Designated areas where pupils can go to self-regulate or de-escalate.

Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs): Used for pupils with identified needs to outline tailored strategies.

Parental Engagement: Ongoing communication with parents to reinforce consistent approaches at home and school.

Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff will consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- Staff will consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff will assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff will communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff will use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff will reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff will consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and will consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.¹⁴

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff will consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff will seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff will clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies will be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff will seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff will also take into account other relevant considerations.

Training on the use of restrictive interventions will equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It will also help s

Trained Staff

While any staff member may use reasonable force when necessary, those who are more likely to encounter situations where restrictive interventions may be required receive additional training. This includes training in:

- Safe and lawful use of reasonable force;
- Preventative strategies, including de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour support.
- School leaders are responsible for assessing their specific context to determine which staff require training, and for ensuring that all training aligns with national guidance and the principles of this policy.
- Training will be delivered by certified positive handling trainers who undergo annual training and assessment.

Employer Responsibilities

Employers have a legal duty to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their employees under the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*. As such, schools must:

- Conduct risk assessments to identify roles where there may be a foreseeable need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions;
- Ensure that staff in these roles are appropriately trained and supported to carry out such duties safely and confidently;

- Regularly review these assessments to reflect changes in pupil needs or staffing.

Pupil and Staff Support

Following a restraint incident or seclusion, the school will hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation will be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue.

This process will ideally be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident and may also benefit from the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support.

School will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources.

Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed will also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

Tailored Approaches for Individual Pupils

At ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL we recognise that some pupils may require a personalised approach to behaviour support. For these pupils, we aim to provide:

- **Individual Risk Assessments:** Identifying triggers, signs of escalation, and personalised de-escalation strategies.
- **Restrictive Intervention Plans:** Developed collaboratively with staff, parents/carers, and where appropriate, the pupil.
- **Multi-agency Support:** Involving SEND, pastoral, safeguarding, and external professionals, where necessary.
- **Regular Reviews:** To ensure strategies remain appropriate and effective.

Considerations for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are vulnerable

At ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL we also recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) may respond differently to certain situations, and we are committed to ensuring that their needs are met with understanding, compassion, and proactive support.

Some pupils with SEND may display behaviours that could be harmful to themselves or others in response to distressing or confusing situations. Such behaviours may be triggered by:

- Physical pain
- Sensory overload
- Unfamiliar environments
- Feelings of fear or anxiety

Particularly for pupils who have difficulty with verbal communication, behaviour may be their primary way of expressing discomfort, confusion, or unmet needs. We acknowledge the potential for pupils with SEND to be disproportionately subject to the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions.

To address this, we will:

- Strive to understand the underlying causes of behaviours rather than focusing solely on the behaviours themselves.
- Ensure our policies and practices support inclusivity, and do not inadvertently create distress or disadvantage for pupils with SEND.

- Recognise that school culture, routines, and expectations may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND and adjust our approach accordingly.

Proactive Support and Risk Reduction

Staff who know pupils well play a key role in identifying potential triggers, managing risk, and supporting individual pupils to prevent escalation. Preventative and de-escalation strategies may include:

- Removing distressing stimuli
- Adjusting staff body language, tone, or posture
- Supporting the pupil to express their feelings before becoming overwhelmed
- Using calming or distracting activities
- Providing access to familiar objects, routines, or safe spaces
- Behaviour Support Plans

Where appropriate, the school will work with parents, pupils, and professionals to co-produce personalised Behaviour Support Plans. These will:

- Detail agreed de-escalation strategies
- Specify any required environmental adjustments
- Outline how the pupil communicates distress or needs
- Identify when and how increased physical contact might be necessary, with clear boundaries around its use

Plans will also reference risk assessments where there is an identified likelihood of the use of reasonable force or restrictive interventions. These plans will be regularly reviewed, particularly after any significant incidents, to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.

Recording and Reporting the Use of Force by Members of Staff

In accordance with Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL ensures that a clear and consistent procedure is in place for recording and reporting each seclusion or restraint incident. This includes incidents where reasonable force or other restrictive interventions and seclusion have been used, even if such interventions are part of an agreed Behaviour Support Plan. For restraint incidents that occur without direct physical contact, for example, the removal of a walking aid, these will also be recorded.

Recording Incidents

All staff involved in seclusion or a restraint incident will record the incident in writing as soon as practicable after the event, within the same day, and no later than 24 hours later. The school has a consistent template for the recording of incidents which includes:

- Names of the pupil(s) and staff involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including SEND status and SEN code
- Date, time, location, and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief factual account of the incident, including:
 - What led up to it
 - Any known or suspected triggers
 - Preventative or de-escalation strategies used
 - Type and degree of force applied
 - Any injuries sustained (by pupil or staff)
 - The rationale for the use of force
 - Details of how and when parents were informed
 - Any post-incident support or medical treatment provided
 - Follow-up actions or reviews of behaviour support plans

All records will be kept securely and used to evaluate practice and ensure accountability.

Reporting Incidents to Parents

ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL will report the use of force to each parent of the pupil involved as soon as practicable, unless:

- The pupil is aged 20 or over; or
- Reporting to parents is likely to cause significant harm to the pupil (e.g., risk of abuse or neglect). In such cases, the incident will be reported to the Local Authority where the pupil is ordinarily resident.

The requirement to inform parents applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The school has a consistent template for reporting incidents to parents which includes:

- Date, time, location, and length of time force was used
- Type and degree of force applied
- Details of any physical injuries (if applicable)
- Brief explanation of why the use of force was deemed necessary

ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL will choose the most appropriate method to report to parents (e.g., phone call, email, secure online system) and will offer a follow-up meeting where appropriate.

This meeting may include:

- A discussion of triggers or warning signs and what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- Review of the Behaviour Support Plan and its effectiveness
- Consideration of alternative strategies or adjustments
- Opportunities to gather parental and pupil feedback
- Any necessary amendments to Behaviour Support Plans will be made collaboratively following such discussions.

Compliance and Oversight

The Local Governing Body, supported by St Teresa of Calcutta MAC, ensures this policy aligns with the latest statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education and all relevant safeguarding duties. All staff involved in restrictive interventions will be appropriately trained and supported.

Monitoring of reasonable force and restrictive interventions

Use of Data

Data on the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions will be routinely monitored and analysed by St Teresa of Calcutta MAC and ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL to improve practice, support vulnerable pupils, and uphold the school's duty of care. This includes:

Identifying policy and practice improvements: We will evaluate whether existing behaviour strategies and interventions are effective and where ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL should seek to strengthen or revise policy and practice.

Informing staff training and development: We will use data to identify specific areas where additional training or support is needed—whether for individual staff members, year groups, or departments.

Understanding pupil patterns and needs: We will analyse patterns of repeat incidents to identify possible behavioural triggers or support gaps. This analysis should be shared with relevant staff and, where

appropriate, used to revise or establish behaviour support plans in partnership with parents and external professionals.

Monitoring Disproportionality: We will monitor data for any disproportionate use of force or restrictive interventions concerning pupils:

- With protected characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, disability, gender)
- With Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Or who experience other vulnerabilities

This scrutiny helps ensure that practice is equitable, lawful, and reflects an inclusive ethos.