

Restrictive Interventions Policy (including use of reasonable force)



Maritime
Academy
Trust

Approved by:	Maritime Trust Board	Date:
Last reviewed on:	03/07/26	
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1. Introduction & Purpose

This policy outlines Featherby Infant and Junior School's approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force. It is written in accordance with the DfE guidance "Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools" (April 2026), Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), and other relevant legislation. This policy aims to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff while promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment. We are committed to minimising the need for restrictive interventions through proactive strategies, de-escalation techniques, and individualised support. This policy aligns with our relationships and behaviour policy, our safeguarding policies, staff handbook, SEND and equalities policy.

2. Definitions

To ensure clarity, the following definitions are used in this policy:

- Restrictive Intervention: A means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This includes both physical and non-physical actions. It is the umbrella term for the below.
- 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. Seclusion is not a disciplinary measure and should only be used as a last resort safety measure.
- Restraint: A non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.
- Reasonable Force: A term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

These terms will be defined to all staff within the introduction of this policy and within all training around behaviour and de-escalation to ensure staff are clear about what is and is not classed as a restrictive intervention.

No form of restrictive intervention is encouraged by Featherby Infant and Junior School's and any form is only ever used as a last resort when a child is at risk of harm and all other avenues are unsuccessful. De-escalation before damage or harm is always our primary strategy.

3. Legal and Ethical Framework

This policy is compliant with the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)
- DfE Guidance for schools April 2026 – Use of Reasonable Force
- SEND Code of Practice
- OFSTED framework 2025

This policy adheres to the principles of:

- **Necessity:** Restrictive interventions are only used when all other de-escalation strategies have failed, and there is an imminent risk of harm to the child or others.
- **Proportionality:** The level of intervention must be proportionate to the risk presented.
- **Minimum Force:** Only the minimum force necessary to prevent harm is used.
- **Accountability:** All instances of restrictive intervention are recorded, reported, and reviewed.
- **Contact:** School does not support a "no contact" stance in some cases positive physical contact is appropriate (e.g., administering first aid, comforting a distressed child, or guiding a pupil safely to an assembly line)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Head of School/Headteacher:** Overall responsibility for the implementation and review of this policy.
- **SENDCo:** Supporting staff in developing individual behaviour support plans and providing training on de-escalation techniques.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Ensuring that all incidents of restrictive intervention are reviewed in the context of safeguarding.
- **Class Teachers and Support Staff:** Implementing proactive strategies, de-escalation techniques, and, when necessary, restrictive interventions in accordance with this policy and their training.
- **Parents/Carers:** Working in partnership with the school to support their child's behaviour and well-being.
- **LAC/Trust :** Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

- 5. Principles

Featherby Infant and Junior School's is committed to the following principles:

- Last Resort: Restrictive interventions will only be used as a last resort when all other de-escalation strategies have been exhausted and there is an immediate risk of harm.
- Proportionality: Any intervention used will be proportionate to the risk presented and the needs of the individual pupil, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
- Minimising Harm: The safety and well-being of the pupil and others will be the paramount consideration, adhering to safeguarding principles outlined in KCSIE.
- Dignity and Respect: All interventions will be carried out with dignity and respect, minimising distress and potential for humiliation, in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Transparency and Accountability: All incidents involving restrictive interventions will be recorded and reported accurately and promptly, fulfilling our statutory duties under the Education Act 2002.
- Inclusion: We will take into account the individual needs of pupils, particularly those with SEND, and make reasonable adjustments as necessary, as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- Positive Relationships: We will foster positive relationships between staff and pupils to create a supportive and inclusive environment where restrictive interventions are less likely to be needed.
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These principles are reflected in our behaviour and relationships policy which aims to provide a whole school as well as personalised strategy to maximise inclusion, relationships and belonging and minimise the necessity for restrictive interventions.

6. Whole School Approaches to Minimise Restrictive Interventions

Featherby Infant and Junior School proactively implements several whole-school procedures and policies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions, aligning with our school vision and values:

- Relationships and Behaviour Policy: This policy ensures positive relationships between staff and pupils by agreeing on consistent expectations of adult and child behaviours. It acknowledges transitions, repetition of expectations, restorative approaches, explicitly teaching positive behaviours, and high-quality teaching to create a predictable and safe environment.
- Pupil Passports and Transition Arrangements: These ensure receiving teachers know of any triggers, sensory needs, or accommodations needed for individual pupils, in line with SEND Code of Practice.
- Zones of Regulation, Worry Monsters, and Jigsaw: These programmes ensure consistent use of emotional vocabulary and support pupils to recognise and express their feelings.

Visual Support Policy: This policy ensures visuals for communication are consistent throughout the school, supporting pupils with communication difficulties to express their feelings and preferences. We adopt a total communication approach.

- Training: Staff receive training in trauma-informed practice and positive behaviour management as part of their annual CPD and induction package. Positive handling training is provided to key staff by accredited trainers.
- Graduated Response to Behaviour: This includes monitoring behaviour on CPOMS, through safeguarding QA meetings, and the use of SEMH strategies to ensure early identification and intervention of needs through appropriate internal or specialist pathways, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.

