Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy

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1. Introduction and Philosophy

This policy outlines our approach to the use of restrictive interventions, integrating PRICE (Protecting Rights In a Caring Environment) within the framework of the April 2026 Department for Education guidance.

We aim to, and believe in, providing opportunities for our pupils to reflect and develop skills, including communication, confidence, resilience and independence.

As a Trust, we follow PRICE strategies to promote fundamental human rights, build positive relationships, and instill workplace confidence, ensuring all pupils receive dignified, person-centred care. The PRICE approach prioritises communication alongside verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques to handle challenging behaviour, which minimises the need for physical intervention. When necessary as a last resort, staff are trained in PRICE techniques to safely deal with challenging incidents while creating opportunities for reflection and repair for everyone involved. Our policy and procedures comply with our duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the public sector equality duty where relevant: Equality Act 2010.

2. Definitions

- **Restrictive Intervention:** An umbrella term for physical and non-physical actions used to prevent, restrict, or subdue a pupil's body movement.
- **Reasonable Force:** Using no more force than is necessary for the shortest amount of time to achieve a safe outcome.
- **Seclusion:** A non-disciplinary safety measure where a pupil is kept alone (with supervision) in a room and prevented from leaving to protect others from harm during high emotional dysregulation.
- **Restraint:** An intervention that immobilises a pupil or limits movement, which may or may not involve physical contact (e.g., removing a walking aid).

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

- Head teachers and staff who authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item.

- A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only.
- Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

6 Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. 7 Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools 8 In this context, "prohibited item" specifically means an item listed in section 550ZA(3) of the Education Act 1996. 9 Section 550ZB(5) of the Education Act 1996

3. Preventative Strategies and Whole-School Measures

To minimise the need for restrictive interventions, staff will employ PRICE (Protecting Rights In a Caring Environment) which emphasises primary, secondary, and non-restrictive tertiary strategies—such as verbal de-escalation, diversion, distraction, and safe breakaway or guiding techniques.

Procedures and Core Values

Proactive Strategies: Our core approach prioritises proactive strategies, early identification, and de-escalation as the primary means to maintain safety and reduce the need for intervention.

Relationships: Positive, respect-based relationships form the essential foundation for all behavioural support, fostering trust and connection and using an appropriate tone of voice and empathy during de-escalation.

Individual Focus: All supportive measures and decisions are tailored to the specific needs and unique circumstances of each individual.

Behaviour as Communication: We interpret all behaviour, especially challenging behaviour, as a meaningful form of communication, seeking to understand its function and purpose.

Education & Skill Building: We focus on education and skill-building, empowering individuals to learn and utilise more socially acceptable ways to express their feelings and meet their needs.
Environmental Support: We consider how the classroom layout supports all pupils.

Individual Support: We develop Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) for vulnerable pupils in collaboration with parents to identify triggers and preferred calming strategies.

Restrictive Interventions: Restrictive interventions are only considered as a last resort, applied reasonably and proportionately to prevent individuals from hurting themselves or others, and are never used as a form of discipline or punishment.

Professional Judgment: Staff members with care and protection responsibility use their professional judgment to make intervention decisions based on individual circumstances and immediate risk.

<u>All staff must be aware that they must not:</u>

- Use force as a punishment, as this would fall within the definition of corporal punishment.
- Use pain to gain compliance.
- Deprive the child of food or drink.
- Humiliate and/or degrade the child or young person.
- Use punitive measures to intentionally cause discomfort or distress.
- Confine children in rooms that are unsafe and/or unheated as punishment.
- Lock children in rooms to isolate them.

4. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

1. Causing injury to themselves or others.
2. Committing a criminal offence.
3. Damaging property.
4. Causing disorder.

5. Unacceptable Uses of Force

The following practices are **strictly prohibited**:

Force as punishment: It is illegal to use force to punish a pupil.

Respiratory interference: Restraining a pupil in a way that affects breathing, such as applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.

Pain for compliance: Intentionally using pain to gain a pupil's cooperation.

Ground holds: If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, they must be released or moved to a safer position immediately.

6. Appropriate Physical Contact

We do not have a "no contact" policy. Appropriate physical contact is often necessary for teaching and well-being.

Examples from Guidance:

- Guiding/Escorting: • such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- Comforting: Providing support to a distressed pupil.
- Instructional: Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument or showing techniques in PE.
- First Aid: Administering medical assistance.
- Identified as part of sensory needs in EHCP

7. Support for Pupils with SEND

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may express distress as a way to communicate through behaviour. Staff must seek to understand underlying causes and triggers such as sensory overload or anxiety. 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.

8. Statutory Recording and Reporting Duties Recording (Internal)

Incidents must be recorded in writing (using the Google form) as soon as practicable, and no later than the same day. Records must include:

- Names of staff and pupils involved.
- Time, date, location, and duration.
- A brief account of the incident, including triggers, de-escalation used, and why the intervention was necessary.
- Details of any injuries or medical treatment required.

Reporting (To Parents)

Parents **must be informed** of each significant incident as soon as practicable, ideally by the end of the school day or as agreed, where a child has a Behaviour Plan in relation to their SEND. This will be in writing.

- Time, date location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- A brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries and any post-incident support

9. Post-Incident Support and Review

Following an incident, the school will facilitate a debriefing process for both staff and pupils to repair relationships and foster learning.

- Debriefing: Ideally facilitated by a staff member not involved in the incident.
- Data Monitoring: Leaders will regularly review data on restrictive interventions to identify patterns, ensure equality, and improve school policies, reporting information to Governors regularly.

10. PRICE/ further training

All schools within the Trust will provide effective training in the following ways:

- Train our staff accredited course, factoring in their roles and responsibilities.
- Notify Staff of any updates and changes in the management of challenging behaviour and handling techniques, and changes in current legislation / legal considerations.
- Review and assess any areas of additional training requirements through risk assessment and situations arising.

- Carry out regular assessment by SMT of presenting behaviours and risks within the school environment
- All staff will carry out statutory training regarding reasonable force (The Key)