

Brunshaw Primary School



*'Inspiring children to be resilient and aspirational learners,
within a positive and considerate community.'*

Brunshaw Primary School: Restrictive Intervention Policy (Including Use of Reasonable Force)

April 2026

Agreed by Governors: April 2026

Introduction

This policy sets out Brunshaw Primary School's approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. Our priority is to ensure the safety, dignity and well-being of all pupils, staff and visitors, while fostering a calm, supportive and inclusive learning environment.

At Brunshaw Primary School, we are committed to *'inspiring children to become resilient and aspirational learners within a positive and considerate community'*. This underpins our approach to behaviour, relationships and the use of any intervention.

We recognise that restrictive interventions can have a significant impact on both pupils and staff. They will only ever be used as a last resort, when necessary, proportionate and lawful, and when other supportive strategies have been attempted or deemed unsuitable in the circumstances.

This policy is in line with relevant UK legislation, including the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, and the Equality Act 2010. It also reflects guidance from the Department for Education, including Keeping Children Safe in Education, and incorporates our safeguarding responsibilities.

Brunshaw Primary School is committed to:

- safeguarding the welfare, dignity and rights of every member of the school community
- promoting positive behaviour through proactive, trauma-informed and inclusive practices
- minimising the need for restrictive interventions wherever possible
- ensuring that any use of intervention is transparent, proportionate and accountable
- supporting staff to meet the diverse needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and those within The Meadows SEN provision
- ensuring appropriate, safe and individualised arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs
- continually reviewing practice to ensure the highest standards of care and support

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a framework for the safe and responsible use of restrictive interventions.
- protect pupils and staff from harm.
- promote positive behaviour management strategies.
- ensure transparency and accountability in the use of restrictive interventions.
- comply with all relevant legislation and guidance.

- reflect the school’s commitment to trauma-informed practice and inclusivity, particularly for pupils with SEND and those in The Meadows SEN units.
- ensure the safety of learners with additional learning needs and ensure that arrangements for these learners are appropriate.

3. Definitions

This policy will refer to the following definition:

- **restrictive intervention:** a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses ‘restrictive interventions’ as the 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 the circumstances.
- **significant incident:** any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in ‘Other physical contact with pupils’ within this document. 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 direct 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.
- **non-force-related restrictive intervention:** an action that limits a pupil’s movement or freedom without the use of physical force, such as directing a pupil to a different space, adjusting the environment, or using seclusion, and is used only when necessary to prevent harm and when less restrictive measures have not been effective
- **de-escalation:** Strategies used to calm a situation and prevent escalation to restrictive intervention.
- **serious incident:** Any incident involving restrictive intervention that results in significant injury, trauma, or requires external agency involvement (e.g., police, social services).

Other Physical Contact with Pupils:

Brunshaw Primary School does not operate a ‘no contact’ policy. We recognise that such an approach may increase risk, as it could prevent staff from responding appropriately to safeguard and support pupils.

There are occasions when physical contact is appropriate and does not constitute a restrictive intervention or the use of reasonable force. This will always be proportionate, age-appropriate and responsive to individual need. Examples include:

- providing first aid or responding to injury
- guiding or escorting pupils around school or on visits such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- comforting or reassuring a distressed pupil, including supporting emotional regulation
- offering praise or encouragement, such as a handshake
- supporting teaching and learning, for example in PE, music or practical activities supporting pupils with personal care, medical or physical needs, in line with agreed care plans
- helping pupils to access the environment safely, including equipment or play areas

When determining whether physical contact is appropriate, staff will use their professional judgement and consider:

- relevant school policies, including safeguarding, staff code of conduct and safer working practice guidance
- the context, including the presence of other adults
- the pupil's age, development, and any additional needs or vulnerabilities, including SEND or experiences of trauma
- whether non-physical strategies could be used effectively

Where physical contact forms part of a planned approach to support an individual pupil, this will be clearly documented and shared with relevant staff and, where appropriate, parents or carers.

4. De-escalation – Preventing Significant Incidents

Brunshaw Primary School adopts a whole-school, proactive approach to reducing the likelihood of significant incidents and the need for restrictive interventions.

Our approach focuses on early intervention and prevention through:

- consistent routines, clear expectations and predictable structures
- positive, relational and trauma-informed practice
- adaptive teaching and appropriate environmental adjustments
- early identification and support for pupils' needs, including SEND

- effective communication and co-regulation strategies
- the use of sensory and regulation approaches

Pupils who may be at increased risk of dysregulation or involvement in a significant incident will be supported through an individual risk assessment and regulation plan. These are developed collaboratively with the pupil (where appropriate), their parents or carers, and relevant professionals. Plans clearly outline proactive and preventative strategies to support regulation and reduce risk.

Regulation plans will be shared with all relevant staff to ensure a consistent approach and will be reviewed regularly, at a minimum of half-termly, and following any significant incident or use of a restrictive intervention.

