

St. John Paul II Multi Academy
Restrictive Interventions Policy

Including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion

April 2026

Date of last review	March 2026	Review period	Annual
Date of next review	September 2026	Owner	CEO/Curriculum and Standards
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Summary of Changes	Date
New policy	March 2026

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1. Policy Statement

St John Paul II Multi Academy schools are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment rooted in Catholic values and the dignity of every person as created in the image of God. Our approach to behaviour and safeguarding reflects the Gospel values of compassion, respect, forgiveness and care for the common good.

We believe that all pupils should be supported to develop positive behaviour through strong relationships, restorative practice and compassionate guidance. Restrictive interventions are therefore used when primary or secondary behaviour strategies are likely to fail.

Where restrictive intervention is required, it will always be lawful, necessary and proportionate, and used for the shortest time possible to restore safety. At all times, staff will seek to protect the dignity, wellbeing and rights of the pupil, and to support them in returning safely to learning and community life.

This policy should be read alongside the

- The school's Behaviour Policy
- St John Paul II Behaviour Principles
- St John Paul II Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- St John Paul II SEND Policy
- St John Paul II Health and Safety Policy
- St John Paul II Complaints Policy

This policy is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

2. Definitions

- **Restrictive intervention:** Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement, including physical and non-physical interventions. It is 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Significant incident:** Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Appropriate physical contact' within this policy. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Where this policy uses the word '**must**', this indicates a legal requirement. Where it uses '**should**', this indicates expected practice unless there is good reason not to follow it.

Using Restrictive Interventions

3. Prevention and de-escalation

All schools within St John Paul II Multi-Academy prioritise proactive, preventative strategies, tailored to the needs of their pupils to minimise the need for restrictive interventions. These may include:

- **Developing strong, positive relationships** between staff and pupils, including greeting pupils by name, recognising individual strengths, and identifying key, safe and trusted adults
- **Using positive behaviour reinforcement approaches**, including specific praise and positive behaviour recognition systems
- **Maintaining consistent routines and expectations**, including clear structures, visual schedules, advance warning of transitions, and consistency across staff
- **Considering individual needs, experiences and wellbeing**, including the impact of trauma, sensory processing differences, and prior academic experiences

- **Adapting the environment to reduce stress and anxiety**, including access to low-arousal spaces, reducing demands where appropriate, and considering factors such as lighting, noise and crowding
- **Identifying triggers at an early stage**, including the use of behaviour logs and ABC (Antecedent–Behaviour–Consequence) monitoring
- **Recognising early warning signs of distress**, including changes in body language, tone, withdrawal or agitation
- **Providing safe and appropriate exit strategies**, including time-out cards and movement breaks
- **Using effective, low-arousal communication strategies**, including a calm tone, non-threatening body language and minimal verbal input during escalation
- **Working collaboratively with families and external professionals** to ensure consistency of approach and support

3.1 Staff Training

St John Paul II Multi Academy schools recognise that staff training is a critical component of preventing the need for restrictive interventions and ensuring that, where they are used, they are applied safely, lawfully and proportionately.

All staff who are likely to work in situations where restrictive interventions may be required will receive appropriate training in behaviour support, prevention and de-escalation strategies and the safe and lawful use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions through React UK.

Training will reflect the principles of the DfE Restrictive Interventions guidance and will support staff to assess necessity and proportionality, understand risks to physical and psychological wellbeing, recognise the impact of trauma and SEND and make defensible professional judgements, including in situations where decisions must be taken quickly.

4. When restrictive interventions may be used

Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion, may only be used in exceptional circumstances where they are lawful, necessary and proportionate, and where other less restrictive approaches have been attempted or judged to be ineffective.

In line with DfE guidance, restrictive interventions may only be used to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- causing serious damage to property

- causing significant disorder.

The decision to use a restrictive intervention is a matter of professional judgement, based on the circumstances at the time.

Before using, or continuing to use, a restrictive intervention, staff should consider the following:

Necessity

Whether the intervention is required to reduce an immediate risk of harm and whether other strategies, such as de-escalation, redirection or support from other staff, are likely to be effective.