The impact of these approaches is monitored through CPOMs, pupil progress meetings and pupil, staff and parent voice.

7. Recognising Triggers, De-escalation, and Individualised Support

Featherby Infant and Junior School recognises the importance of understanding triggers, de-escalation techniques, and developing individualised support plans, particularly for pupils with SEND:

- Understanding Triggers: Our behaviour policy highlights the importance of understanding the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour to provide proactive support and create an inclusive environment.
- Parental Partnership: We foster strong relationships with parents through parents' evenings and home visits to better understand pupils' triggers and effective strategies. We share scripts and strategies with parents to enhance support.
- Pupil Passports: These help identify and manage risks, such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions. Advice from outside agencies is utilised and discussed with parents.
- Behaviour Support Plans: For some pupils, a behaviour support plan is developed as part of our graduated response. These plans outline adjustments, challenges, and effective de-escalation strategies. They are developed alongside professional advice and with parental input, and shared with all staff in contact with the pupil.
- Risk Assessments: Where there is an identified risk of needing to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions, this is included in the support plan, and a risk assessment is put in place.
- Review: All behaviour plans are reviewed with the pupil (where appropriate) and parents at least termly, and more frequently if changes are needed.

8. Situations Where Restrictive Interventions May Be Necessary

Restrictive interventions are always an absolute last resort and should never be used as a threat or punishment. Staff are strictly prohibited from restricting a pupil's airway, breathing, or circulation (e.g., pressure on the neck, abdomen, or nose). Unintentional ground holds must be re-positioned immediately. In the vast majority of incidents, de-escalation strategies, following pupils' behaviour plans or pupil profiles, using behaviour scripts, or following pupils' sensory preferences are effective.

On very rare occasions, staff may find themselves in a situation where restrictive interventions are lawful and necessary to keep individuals and the school community safe. The DfE Guidance for schools April 2026 states that reasonable force can be used to prevent a child from:

1. Causing injury to themselves or others.
2. Committing a criminal offence.
3. Damaging property.
4. Causing disorder among pupils at the school.

Any staff member concerned that a situation is escalating should immediately request support.

In deciding whether a restrictive intervention is required, staff should consider:

1. Is it necessary?
 - Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation.
 - Staff should 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 should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.
2. 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 (e.g., medical conditions, SEND, vulnerabilities), their characteristics (e.g., age, size), and relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.
3. Have you considered the pupil's welfare?
 - Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. Pupils who have experienced adverse life events, medical conditions,

sensory impairments, past trauma, communication difficulties, or other needs may find restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language, and communication, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands 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.

A risk assessment will be carried out on staff who may most likely need to deploy restrictive interventions, and appropriate training should be monitored and up-to-date.

9. Recording and Reporting

Featherby Infant and Junior School adheres to the statutory requirements for timely and thorough recording and reporting of restrictive interventions, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education:

- Recording: Any incidents of restraint and seclusion must be recorded as soon as possible after the event and within the same day by the adults involved, including any witnesses. The recording must be on CPOMs and must include:
 - ❖ the SEN status code,
 - ❖ the approximate duration of the intervention,
 - ❖ the degree of force applied
 - ❖ pre-existing triggers or de-escalation strategies attempted
- Reporting to Parents: Parents must be informed the same day as the incident and as soon as possible after a record has been given to SLT. SLT will be responsible for reporting to parents and ensuring they have a copy of the written report. Reporting to parents is mandatory unless doing so would likely result in serious harm to the pupil, in which case the incident must be escalated directly to the Local Authority
- In-School Meeting: An in-school meeting with parents will be held to discuss the event and next steps to minimise future chances of restrictive interventions. Behaviour plans will be adapted and agreed upon.
- Governing Body Review: The governing body will regularly review incidents of restrictive practices to support the school in identifying trends and where adaptations need to be made to school procedures or policy.

- Injuries: Any injuries to staff or children should be recorded in this process and additionally on Medi-Tracker, and first aid delivered as soon as possible. Reporting of injuries will also follow RIDDOR guidelines where applicable.

10. Wellbeing and Support

Featherby Infant and Junior School is committed to providing wellbeing support following any restrictive intervention:

- Follow-up Conversation: A follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning, and to support pupil and staff wellbeing will be held after any event. This conversation will be 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 and a restorative conversation. This will be facilitated by a SLT member who was not involved in the incident.
- Ongoing Monitoring: We will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed.
- Support for Witnesses: 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.

11. Training

All staff at Featherby Infant and Junior School will receive training on:

- This Restrictive Interventions Policy.
- De-escalation techniques.
- Positive behaviour management strategies.
- Understanding SEND and its impact on behaviour, in line with the SEND Code of Practice.
- Specific training on positive handling techniques will be provided to designated staff members based on risk assessment.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with staff, parents, and the governing body.

The review will consider:

- The effectiveness of the policy in minimising the need for restrictive interventions.
- The impact of the policy on the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Data from incident reports.
- Feedback from stakeholders.
- Changes in legislation or guidance.

13. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy