

ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Achievement through Commitment

Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy

Policy for the Attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team	✓		
Teachers	✓		
Teaching Assistants	✓		
Administrative Staff	✓		
Curriculum Support	✓		
Lunchtime Supervisors	✓		
Site Manager	✓		
Cleaners	✓		
Governors	✓		
Parents	✓		
Website	✓		
Local Authority		✓	

1. Aims

At Alder Coppice we strive to create a safe, secure and supportive environment for all of our pupils and staff.

We recognise that there are times when the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion are lawful and necessary to keep people safe. However, we also recognise the significant impact that these can have on pupils, staff and parents/carers. In our school, these measures are usually only considered as a last resort once all other prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted.

This Policy aims to:

- Minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through the use of early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- Help school staff feel confident in knowing how to use restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully, when they are necessary.
- Clearly set out the steps for recording and reporting incidents of reasonable force, seclusion and restraint
- Protect the safety, well-being and dignity of all pupils, staff and help to create a positive and safe place for everyone in school.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This Policy is based upon the DfE (Department for Education) guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools. It also meets the requirements of the following:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Section 83A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Section 550ZA and section 550ZB of the Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025

3. Definitions

The terms used in this Policy are defined as follows. These are based on the Department for Education's guidance on restrictive interventions.

- **Restrictive interventions** are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. This Policy uses restrictive interventions as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Examples of restrictive interventions could include:

- Supervised seclusion of a pupil in an area away from others, where the pupil is prevented from leaving for their own safety and/or the safety of others.
- Passive physical contact, such as a member of staff blocking a pupil's path if they are running towards danger (like a busy road), or to prevent a fight.

- **Reasonable force** refers to the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain children, using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Examples of the use of reasonable force could include:

- A member of staff guiding a pupil to safety by the arm
- Staff breaking up a fight between pupils.
- A staff member restraining a pupil to prevent injury.

- Restraint is a form of non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.

Examples of the use of reasonable force could include:

- A member of staff holding a pupil's arms to their sides when they are attempting to harm themselves or others.
- Removing crutches from a pupil

- Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil or for others. This could be by physical obstruction or by making the pupil think that they will be punished if they leave.

For example, putting a pupil into a "holding room" until they calm down.

- The DfE defines a 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**

3.1 Appropriate Physical Contact with Pupils

Alder Coppice does not have a 'no contact' policy. We do not grant any requests by parents/carers not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

There are many circumstances where 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 or other restrictive interventions.

Examples of these include:

- Providing first aid to a pupil
- Guiding or escorting a pupil through the School building or on a school visit by holding their hand
- Comforting a pupil who is upset.
- Offering congratulations or praise, such as with a pat on the back or a handshake
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- When demonstrating exercises or techniques in PE lessons

When assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, staff should use their professional judgement and have regard to:

- The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The specific circumstances of the incident, such as whether other adults are present.
- Factors which may include (but are not limited to) the pupil's age, any known vulnerabilities, including SEND and/or other disabilities.
- Whether any other strategies that do not include physical contact could be used.

3.2 Seclusion

As defined above, seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them leaving for the safety of themselves or others. This could be through physical obstruction or placing a pupil into a 'holding room' until they calm down.

We will only use seclusion as a safety measure when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. It is not a threat or punishment. It is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful behaviour.

If seclusion is necessary:

- The pupil will be secluded in a safe space that is not intimidating or threatening i.e., a library or a calm area e.g. a tent.
- The pupil will be supervised at all times by at least one member of staff (this may be an allocated member of staff for that pupil).

As soon as the immediate/potential risk of harm has passed, the pupil will be able to leave.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving the Policy.
- Ensuring that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting significant incidents involving force, seclusion incidents or incidents involving restraint.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the procedures for recording reporting the use of force, seclusion and restraint are followed.
- Reviewing and interrogating data on the use of restrictive intervention in school.
- Supporting and challenging leaders on where changes may be needed i.e. where approaches have not been effective or where there appears to be disproportionate use of interventions in relation to pupils with SEND or other vulnerabilities.

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall implementation and oversight of this Policy.
- Ensuring that appropriate and high-quality training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions is provided to staff, based on needs and context.
- Ensuring appropriate staffing levels to support positive behaviour management.
- Monitoring incidents requiring restrictive interventions and review these to refine and improve procedures.
- Ensure compliance with recording and reporting procedures.
- Authorising staff to search a pupil or their belongings if they have good reason to think that a pupil has a prohibited or banned item.
- Following the procedure set out in our complaints procedure to deal with any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions.
- Following the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education if an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other inappropriate restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff.

4.3 All Staff

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they have read and understood the principles of this policy.
- Using de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour management strategies to try to minimise and prevent the need for restrictive interventions.
- Accurately recording every seclusion, restraint and significant incident involving force that they are involved in.
- Reporting these incidents initially to the Headteacher and then also to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Recording any injuries that occur as part of an incident involving restrictive interventions and following our Health and Safety Policy to ensure that these are reported to the Health and Safety Executive where necessary.
- Taking part in training on de-escalation strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions if relevant to their role
- Engaging in follow-up conversations to debrief and reflect on incidents involving restrictive interventions that they were involved in, in order to help us understand what happened and why.

4.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Reporting every restraint incident and significant incident involving force to each parent/carer involved
- Ensuring that records are kept securely and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures.
- Contacting the Local Authority in cases where informing a pupil's parent/carer of the use of reasonable force, seclusion or restraint would put that child at significant risk of harm.

4.5 The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Working with pupils, parents/carers and relevant school staff to develop and review behaviour support plans and risk assessments for any pupils with SEND where it is identified that there is an increased likelihood for the need for restrictive interventions.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of individual pupil needs and associated behaviour support strategies.
- Working with staff who know pupils well to identify and manage risks.
- Working with pupils, parents/carers, staff and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalations strategies.
- Advising on reasonable adjustments for any pupils with disabilities when considering prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- Participating in the review of restrictive intervention incidents involving pupils with SEND
- Providing advice and support on the application of the policy for pupils with SEND
- Contributing to staff training on SEND and behaviour management, including restrictive interventions.

5. Acceptable Uses of Force

All of our school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in certain situations. Staff can use reasonable force to stop or prevent a child from:

- Hurting themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils, in or out of school.

While all staff have this power, some staff, especially those who work closely with pupils are more likely to need it than others.

We will ensure that staff are adequately trained and that risk assessments are carried out where necessary.

Any significant incident involving the use of reasonable force will be recorded and reported in compliance with procedure set out in Section 12 of this Policy.

6. Unacceptable Use of Force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. **We never use force as a sanction, threat or deterrent.**

Our staff understand that any form of force or restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, so always avoid using these measures if possible.

The following uses of force are never acceptable:

- Staff using force for punishment.
- Staff restraining a pupil in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for examples by covering their nose and/or mouth or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.
- Staff using force on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their hold and move into a safer position as quickly as possible.

7. Using reasonable force to search pupils

The Headteacher or any other member of staff authorised by the Headteacher have a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have prohibited items (such as those listed in the DfE's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance) or an item banned under our school Uniform and Property Guidance.

They can use reasonable force to search for prohibited items such as those in the DfE guidance: knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs. They cannot use reasonable force to search for items that are banned under our school rules only, such as mobile phones, air tags/tracking devices.

The decision to use reasonable force to carry out a search should be made carefully on a case-by-case basis taking into account the level of risk to pupils and staff.

8. Prevention and de-escalation strategies

Restrictive intervention is used only when necessary. We aim to minimise its use as much as possible using both whole-school and individual approaches.

Our whole-school approaches include:

- Consideration of how our school and classroom environment can support a pupil to achieve and thrive.
- Sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management and for managing communal spaces.
- Training staff in effective communication strategies such as use of appropriate tone and empathy to aid de-escalation.
- Development of working staff-pupil relationship and trust
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning.

We also:

- Work closely with parents and carers to develop behaviour support plans
- Develop strategies to help pupils calm down before their behaviour escalates.
- Make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability.

8.1 De-escalation where a situation arises

When a staff member is faced with a situation where a restrictive intervention may need to be used, they should always consider de-escalation techniques first, wherever possible.

These include:

- Having open body language and being aware of the pupil's personal space.
- Taking the pupil away from an 'audience' and speaking to them on their own.
- Using empathy – asking the pupil to help you understand their feelings.
- Distraction techniques.
- Offering a calm space for the pupil to go to, so that they can self-regulate.
- Verbal warnings – calmly reminding the pupil of the consequences of their behaviour.

9. Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

Necessity and Proportionality

The decision of whether to use restrictive interventions is down to the professional judgement of the staff member and will always depend on the individual circumstances of each situation.

Staff should always consider if there are other ways to manage the situation, such as de-escalation techniques. However, there may be times when staff have no other choice but to use restrictive interventions to reduce the risk of harm to the pupil and/or others.

When assessing whether a restrictive intervention is required, staff should always consider:

- Is it necessary?
 - Are there other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
 - Is a restrictive intervention likely to successfully reduce the risks, or could its use escalate the situation further and cause more harm?
- Is it proportionate?
 - Staff should use the least amount of force or the least restrictive intervention for the least amount of time.
 - If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should consider their approach and attempt an alternative.
 - Staff should consider the individual circumstances of the child: their age, size, medical conditions and/or SEND and any other vulnerabilities.

9.1 Pupil and Staff Welfare

Pupil Welfare

The most important consideration when using a restrictive intervention is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil involved, as well as the safety of other pupils and staff. Staff should always consider the potential impact on the pupil's welfare balanced against actions taken. For example, staff should bear in mind pupils who have experienced adverse life events, trauma or neglect, or who have diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions such as sensory impairments, communication difficulties or other needs, and may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

If a restrictive intervention is needed, staff should always aim to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This includes consideration of the location and environment where an intervention is used, including in front of peers.