Proportionality

Any intervention must be the least restrictive option, using the minimum force for the shortest time necessary to reduce the risk. The intervention should stop as soon as it is safe to do so.

Pupil welfare and dignity

Staff must consider the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing, maintain dignity wherever possible and communicate calmly about what is happening and why.

Individual needs and vulnerabilities

Staff must take account of the pupil's individual circumstances, including SEND, disabilities, medical conditions, communication needs, sensory sensitivities or past trauma. These factors may affect how a pupil experiences an intervention and must inform decision-making before, during and after any restrictive intervention.

Equality duties

Staff must act in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, including avoiding discrimination and making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Restrictive interventions must never be used as punishment, a disciplinary sanction, or for staff convenience. They must only be used as a last resort to maintain safety.

Following any restrictive intervention, staff must complete appropriate recording, reporting and post-incident review, including medical checks where required, in line with this policy and React UK guidance.

4.1 Statutory power to use reasonable force (Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence

- damaging property
- causing serious disorder

This power applies when staff are lawfully in charge of pupils, including on school premises and during off-site activities such as educational visits. Any use of force must be reasonable, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances. All incidents will be reported in line with this policy and React UK guidance.

4.2 Unacceptable use of restrictive intervention

Restrictive interventions must never be used as punishment, a disciplinary sanction, or for compliance, convenience or behaviour management where there is no immediate risk of harm.

Staff must not use any technique that restricts a pupil's breathing or circulation, including pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen, covering the mouth or nose, or any position that interferes with breathing.

Specific restrictive interventions carry significant physical and psychological risks. Ground restraint should be avoided wherever possible. If a pupil is unintentionally brought to the ground, staff must take steps to reduce risk and move to a safer position as soon as it is safe to do so.

Any intervention that presents a medical risk must stop immediately and medical attention must be sought where appropriate.

Staff must make every effort to ensure that interventions do not humiliate, degrade or cause emotional harm and that the pupil's dignity and wellbeing are maintained.

Any concerns about unsafe or unacceptable practice must be reported immediately in line with the St John Paul II Multi Academy's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

4.3 Appropriate physical contact

Appropriate physical contact (for example first aid, providing comfort, guiding a pupil or supporting PE activities) is lawful and sometimes necessary.

Staff must use professional judgement, taking account of safeguarding considerations, the pupil's age and needs and whether alternative strategies are available.

4.4 Reasonable force for searching pupils

Executive Principals/Principals and staff authorised by the Executive Principal/Principal may search pupils or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect they are carrying a prohibited item, in line with statutory guidance.

Prohibited items include, for example:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- any item likely to be used to commit an offence, cause injury or damage property.

Where a lawful search for a prohibited item is taking place, staff may use reasonable force if necessary to carry out the search.

Any use of force must be necessary, proportionate and for the shortest time possible.

Reasonable force must not be used to search for items banned only under school rules.

Where force is used during a search, the incident must be recorded and managed in line with this policy.

All searches must be carried out in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policies and staff will receive appropriate guidance and training.

5. Seclusion

Seclusion is defined as a short-term, non-disciplinary safety measure and may only be used where there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to the pupil or others.

Seclusion must never be used as:

- punishment
- a disciplinary sanction
- a planned behaviour management strategy
- a response to non-compliance where no immediate risk exists.

Where seclusion is used:

- the environment must be safe and suitable

- the pupil must be continuously supervised by staff
- staff must monitor the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing
- seclusion must end as soon as the risk of harm has reduced.

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with statutory duties using the **React UK Significant Recording Form (Appendix 1)**.

6. Recording and reporting incidents

6.1 Recording significant incidents involving the use of force

All significant incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded in writing on the **React UK Significant Incident Recording Form** as soon as possible after the incident, and wherever possible no later than the same day. This form will be uploaded to CPOMS under the child's file.

Records must be completed by the staff involved and provide a clear factual account. As a minimum, records should include:

- the pupil's name and the staff involved
- the date, time, location and duration of the incident
- a brief description of what happened, including any triggers or behaviours of concern
- any preventative or de-escalation strategies used before the intervention
- the type of force used and why it was considered necessary
- details of any injuries, distress or welfare concerns
- details of any support or medical attention provided afterwards

Incidents must be recorded even where restrictive interventions were anticipated in a behaviour support plan.

6.2 Informing parents

Parents must be informed in writing of any significant incident involving the use of force as soon as practicable, on the **same day**. All communication will be recorded on the React UK Significant Incident Form and on CPOMS.

Reports will include:

- when and where the incident occurred
- why the intervention was necessary
- the type of force used - **select from Annex A - Restrictive Techniques used**
- any injuries or welfare concerns.

Parents may be invited to discuss the incident and review any relevant **behaviour support plans or safety plans**.

Post-incident

7. Post-incident support and review

Following any restrictive intervention, schools will take appropriate steps to support those involved and review the incident.

Welfare checks

Staff will check the pupil and any staff involved for signs of injury or distress. First aid or medical attention will be provided where required.

Emotional support

Support may be offered to the pupil, staff and any witnesses through pastoral or wellbeing support. Where appropriate, restorative approaches may be used to support reintegration, rebuild relationships and help pupils feel safe and supported.

Reflective review

A reflective review will take place and consider:

- what happened and why
- any triggers or warning signs
- the effectiveness of de-escalation strategies
- actions to reduce future risk.

Following an incident, the school will review relevant behaviour support plans, risk assessments, safety plans and reasonable adjustments, particularly where pupils have SEND or additional needs. Where appropriate, this may involve the pupil and their parents. All reviews will be recorded on CPOMS using the React UK Significant Incident Form.

8. Leadership and Governance

School leaders will monitor incidents to identify patterns, emerging risks or training needs. Where concerns arise, further review, multi-agency involvement or safeguarding processes may be initiated.

The governing body recognises that restrictive interventions are a significant safeguarding matter and will ensure appropriate oversight.

The governing body will:

- ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed
- monitor the use of restrictive interventions
- review incident information to identify patterns or trends
- consider whether there is any disproportionate impact on pupils with SEND or other vulnerabilities
- ensure staff receive appropriate training and support
- use learning from incidents to improve practice.

Oversight forms part of the governing body's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

9. Complaints

Complaints relating to restrictive interventions will be managed in accordance with the St John Paul II Multi Academy's complaints procedure.

Where concerns arise that a member of staff has acted inappropriately or unlawfully, the matter will be managed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and the St John Paul II Multi Academy policy on Allegations against staff.

Where appropriate, the school will consult external agencies, the CEO and consider referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Learning from complaints or allegations will inform training, policy review and preventative practice.

Appendix 1 - React UK Incident Recording Form

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

This template is designed to support schools in England to meet the Department for Education guidance *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (effective April 2026). It should be used to record **all significant incidents** involving restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion

Section 1: Basic Incident Details

School Name:			
Date of Incident			
Time Incident Started		Time Incident Ended	
Total Duration			
Location(s) of Incident			
CCTV available	Yes/ No		

Section 2: Pupil Details

Pupil's Name:			
Pupil's UPN:			
Date of Birth		Age	
Ethnicity		First Language	

SEND Status	☐ EHCP ☐ SEN Support ☐ No identified SEND		
Relevant support plans in place:	☐ EHCP ☐ Behaviour Support Plan ☐ Risk Assessment ☐ Other (specify)		
Diagnosed (<i>or suspected</i>) Disorder/ Disability		Known Trauma History	Yes / No

Section 3: Staff Involved

Your Name:	
Name of staff member leading the intervention:	
Other persons present	

Section 4: Type of Force Used

Type of Force (Tick all that apply)		
Restraint	Seclusion	Other

Section 5: Report of Incident

Adult statement – what occurred in your own words	
Your statement must set out what happened; give details of your part in the significant incident, your 'Honestly Held Belief', what use of restrictive intervention that you have used and how the incident was finally resolved. It should give details of any attempts made to de-escalate throughout the incident. Your statement should be completed independently of other staff involved in the incident. The written report must be completed as soon as practicable after the event. Staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.	
The use of force must only be used when it is reasonable in the circumstance, meaning: i. You believed that it was absolutely necessary & ii. Proportionate to the seriousness of the situation	If physical restraint was used, please tick your primary role: ☐ Right arm ☐ Left arm ☐ Supervising
Antecedents and Context	
What were you doing just before the significant incident took place?	
What was the pupil doing just before the significant incident took place?	
<i>What signs of dysregulation were being communicated by the pupil?</i>	
<i>Explain what you think may have triggered this behaviour?</i>	
<i>How did you try to de-escalate the situation?</i>	
<i>What was the pupil's response?</i>	
Dynamic Risk Assessment & Rationale	

<i>Why did you believe it was necessary to use restrictive intervention on the child/ young person?</i>	
To prevent or stop harm to themselves	To prevent or stop harm to others
To prevent or stop a crime	To prevent or stop damage to property
To prevent or stop causing disorder at the school	Other – Please specify
<i>Describe exactly what happened (i.e. what use of force were used and by whom, why it was absolutely necessary, strictly proportionate and what your 'Honestly Held Belief' was, other steps taken to gain assistance)</i>	
<i>Did any other factors impact on your choice of intervention? (Welfare/Medical conditions / SEND considerations)</i>	
<i>Ending the Intervention</i>	
<i>What indicated that the risk had reduced and the intervention could end?</i>	
<i>How was the pupil helped back to calm state of regulation?</i>	
<i>Injury or Distress</i>	
<i>Did the pupil sustain an injury OR report pain or distress? If so, what did you do?</i>	
<i>Did any staff member sustain an injury or report pain or distress? If so, what did you do?</i>	
<i>SLT/ Manager informed (Name/ Date/ Time)</i>	
Staff Member's Name:	
Staff member's signature:	
Date/Time:	

Section 6: Pupil Voice (*where appropriate*)

Who consulted the child/ young person?	
Date/time of consultation:	
Pupil's Statement:	
Pupil's Name:	
Pupil's Signature:	
Date/Time:	

Section 7: Parent / Carer Communication

Details of Parent/Carer Notification (Date, Time, Person Informing)				
c Face to face	c Telephone	c Email	c Letter	c Text/ Messaging system
<i>Parent/ Carer Invited to Follow Up Discussion on:</i>				

Parent/ Carer Meeting Attended by:

Points from the meeting:

Section 8: Post-Incident Review and Follow-Up for Risk Assessment

Staff De-brief completed	Yes / No
Date/ Time	
Staff Present	
<i>Was the practice in keeping with an existing risk assessment and behaviour support plan?</i>	
<i>What can we learn regarding the pupil's behaviour from this specific incident?</i>	
<i>Has an ABC form been completed?</i>	
<i>What actions are to be taken to avoid a repeat of this behaviour? (e.g. changes to support plan, environmental adjustments, further assessment.)</i>	
<i>What might be done differently in the future?</i>	
<i>Referral or escalation required:</i> ☐ SENCo ☐ DSL ☐ SLT ☐ External agency	

Section 9: SLT Oversight

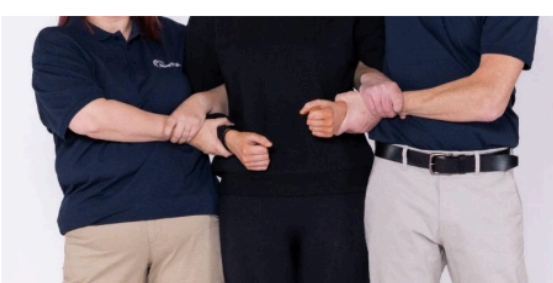
Reviewed by (Name and Role)	Yes / No
Date of Review	
Any Safeguarding concerns Identified <i>(If yes, include actions taken)</i>	Yes/ No
Signature	

Section 10: SLT Signature sign off

Name	
Signature	
Date of Sign off	

Data protection note: This record must be stored securely and handled in line with GDPR and the school's safeguarding and record-keeping procedures.

Annex A – Restrictive Techniques Used

1. Double Hand Restraint 	2. Secure Cup Restraint 	
3. Straight Arm Restraint 	4. Figure Four 	
5. Leg Restriction A 	6. Leg Restriction B 	7. Leg Restriction C 
8. Kneeling Position 	9. Bean Bag Restraint 	
Other use of reasonable force:		

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