We recognise that each pupil and situation is unique. Pupils with additional vulnerabilities, including SEND or experiences of trauma, may be more likely to experience dysregulation in response to triggers within the school environment. Staff will use their professional judgement and knowledge of the pupil to respond to presenting needs and to prevent escalation wherever possible.

Where a regulation plan is in place, staff must follow the agreed strategies. All responses should be proportionate, supportive and focused on reducing anxiety, supporting co-regulation and restoring calm.

De-escalation strategies may include (but are not limited to):

- offering an alternative or distraction activity, including sensory strategies or food/drink where appropriate
- removing or reducing sources of distress within the environment
- providing calm reassurance and supportive verbal communication
- allowing time, space and reduced interaction to support self-regulation
- adapting the environment, including relocating other pupils if appropriate and safe to do so
- adjusting the adult response, including tone of voice, body language or changing the supporting adult
- using humour appropriately, where this is supportive and based on a positive, established relationship

There may be occasions where de-escalation strategies are not sufficient or appropriate, or where there is an immediate risk of harm. In such circumstances, staff will take action in line with this policy, including the use of restrictive intervention where it is necessary, proportionate and lawful, and in accordance with safeguarding and recording procedures.

5. Use of Restrictive Interventions

Brunshaw Primary School recognises that restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, should only be used in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort. Our approach is underpinned by a commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and inspiring children to be resilient and aspirational learners within a positive and considerate community.

Statutory Power to Use Reasonable Force

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This allows staff to intervene to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing an offence
- causing serious damage to property
- causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Any use of force must be lawful, reasonable and in line with this policy.

When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Restrictive interventions may only be used where there is a clear and immediate risk of harm and when de-escalation strategies have been unsuccessful, are inappropriate, or where the situation requires immediate action to maintain safety.

Key Principles

Necessity: Intervention must be necessary to prevent harm or significant disruption.

Proportionality: The least restrictive option must always be used for the shortest possible time.

Child Welfare and Dignity: The safety, dignity and well-being of the pupil must remain central at all times. Interventions must be applied in a way that minimises distress and preserves respect.

Vulnerabilities and SEND: Staff must take into account any additional needs, including SEND, medical conditions or experiences of trauma, and adapt their approach accordingly.

Equality Implications: Interventions must be applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Support During a Restrictive Intervention

Where restrictive intervention is necessary, staff will:

- seek to maintain calm, using clear and reassuring communication

- continually assess risk and reduce the level of intervention as soon as it is safe to do so
- ensure the pupil's physical and emotional well-being is monitored throughout
- call for additional support where required

Support Following a Restrictive Intervention

Following any use of restrictive intervention:

- the pupil will be supported to recover and regulate in a safe and appropriate space
- a restorative approach will be used, including listening to the pupil's voice and reflecting on the incident
- staff involved will have the opportunity for support and reflection
- the incident will be recorded and reported in line with school procedures
- risk assessments and regulation plans will be reviewed and updated where necessary
- parents or carers will be informed in line with school policy

Staff Training

At Brunshaw Primary School we are committed to ensuring that staff are appropriately trained and supported. All staff receive training in de-escalation and preventative approaches. In addition, identified staff are trained in Team Teach, including Level 1 and, where appropriate, Level 2, to support the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions.

6. Seclusion

Seclusion is defined in statutory guidance as a non-disciplinary intervention where a child is kept apart from others and prevented from leaving. It is a short-term safety measure and may only be used where a pupil is experiencing high levels of dysregulation and there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to themselves or others. In such situations, the focus is on supporting the pupil to regulate and reducing the need for further intervention.

Seclusion is not used as a planned strategy and must never be used as a punishment, sanction, or response to non-compliance where there is no immediate risk.

Key Principles:

- used only as a last resort, where de-escalation is ineffective or inappropriate
- must be necessary, proportionate and for the shortest time possible
- must never be used to threaten, coerce or control
- must maintain the pupil's safety, dignity and well-being at all times

Environment and Supervision:

- the space must be safe, suitable and non-threatening, taking account of individual needs and vulnerabilities
- pupils must be continuously and actively supervised
- staff must monitor well-being, maintain communication and continue de-escalation strategies to reduce risk and duration

After Seclusion

- support the pupil to regulate and reintegrate
- complete a pupil and staff debrief
- review and update the risk assessment and regulation plan as required
- inform parents or carers

All incidents of seclusion are treated as a significant safeguarding event

7. Recording and Reporting

Brunshaw Primary School recognises that all incidents involving restrictive intervention, including the use of reasonable force or seclusion, are significant incidents and must be recorded, reported and reviewed promptly.

Staff must inform a senior leader as soon as possible following any incident to ensure appropriate support for all involved. A written record must be completed as soon as practicable, and wherever possible on the same day, even where interventions are part of an agreed regulation plan.

All incidents involving restrictive interventions, seclusions and use of non-force related restraint will be documented using the school's incident report form within CPOMS. This report will include:

- date, time, location and duration
- pupils and staff involved, including SEND and risk assessment status
- antecedents and known triggers
- de-escalation strategies used and rationale for intervention
- type of restrictive intervention and level of force used
- any injuries, distress or medical support required
- post-incident actions, including support and follow-up
- the pupil's views, where appropriate

Parents or carers will be informed in writing in line with school procedures and, where appropriate, invited to discuss the incident, including triggers, effectiveness of strategies and any need to review the pupil's risk assessment or regulation plan.

Parents will be invited in to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate, including details on:

- any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- behaviour support plans if applicable
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- what might be done differently in the future

In exceptional circumstances, where informing parents or carers may place the pupil at risk of harm, the school will act in accordance with safeguarding procedures and local authority guidance.

Following any incident, a debrief will take place for both pupil and staff. Senior leaders will review all records to ensure that actions taken were necessary, proportionate and in line with this policy, and to identify any changes required to support future practice.

8. Post-Incident Support and Review

Brunshaw Primary School ensures that following any restrictive intervention, appropriate and timely action is taken to safeguard the physical and emotional well-being of all involved, understand the incident, and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Immediate Welfare Checks

As soon as practicable, staff will check all pupils and staff involved for injury, distress or illness. First aid will be provided where required and further medical support sought if necessary. Any concerns will be recorded in line with school procedures.

Emotional Well-being and Safeguarding

Recognising that restrictive interventions can be distressing, appropriate support will be offered to the pupil, staff and any witnesses. This may include support from a trusted adult, pastoral support or other appropriate interventions.

Reflective Debrief and Review

A debrief will take place following the incident to support reflection, learning and future prevention. This will include:

- a factual overview of the incident and rationale for actions taken
- consideration of triggers and early warning signs
- review of de-escalation strategies used and their effectiveness
- identification of any changes required to reduce future risk

The pupil's voice will be sought in an age-appropriate and inclusive way. Where possible, debriefs should be supported by a member of staff not directly involved.

Following the incident, risk assessments and regulation plans will be reviewed and updated where necessary to better meet the pupil's needs.

Restorative Approach

Brunshaw Primary School is committed to repairing relationships following incidents. Where appropriate, restorative approaches will be used to rebuild trust, promote understanding, and ensure all pupils feel safe, respected and included.

9. Monitoring and Escalation

The use of restrictive interventions, along with any significant incidents, will be carefully recorded and regularly monitored by senior leaders to ensure that practice remains safe, proportionate and in the best interests of pupils. Monitoring will focus on identifying patterns, evaluating the effectiveness of support strategies, and determining any further staff training or development needs.

All incidents will be reviewed in line with safeguarding procedures, with particular attention given to the voice, wellbeing and dignity of the child. Where appropriate, records will inform updates to individual risk assessments, behaviour support plans or SEND provision.

Information regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be reported termly to the Governing Body to ensure appropriate oversight and challenge. Leaders will ensure that governors are kept informed of any trends, actions taken, and the impact of interventions.

Where restrictive interventions are used repeatedly, or where concerns arise, this will prompt a more detailed review. This may include engagement with parents/carers, involvement of external agencies, and consideration of alternative strategies or provision. Escalation will take place through safeguarding and/or SEND processes where necessary, in line with school policy.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governing Body:**
 - approving and monitoring the implementation of this policy.
 - ensuring adequate resources are available for training and support.
 - reviewing incident data and addressing any concerns.
- **Headteacher:**
 - overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
 - ensuring staff are appropriately trained and supported.
 - overseeing the investigation of serious incidents.
 - liaising with external agencies as required.
- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT):**
 - supporting the Headteacher in implementing this policy.

- monitoring the use of restrictive interventions.
- providing guidance and support to staff.
- leading CPD on strategies for Positive Behaviour Management and De-escalation strategies
- **Pastoral Team, Pupil Mentor and Attendance Manager:**
 - evolving role to meet the needs of children and their families, impacting positively on pupils' well-being, attendance, punctuality, behaviour, and overall outcomes.
- **Class Teachers and Support Staff:**
 - implementing this policy in their daily practice.
 - using positive behaviour management strategies.
 - de-escalating potentially volatile situations.
 - using restrictive interventions only as a last resort and in accordance with this policy.
 - documenting and reporting all incidents involving restrictive interventions.
- **Parents/Carers:**
 - working in partnership with the school to support their child's behaviour.
 - being informed of any incidents involving restrictive interventions.
 - providing relevant information about their child's needs and triggers.
- **Pupils:**
 - understanding the school's expectations for behaviour.
 - knowing how to seek help if they feel unsafe or distressed.

11. Use of Reasonable Force During Searches

The headteacher, and any staff members they formally authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is carrying a prohibited item.

Staff may use only such force as is reasonable when searching for items that are prohibited by law. Reasonable force must not be used to search for items that are banned solely under the school's own rules. As set out in the [Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools](#) guidance

12. Links to Other Policies

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

- Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Review Date: April 2027