Staff should calmly communicate what is happening, why and what the pupil needs to do, using verbal and non-verbal strategies where needed. They should give time for the pupil to process the information and respond where appropriate.

Staff should try to find out how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether restrictive intervention should be applied, continued, reduced or stopped.

Support following an incident

As soon as possible after any use of restrictive intervention, school will evaluate the incident to understand why restrictive intervention was used, the impact on pupils and staff, patterns and trends and how another incident may be avoided in the future.

We will endeavour to ensure that every staff member and pupil receives the right support, including medical assessment and treatment if required.

The follow-up conversation will be part of the overall debriefing process to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from all parties involved. Conversations should aim to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue.

Whenever possible, this process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not present or involved in the incident. It may also include the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support. We will continue to monitor staff and pupil well-being and provide additional support where needed.

10. Considerations for pupils with SEND

We understand that pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Pupils who have difficulty communicating verbally might show their needs and discomfort through their actions.

We are committed to understanding what might trigger challenging behaviour in pupils with SEND and, wherever possible, to providing the right support and inclusive environment.

Where we identify that there is an increased risk of a pupil requiring the use of reasonable force, a risk assessment will take place. We are aware of our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to pupils with disabilities to avoid disadvantage and ensure that they can take part in school life as fully as possible.

We will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points and developing proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. We will also work with the pupil, their parent/carers and any other professional to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Strategies might include:

- Removing stimuli that might be distressing to the pupil.
- Staff members changing or adapting how they communicate with a pupil and being more mindful of body language, facial expression and tone of voice.
- Helping the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed.
- Engaging the pupil in activities to help them regulate their emotions.
- Distracting the pupils with familiar objects or activities to redirect their attention.

Where appropriate, a behaviour support plan will be created. These will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Plans should include the following:

- Any adjustments to address aspects of the School environment which the pupil finds challenging.
- Explanations of the best ways to communicate with the pupil.
- If appropriate, specify when increased physical contact with staff might be appropriate. These should be clearly identified and discussed with everyone involved in the plan.

11. Training and Risk Assessments

We will ensure that all staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in their safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

We have a duty to ensure the health, safety and well-being of our staff. We will therefore carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils, where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required, can be done so as safely as possible.

12. Recording and Reporting Arrangements

We have a legal duty to record and report all:

- Significant incidents involving force
- Seclusion incidents
- Restraint incidents

12.1 Recording Incidents

We have a clear process for the recording of incidents. As soon as possible, the matter should be reported to the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead. A written report should then be made from all parties involved, including what happened prior to the event, why the intervention took place and what followed afterwards, including conversations with the pupil and parent/carer.

These are recorded in the bound and numbered book which is held by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in Key Stage 2. A record of the incident will also be made on CPOMS.

Significant incidents involving force, seclusion or restraint

For these incidents we will record:

- The names of the pupil and staff members directly involved.
- Relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether they have identified special educational needs or disability, and their SEND code.
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- A clear and brief description of what happened, including:
 - What led up to the incident
 - Any known potential triggers for the behaviour
 - Any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
 - The type and degree of reasonable force used
 - Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.
- A brief explanation of why using force was assessed as being necessary in the situation
- Details of support given following the incident, such as medical or emotional support.

Completed reports will be stored securely and in line with our data protection procedures.

12.2 Reporting incidents to parents/carers

When reporting incidents to parents/carers, the following steps will be taken:

Once the completed report is made, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the parents/carers. We will endeavour to ensure that this takes place as soon as possible, and on the same day.

The only exception to this would be if a member of staff feels that telling the pupil's parents/carers would likely result in significant harm to the pupil. If it cannot be reported to a parent or carer, it will be reported to the Local Authority where the pupil resides.

When reporting incidents to parents/carers we will include the following information:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

Following any incident, parents/carers will be invited to attend a follow-up discussion about the incident. Discussion may include:

- Any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- Whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed
- What de-escalation strategies were used and their effectiveness
- What might be done differently in the future.

These discussions will also be followed up by a written letter confirming the discussions that took place.

12.3 Reporting incidents to the Local Authority

In cases where the incident is required to be reported to the Local Authority where the pupil resides, this report will include the information we would normally have with a parent/carers as well as the reasons we believe that it was unsafe to tell the parents/carers directly.

In cases where a pupil has parents/carers and is subject to a Care Order under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, we will report the incident to the relevant Local Authority, in addition to the parents/carers (unless we deem it unsafe to do so).

13 Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled either through our school's Complaints Policy which can be found on our School Website and/or investigated by the Designated Safeguarding Leads/Headteacher.

We take any allegations of the inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff very seriously. We will deal with allegations in line with statutory safeguarding procedures as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14. Links to other Policies

This Policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy

