WIMBLEDON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Restrictive Interventions Policy
(Including use of Reasonable Force and Seclusion)

Approved by Governors: Oct 2026

Next revision: Oct 2028

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out the approach of Wimbledon Park Primary School to the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion. It applies to all members of school staff (including teaching staff, support staff, and volunteers) and is binding on all who work with pupils in our school.

This policy is based on and should be read in conjunction with the Department for Education statutory guidance: Restrictive Interventions including use of Reasonable Force in Schools (April 2026), which replaces the 2013 Use of Reasonable Force guidance.

Key principle

The school is committed to minimising the use of restrictive interventions through prevention, early support and de-escalation. However, there are lawful circumstances in which their use is necessary to keep pupils and the school community safe.

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to all pupils at Wimbledon Park Primary School and to all members of staff working on the school premises or accompanying pupils off-site, for example on school trips.

1.2 Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives

2. Legal Framework

This policy has regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE: Restrictive Interventions including use of Reasonable Force in Schools (April 2026) — statutory and non-statutory guidance
- DfE: Behaviour in Schools guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances under section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3. Key Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy, consistent with the DfE April 2026 guidance:

Term	Definition
Restrictive Intervention	A means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This umbrella term covers both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils.
Reasonable Force	A term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. It means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time. All staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances.
Significant Incident	Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. 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 non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact (e.g., holding a pupil's arms to their sides, or removing a pupil's crutches).

4. Who May Use Restrictive Interventions and When

4.1 Who May Act

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This includes teaching staff, learning support assistants, cover supervisors, and other staff authorised by the headteacher.

4.2 Lawful Circumstances for Using Reasonable Force

Staff may use reasonable force 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

Important

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. The school must not have a 'no contact' policy, and must not grant requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force.

4.3 Use of Force for Searching

The headteacher and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil has a prohibited item. Reasonable force may be used to search for legally prohibited items only — not for items banned under school rules alone.

4.4 Seclusion

Seclusion 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. It is not a disciplinary response. The following requirements apply:

- Seclusion must not be implemented through threat of punishment.
- The place of confinement must be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating.
- The pupil must be supervised at all times.
- The pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.
- The incident must be recorded and reported in line with section 8 of this policy.

5. Unacceptable Uses of Force

The following uses of force are never acceptable:

- Using force as a punishment — this is illegal.
- Restraining a pupil in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation (e.g. covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen).
- Holding a pupil on the ground — if a pupil is unintentionally taken to the ground, staff must release holds or reposition into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.
- Using excessive force — force must always be the minimum necessary.

Where a pupil requires medical assessment or treatment following any use of force, this must be arranged as soon as possible.

6. Appropriate Physical Contact

There are many circumstances in which physical contact with pupils is appropriate and expected. The following are examples of appropriate physical contact that does not engage questions about reasonable force:

- Giving first aid
- Guiding or escorting pupils (e.g. holding a hand on a school trip or helping a pupil to a self-regulation space)
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil (e.g. a pat on the back or handshake)
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons

Staff should use professional judgement and have regard to the school's safeguarding policy, the pupil's age, any SEND or vulnerabilities, and the circumstances at the time.

7. Decision-Making: Is a Restrictive Intervention Appropriate?

Any decision to use a restrictive intervention should be assessed against the following questions:

Is it necessary?

- Are there other, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
- Is the intervention likely to reduce risk, or might it escalate the situation or cause more harm?
- Has the member of staff communicated with other staff about broader risks in the environment?

Is it proportionate?

- Is the least amount of force being used, for the least amount of time?
- If the intervention is escalating the situation, has the member of staff reconsidered their approach?
- Has the member of staff considered the pupil's medical conditions, SEND, age, size, and equality implications?

Has the pupil's welfare been considered?

- Has the impact on the pupil's overall wellbeing been considered (e.g. past trauma, communication difficulties, sensory needs)?
- Has the member of staff sought to maintain the pupil's dignity, including considering the location of the intervention?
- Has the member of staff communicated clearly and calmly with the pupil about what is happening and why?
- Have verbal and/or non-verbal strategies been used for pupils with communication difficulties or EAL?

Staff support

Staff making these decisions will be supported by school leaders. Training will equip staff to make these judgements, including in situations requiring rapid decision-making.

8. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately subject to restrictive interventions. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar environments, or anxiety. Staff should:

- Seek to understand the underlying causes of challenging behaviour.
- Create an inclusive environment that reduces triggers.
- Involve staff who know the pupil well in risk identification.
- Work with pupils, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

8.1 De-escalation Strategies for Pupils with SEND

Examples of strategies include:

- Removing stimuli causing distress
- Changing body language, facial expression and/or tone of voice
- Supporting the pupil to express emotions before becoming overwhelmed
- Engaging the pupil in a calming activity
- Distracting the pupil using familiar objects or preferred activities

8.2 Behaviour Support Plans

Where appropriate, staff should work with pupils with SEND and their parents to co-produce behaviour support plans. These plans should:

- Outline reasonable adjustments and strategies tailored to the pupil
- Detail circumstances where increased physical contact may be appropriate
- Be reviewed periodically and following any significant incident

Where there is an identified risk of needing to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions, a risk assessment must be in place.

9. Recording and Reporting Duties

Statutory guidance

Pages in this section contain statutory guidance under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025. School leaders and governing bodies must comply.

