



## Restrictive Interventions Policy

**This policy is applicable to the Wonder Learning Partnership (WLP)**

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The Wonder Learning Partnership welcomes the support of the recognised trade unions in seeking to implement this policy in a fair and consistent manner and actively encourages employees who are members of a trade union to seek the support of their trade union representative at the earliest opportunity.

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## Introduction

WLP's Restrictive Intervention policy has been prepared in order to codify each Academy's response to behaviour that requires Restrictive Intervention. It is designed to provide guidance to colleagues who may need to hold, escort or restrain a student of when that is appropriate and what strategies should be used.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the WLP Safeguarding policy and its behaviour (PD) policy.

## Scope and purpose of this Policy and who it applies to

This policy applies to all colleagues. Colleagues are expected to follow this policy and non compliance may lead to disciplinary action being taken against them.

Restrictive Intervention places colleagues in a vulnerable position and it should only be undertaken by colleagues who have received sufficient training. It should only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when students, colleagues or property are at immediate risk.

## Definitions

“Physical Intervention” may be used to divert a student from destructive or disruptive action such as guiding or leading a student by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

“Positive Handling” involves the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to students, colleagues or property or good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents must be noted.

“Reasonable force” in this policy is the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a student harming themselves, others or property.

“Seclusion” in this policy refers to a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving

### **Before the use of Restrictive Intervention**

Before the use of Restrictive Intervention, colleagues should use other strategies to defuse a situation by:

- Appropriate use of colleagues voice in terms of pace, volume and tone;
- Adjustment of colleagues body position to ensure a minimum threat to a student and maximum safety for colleagues. Generally, this should be a sideways stance;
- Facial expressions including eye contact which is seen as positive and calming;
- Appropriate use of humour;
- Seeking help from other colleagues to defuse the situation.

### **Whole School and Student Considerations**

In considering the use of Restrictive Intervention, schools should first consider the following and ensure they have taken all reasonable measures to avoid the need for Restrictive Intervention unless absolutely necessary:

#### **Whole School Measures**

- consideration of how the school and classroom environment 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 using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

#### **Individual student measures**

- working closely with parents to support individual pupils
- strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of behaviour support plans. Where a pupil has a disability, schools 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 giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates

## **Training**

Only colleagues who have been trained in Restrictive Intervention should engage in the same. This includes initial training and refresher training which should take place every 2 years.

Human Resources (HR) will maintain details of colleagues who have been trained in positive handling.

## **The Legal Basis for using force**

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England (April 2026) and Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables Academy colleagues to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- 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

## **When Restrictive Intervention may be used**

Restrictive Intervention may be used to prevent a student from doing or continuing to do the following:

- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the Academy or among its students whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere such as out of Academy activities.
- Self-injuring or placing themselves at risk.
- Injuring others.
- Causing damage to property including property that belongs to them.
- To prevent the commitment of a criminal offence.

## Justification for Restrictive Intervention

Restrictive Intervention can only be deemed reasonable if:

- It is warranted by the circumstances of an incident.
- It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident.
- It is minimised to achieve the desired result.
- The age, understanding and gender of the student are taken into account.
- It is likely to achieve the desired result.

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and they should know this option may be 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 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.

### 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, special educational 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 particularly distressing.

- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and 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 pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, 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.

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 restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It should also help staff understand how to assess whether their response is reasonable under pressure.

### **Consideration 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 and 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.

Schools should seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND. For example, schools should 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.

Schools should utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. They should also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies may include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice

- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Where appropriate, school staff should work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans. Behaviour support plans should outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively.

Behaviour support plans should detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. This should be discussed in conjunction with the relevant people, such as teachers, parents, the pupil, pastoral staff or health professionals, and parameters around its use stated clearly in the plan. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, schools must have risk assessments in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through training and prevention strategies.<sup>15</sup> Whether the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan.

Any behaviour support plans should be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil. Where a pupil has a disability, the 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 by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

Assistance should be sought from another member of trained colleagues before intervention takes place.

Forms of Restrictive Intervention may include the following:

- Physically intervening by placing themselves between students.
- Blocking a student's path.
- Escorting a student.
- Shepherding a student away.

The minimum amount of force should be used in any Restrictive Intervention. It should not be a test of strength or a punishment. It is an act of care and control.

If a hold is used it will gradually be relaxed as soon as it is safe to do so, and the student has begun to regain some self-control.

Throughout the use of Restrictive Intervention, colleagues should continue to talk to the student.

## **Forms of Restrictive Intervention**

### **Escorting and Holding**

The most commonly used forms of Restrictive Intervention are escorting and holding. These depend upon the degree of compliance from the child as to whether they constitute 'restrictive'.

The development of trusting, confident relationships is of high priority so that children are accepting of the use of the friendly escort and calming holding to support their own efforts to manage their behaviour. These Restrictive Intervention holds rarely need force and are not 'restraint'.

### **Positive Handling**

This may be used to divert a student from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a student by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

### **Physical Contact**

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between colleagues and students, e.g. in the care of students with learning disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort students.

### **Restrictive Physical Intervention ("RPI")**

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to students, colleagues or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. The level of compliance from the student determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a method of physical control.

Colleagues use RPI as opposed to holding or escorting as the last resort after:

- appropriate de-escalation techniques have failed to help the child to control themselves;
- instant risk assessment by colleagues lead them to believe that injury, or serious damage to property, is an immediate danger;
- knowledge of the child's history and behaviour pattern leads colleagues to believe that speedy removal from the room is necessary to prevent escalation or breakdown of the session or other students behaving in a similar manner;
- the student has been cautioned that their continued choice of behaviour may lead to restraint.

De-escalation techniques may include:

- requests to comply, partial agreement, negotiation;
- exposition of consequences or application of sanction;
- verbal advice and support, reassurance using calm talking, humour, distraction;
- options offered, stepping away, time out offered;
- holding without force.

## **Seclusion**

Seclusion is 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, the pupil is not acting with intent.

Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

The place to which 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 immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting duties'.

Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom. Schools should refer to the Behaviour in schools guidance for further information on these and other disciplinary measures.

## **Recording of the use of Restrictive Intervention**

Headteachers must maintain a Restrictive Intervention Record and log every instance when Restrictive Intervention is used. It must be updated on the day of any use of Restrictive Intervention and

include the following details:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance

- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Schools may also wish to record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

### **Communication with parents/carers**

Parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible where RPI has been used.

A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

- 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 behaviour support plan.

Schools should communicate this information to parents in writing. For example, via email or online messaging system.

Where appropriate, parents should be invited to attend a meeting in school have a follow-up discussion about the incident. This could involve a discussion about:

- 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 how effective they were
- what might be done differently in the future

The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

### **Review and Investigation**

Following the initial use of Restrictive Intervention on a student, a Restrictive Intervention plan should be put in place by the Academy for any future use of Restrictive Intervention and this should be shared with the student's parents or carers. This should be reviewed if there are any further uses of Restrictive Intervention with a student.

It is a matter for the Headteacher to consider following an incident whether further action needs to be taken against the student or a member of colleagues. In respect of a student,

the Headteacher should consider the Positive Discipline Policy and in respect of colleagues they should take the advice of HR.

### **Complaints**

The availability of this policy and the involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints in respect of the use of Restrictive Intervention should be pursued through WLPs complaints procedures.

### **Monitoring**

The COO will monitor the relevant legislation, guidelines, and information forthcoming from the relevant statutory bodies for any recommendation or changes. Where a gap, potential inequality or shortfall in performance is identified within the policy, the COO will advise the Board of Trustees of any changes that are needed, and a proposal will be submitted to the Trust Board within an appropriate timescale. There will be a full review of the policy by the COO prior to the stated review date where recommendations will be made for consideration by the Trust Board.