

Cottingley Village Primary School

Use of Force and Other Restrictive Interventions Policy

Last reviewed: February 2026

To be reviewed: Annually

Written by: SENDCo

Ratified by Governors:

Applies to: All staff, volunteers and governors

Effective from: 1 April 2026 (with immediate preparatory effect)

Review cycle: Annual, or sooner if statutory guidance updates

Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how our school will prevent, use, record and report restrictive interventions (including reasonable force and seclusion) in line with current law and statutory guidance, to keep pupils, staff and the wider community safe while upholding pupils' rights and wellbeing.

It applies to all education activities on and off site under the school's control and to all staff (including supply, agency and volunteers).

Legal and Statutory Framework

- From 1 April 2026, the DfE document "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools" replaces the 2013 *Use of reasonable force* guidance.

- Page 14 of the new document contains statutory guidance under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, creating duties on recording and reporting each significant incident involving use of force.
- The guidance also introduces a legal duty to record and report seclusion and non-force restraint (e.g., removal of a mobility aid) and to inform parents as soon as practicable, no later than the same day.

Definitions (as per DfE guidance)

- Restrictive intervention: Any action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty or independence, whether physical or non-physical. Reasonable force is one type of restrictive intervention.
- Reasonable force: Physical contact that is no more than necessary and applied for the least time required in the circumstances.
- Seclusion: Supervising a pupil alone and preventing them from leaving a space (distinct from voluntary "time-out"). Seclusion, where used, must be recorded and reported under the new duties.

Principles

- We will proactively minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation.
- Any use of force must be necessary, proportionate and time-limited, used only when other strategies are insufficient to keep people safe or prevent serious disruption.
- Restrictive interventions must never be used as punishment or solely to secure compliance with rules.
- We will pay particular regard to SEND and safeguarding vulnerabilities, recognising disproportionate impact and the need for tailored planning.

When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Staff may judge that a restrictive intervention is necessary to:

- Prevent injury to the pupil or others;
- Stop a criminal offence;
- Prevent serious damage to property;
- Prevent significant disruption to the school environment.

These are professional judgements based on context, risk and available alternatives, applying minimum force for the shortest time.

Unacceptable Uses

The following are not permitted: using force as a punitive measure; using interventions longer or stronger than necessary; practices that degrade or humiliate; and any action inconsistent with safeguarding or equality duties.

Prevention and De-escalation

Leaders will ensure a positive behaviour culture, staff access to evidence-based de-escalation, and proactive planning (including reasonable adjustments) to reduce incidents, especially for pupils with SEND.

Seclusion

Seclusion may be used only where lawful and necessary for safety, with senior oversight, for the shortest possible time, and must be recorded and reported in line with the statutory requirements (section 12 below).

Roles and Responsibilities

- Governing Body/Proprietor: Ensure policy and practice follow the 2026 guidance; monitor aggregated data on restraint, seclusion and patterns; ensure training and oversight.
- Headteacher/Senior Leaders: Implement this policy; ensure same-day parent notification; review each incident and resultant actions; report to governors; ensure data protection compliance.
- All Staff: Follow prevention first; use interventions only when necessary; complete same-day records where possible; make same-day reports to parents via agreed process; participate in debriefs and training.

Decision-Making and Risk

Staff must consider: immediacy and severity of risk, age/needs/SEND, available alternatives, environmental factors, and potential impact on the pupil and others, applying least-restrictive options first where safe.

During an Intervention

Staff will: use clear verbal direction, employ techniques consistent with approved training, continually assess necessity, and cease immediately when risks subside or if the intervention is no longer proportionate.

Recording (Statutory)

For each significant use of force, staff must complete a written record on the same day where possible, including as a minimum: time, date, location, duration; necessity; type/degree of force; injuries; and, where relevant, seclusion or non-force restraint details.

All staff must use the school's designated system

- Complete Restrictive Physical Intervention Form
- A copy of the form must then be given to a DSL or Deputy DSL to check on the same day
- This form will then be uploaded onto CPOMS
- A copy of this form will then be sent home in writing to parents/carers

Reporting to Parents/Carers (Statutory)

A written report must be made to parents as soon as practicable and no later than the same day for any significant use of force. For seclusion or non-force restraint, maintained schools must provide a copy of the written record (other settings must provide the information in writing).

Post-Incident Actions and Support

- Immediate checks of pupil/staff wellbeing and first aid where needed; senior leader notified promptly.
- Debrief with involved staff and a post-incident conversation with the pupil (adapted to need) within 48 hours where possible, feeding into plan updates.
- Review and update risk assessments, behaviour plans and reasonable adjustments following any incident

SEND Considerations

Following any incident, the EHCP/Support Plan/Individual Risk Assessments must be reviewed; teams must ensure agreed de-escalation strategies are understood and available to staff; leaders should monitor for disproportionate impact on pupils with SEND.

Training

All staff will receive regular training aligned with the 2026 guidance covering prevention, de-escalation, lawful and proportionate intervention, and SEND vulnerabilities; leaders will ensure competency and refreshers at appropriate intervals.

Data, Monitoring and Governance

Senior leaders will maintain a secure log of all incidents, analyse frequency, context and patterns, and provide regular reports to governors to inform policy, staff development and risk management.

Data Protection and Information Sharing

All records will be held and shared in line with data protection legislation and safeguarding procedures, ensuring appropriate governance oversight of restraint data.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaint or allegation involving use of force will follow the school's safeguarding and complaints procedures and be escalated without delay where required.

Equality, Human Rights and Safeguarding

Implementation of this policy will reflect duties under the Equality Act 2010 and broader safeguarding expectations, ensuring fair, lawful and proportionate responses that protect pupils' rights and wellbeing.

Communication and Publication

This policy will be available to staff and parents, and embedded via induction, training and briefings; leaders will ensure transitional arrangements are complete by April 2026.