9.1 Recording the Use of Force (Statutory)

All significant incidents involving the use of force must be recorded. Recording must be done:

- By the staff member(s) directly involved
- As soon as practicable after the event
- In writing

Records must include as a minimum:

- Names of pupil and staff directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including SEN status code
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- Brief account of the incident, including triggers, preventative strategies used, type and degree of force applied, and any injuries sustained
- Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary
- Any post-incident support provided (e.g. medical treatment)

Recording forms are included as Appendix A to this policy.

9.2 Reporting to Parents (Statutory)

Parents must be informed of any significant use of force as soon as practicable after the incident. Reports to parents must include:

- Time, date, location and approximate duration
- Brief account of why the intervention was necessary
- Brief account of the type and degree of force applied
- Details of any physical injuries sustained

Appendix C is an example template letter that could be used. Reports must be communicated in writing (e.g. by email or online messaging). Schools should invite parents to a follow-up discussion where appropriate.

Exceptions to reporting apply where: (a) the pupil is aged 20 or over; or (b) reporting would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil, in which case the incident must be reported to the local authority.

9.3 Recording and Reporting Seclusion and Non-Force Restraint (Statutory)

All incidents of seclusion and restraint (including restraint without physical contact, e.g. removal of a walking aid) must also be recorded and reported under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025. The same timescales apply.

Where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, only the use of force reporting procedure needs to be followed — the same information does not need to be reported twice.

Recording forms for seclusion and non-force restraint are included as Appendix B to this policy.

10. Pupil and Staff Support After an Incident

Following any incident involving a restrictive intervention, the school will:

- Ensure the pupil and any staff member involved receives a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible
- Record any injuries in accordance with school procedures and report to the Health and Safety Executive as required
- Conduct a follow-up debrief with all parties involved to understand what happened, identify learning, and repair relationships — ideally facilitated by a staff member not involved in the incident
- Continue to monitor the wellbeing of pupils and staff and provide additional support (e.g. counselling)
- Provide support to any pupil who witnessed the incident and may have been distressed

The governing body should use data from recorded incidents to identify patterns, support staff development, and reduce the use of restrictive interventions over time.

11. Training

School leaders will ensure that all staff are trained in this policy and the requirements of the DfE April 2026 guidance.

School leaders will ensure that staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in:

- Safe and lawful use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions
- Prevention and de-escalation strategies
- This policy and the requirements of the DfE April 2026 guidance

Risk assessments will be carried out to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

12. Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure.

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

13. Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The governing body must:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure these procedures are complied with.
- Regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to identify improvements to policies and practices.
- Identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other vulnerabilities.

Appendix A: Recording Form — Significant Use of Force

Statutory requirement

This form must be completed for every significant incident involving the use of force. It must be completed by the staff member(s) involved, as soon as practicable after the event and no later than the same day.

SECTION 1: INCIDENT DETAILS	
Pupil name:	
Year Group:	
SEN status / code:	
Relevant needs / circumstances:	
Staff member(s) involved:	
Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location:	
Approximate duration:	
SECTION 2: ACCOUNT OF INCIDENT	
What led up to the incident? (include identified or potential triggers and any preventative/de-escalation strategies used):	
Type of force used and degree of force applied:	
Why was the use of force assessed as necessary in this instance?	
SECTION 3: INJURIES AND SUPPORT	

Details of any physical injuries sustained by pupil or staff:	
Post-incident support provided (e.g. first aid, medical referral, counselling):	
SECTION 4: NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS	
Date and time parents were notified:	
How parents were notified (email, telephone, letter):	
Follow-up actions agreed:	
SECTION 5: SIGNATURES	
Completed by (signature):	
Reviewed by headteacher / DSL (signature):	
Date form completed:	

Appendix B: Recording Form — Seclusion and Non-Force Restraint

Statutory requirement

This form must be completed for every incident of seclusion or restraint (including restraint without physical contact, e.g. removal of a walking aid). It must be completed by the staff member(s) involved, as soon as practicable after the event and no later than the same day.

SECTION 1: INCIDENT DETAILS	
Type of incident: *(tick as applicable)*	☐ Seclusion ☐ Restraint (with physical contact) ☐ Restraint (without physical contact, e.g. removal of walking aid)
Pupil name:	
Year Group / SEN status:	
Staff member(s) involved:	
Date / Time / Location / Duration:	
SECTION 2: ACCOUNT AND JUSTIFICATION	
Why was the intervention assessed as necessary?	
Details of any injuries and post-incident support:	
SECTION 3: PARENT NOTIFICATION	
Date and time parents notified:	
Method of notification:	
Signature and date:	

Appendix C: Parent/Carer Notification Letter Template

Guidance for use

Complete this template and send to parents/carers as soon as practicable after the incident, and no later than the same day. Send by email or via your school's online messaging system. Keep a copy on file.

Dear [Parent/Carer name],

I am writing to inform you of an incident involving [Pupil name] that occurred at school today, [Date].

Time, date and location:

[Time] on [Date] in [Location]. The intervention lasted approximately [Duration].

Why the intervention was necessary:

[Provide a brief, factual account of why it was assessed as necessary to use a restrictive intervention, e.g. 'to prevent injury to [Pupil name] and to another pupil.' Do not use judgmental language.]

What happened:

[Brief factual account of the type and degree of force used, or whether seclusion/restraint was used.]

Injuries:

[State any injuries sustained, or 'No physical injuries were sustained.' Include any first aid or medical treatment provided.]

We take all incidents of this nature very seriously and have recorded it in line with our Restrictive Interventions Policy and the DfE statutory guidance. Your child's wellbeing is our priority.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you. Please contact [Name] on [Telephone/Email] to arrange a convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

[School Name]
[Date]