



St. Mary's C. E. Primary School, Rawtenstall

**Restrictive Intervention and Reasonable Force Policy
(Updated April 2026)
Neil Gurman**

School Mission Statement

Based upon our belief of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the World, we will give all children a positive experience of Christianity and learning, whilst retaining a respect for other faiths.

We will promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils, within a caring, loving, stimulating and nurturing environment, which is firmly based upon Christian values.

All children will receive a wealth of high quality educational experiences through the positive involvement of school, home and St. Mary's Church.

Policy Statement

At St. Mary's we are aware the use of restrictive intervention, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupil's, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive intervention will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

The aim of the policy is to proactively minimise the use need to use restrictive interventions at St Mary's CE Primary School, through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies. When it is necessary it will also help school staff feel confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

Relevant legislation

The principal legislation to which this guidance relates to are:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially Sections 93 and 93A.
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (no 2) (England) Regulations 2025.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

Terminology

For clarity, this policy will use the following definitions:

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This is an umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in ‘**Other physical contact with pupils**’ within this policy. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

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.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include physical contact. For example, holding a pupil’s arms to their sides or removing a pupil’s crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

The various restrictive interventions above have been defined for clarity and should not be considered as an endorsement or otherwise for use in schools.

Understanding restrictive interventions

Who can use reasonable force?

At St Mary’s CE Primary school all members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

To prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

At St Mary’s CE Primary School staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions will be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative/de-escalation strategies.

At St Mary's CE Primary School we have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of all staff. Therefore, we carry out risk assessments to ensure staff who regularly work alongside pupils where use of reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

Use reasonable force to search pupils

At St Mary's CE Primary School the following staff have the authorisation to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil may have a prohibited item. The members of staff below can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under school rules only. Staff should refer to the '**Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools**' guidance.

Staff will authorisation to search pupils at St Mary's CE Primary School:

Mr N Gurman – Headteacher
Mrs N Ashworth – Deputy Headteacher
Mrs K Hughes – KS1 Leader
Mrs D Watson - SENDCo

Unacceptable use of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of a punishment.

Pupils should not be restrained in way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation. For example, by covering their mouth/nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment or treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated or standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and should be avoided where possible.

Other physical contact with pupils

At St Mary's CE Primary School we do not implement 'no contact' policy.

Additionally, we do not grant permission for this if we receive requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy as St Mary's Primary School can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in circumstances to fully protect pupils. School leaders will adopt policies which allow and support staff to make appropriate physical contact.

At St Mary's CE Primary School there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on circumstances include:

- To give first aid

- To guide or escort pupils, such as holding hands of a pupils at the front/back of the line when going to collective worship, when walking together around school or on a school trip; or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate.
- To comfort a distressed pupil
- To congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or handshake
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff will use their judgement and have regard to:

- St Mary's CE Primary School Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- The applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- The individual pupil's age
- Any other factors including but not limited to whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities. Any other alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used.

Seclusion

Seclusion – A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving – should only be 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, staff at St Mary's CE Primary School are aware the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be used by staff through threat of punishment.

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

An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded on the proforma within this policy – **Please use Appendix A** and in accordance with the section on **'Recording and Reporting duties'**.

At St Mary's CE Primary School 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. Staff should refer to these measures which are outlined in St Mary's CE Primary School Behaviour Policy which aligns with the 'Behaviour in Schools' guidance.

St Mary's CE Primary school whole school measures

At St Mary's CE Primary School whole school measures can include:

- Consideration of how the school and classroom environments can support all pupils to achieve and thrive.
- Sharing best practice for whole class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds.
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation.
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning.

St Mary's CE Primary School individual approaches

At St Mary's CE Primary School individual approaches can include:

- Working closely with parents to support individual pupils.
- Strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of support plans. Where a pupil has a disability, St Mary's CE Primary School have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers.
- Providing pupils with time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates.

At St Mary's CE Primary School we believe clear communication is vital and we ensure the policy is available for all staff, pupils and parents.

Determining when the use of restrictive intervention is appropriate

At St Mary's CE Primary School there will be occasions when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and are aware this option is available to them. 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 should consider the following:

Is it necessary?

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

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should 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 should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.

- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, SEND needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should 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 distressing.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include where possible, considering the location and the environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For a pupil with difficulty with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupils understand what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should 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 should also take into account other relevant considerations. Training on the use of restrictive interventions should equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It should help staff understand how to assess whether their response is reasonable under pressure.

Considerations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves or others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

At St Mary's CE Primary school we will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND. For example, we will consider how the school culture and environment may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND and seek to support pupils to cope with situations that they may find distressing.

St Mary's CE Primary School staff who know individual pupils well will be utilised to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. We will also with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Examples may include:

- Removing stimuli that be may be causing distress
- Changing body language, facial expressions, and/or tone of voice
- Supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- Engaging the pupil in an activity which can help manage their feelings of anxiety
- Distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Staff will work with parents with SEND in the co-production of support plans. These plans should outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil may be finding challenging and ways for the pupils to communicate needs effectively.

Supports plans will detail circumstances where it be appropriate for staff to have an increased physical contact with a pupil. This will be discussed in conjunction with relevant people, such as teachers, parents, the pupils and other agencies. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions, risk assessments will be in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through training and prevention strategies. Whether the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a support plan.

Support plans will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil. Where a pupil has a disability, St Mary's CE Primary School has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage so that the pupil can fully participate in the education provided, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that school provides for pupils.

Pupil and staff support

St Mary's CE Primary School will evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a support plan.

If appropriate, the pupil and staff member should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Incidents in which a member of staff uses reasonable force or seclusion on a pupil must be recorded on the proforma provided at Appendix A. In addition, any injuries should be recorded in accordance with St Mary's CE Primary School procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

St Mary's CE Primary School will also hold a follow-up conversation 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 be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident and also supported by an additional adult to ensure impartiality and

support. By implementing this process St Mary's CE Primary School will foster a culture of continuous improvement.

St Mary's CE Primary School will 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 should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

Recording and reporting duties

Recording the use of force

St Mary's CE Primary School Governing Body will ensure a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, as part of the school's duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Incidents will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event has occurred. It will be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

The procedure will ensure that record of any such incident is made in writing as soon as practicable after the incident.

The pro-forma at Appendix A and B will be used for this purpose.

Reporting the use of force

St Mary's CE Primary School Governing Body will ensure a procedure is in place for the reporting of each significant use of force to the parents of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, an endeavour to do this not later than the same day.

Exceptions to the requirement to report are where:

- The pupil is aged 20 or over; or
- It appears to the staff member that doing so would likely result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member will report the incident to any parents(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

A report of the incident made to the parents will be use the pro-forma provided at Appendix B of this policy. This will include the following information:

- Time, date location and approximate duration of the intervention
- Brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Brief account of what type of force was applied and the degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

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

St Mary's CE Primary School will communicate the information in writing, this may include via email.

In addition to this parent(s) will be invited to a follow up meeting in school about the incident, where appropriate. This may include the following:

- Any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- Whether any agreed support plans were followed
- What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- What might be done differently in future

St Mary's CE Primary School may use this information to amend any existing support plans, as needed.

Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

St Mary's CE Primary School Governing Body will ensure a procedure is in place for the recording of each seclusion or restraint incident as part of the school's duty under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

As outlined in these regulations, an incident may occur with or without direct physical contact. For restraint incidents that occur without direct physical contact, for example, the removal of a walking aid, these must be recorded under the procedures outlined.

Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

The record of the incident should be recorded in writing using the pro-forma at Appendix C as soon as practicable after the incident. The requirement to record applies even if the use of seclusion or restraint in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as a part of a support plan.

The following information will be included:

- Names of pupil and staff directly involved
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the incident
- Any relevant circumstances or needs of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has identified SEND and their SEND Code
- Brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

St Mary's CE Primary School Governing Body will ensure there is a procedure in place for supplying a written record of the seclusion or restraint incident to parents.

Parents will be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and endeavour to do this no later than the same day. This will be using Appendix D.

Exceptions to the requirement to report are where:

- The pupil is aged 20 or over
- It appears to the staff member that doing so would likely result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member will report the incident to any parents(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

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

In addition to this parent(s) will be invited to a follow up meeting in school about the incident, where appropriate. This may include the following:

- Any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- Whether any agreed support plans were followed
- What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- What might be done differently in future

St Mary's CE Primary School may use this information to amend any existing support plans, as needed.

In circumstances where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, school will only need to follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force, under Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The same information does not need to be reported twice.

However, if a restraint incident does not constitute a significant incident of use of force, for example, the removal of a walking aid, this must be reported under the procedure outlined in this section.

Guidance for governing bodies on using data

St Mary's CE Primary School governing body will take all reasonable steps to ensure the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with.

St Mary's CE Primary School governing body will regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to ensure leaders:

- Identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- Identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and staff to improve understanding and practice.
- Understand pupils repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a support plan or revise an existing plan.
- Identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEND, or other types of vulnerability.

St Mary's CE Primary School governing body will also consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis will be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of people.

Complaints and allegations

At St Mary's CE Primary School any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with St Mary's CE Primary School complaints policy and procedures.

If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education will be followed. This includes the provisions regarding suspension of staff.

Date policy approved by St Mary's CE Primary School Governing Body – April 2026

Date of review – April 2027

Appendix A



Use of force incident reporting form

Student:

Year:

Date of incident:

Time and duration of incident:

Describe incident in detail

Why was the use of force necessary?

What strategies were used to try and defuse the situation before using positive handling?

Was anyone injured?.

If yes has it been recorded in the accident books:

Members of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to positive handling:

The incident form was completed by:

Designation of person completing the form:

Has the parent/carer been informed in writing –

When were they informed:

Date:

Signature of staff members:

Date:

Original form to the Headteacher.

Appendix B



Use of force parent notification form

Student:

Year:

Date of incident:

Duration of incident:

Explanation of why the use of the intervention was necessary

Use of force that was applied and the degree of force used

Were any physical injuries sustained?

I can confirm the parent/carer has been informed in writing:

Date:

Signature of staff members:

Date:

Original form to the Headteacher.

Appendix C



Use of seclusion and non-force restraint – Incident Report Form

Student:

Year:

SEND or other vulnerabilities – Please include SEND code if applicable:

Staff member(s) involved:

Date of incident:

Duration of incident:

Location:

Describe incident in detail

Why was seclusion of non-restraint force necessary?

What strategies were used to try and defuse the situation before using seclusion and/or non-restraint force?

Was anyone injured?.

If yes has it been recorded in the accident books:

Members of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to seclusion and/or non-restraint force:

The incident form was completed by:

Designation of person completing the form:

Has the parent/carer been informed in writing –

When were they informed:

Date:

Signature of staff members:

Date:

Original form to the Headteacher.

Appendix D



Student:

Year:

SEND or other vulnerabilities – Please include SEND code if applicable:

Staff member(s) involved:

Date of incident:

Duration of incident:

Location:

Describe incident in detail

Why was seclusion of non-restraint force necessary?

Were any physical injuries sustained?

I can confirm the parent/carer has been informed in writing:

Date:

Signature of staff members:

Date:

Original form to the Headteacher.