



Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions Policy

Date written	April 2026
Date agreed	April 2026
Date of next full review	April 2027
Governing Committee responsible	S&C

Policy and Guidance for staff at Stocks Green Primary School based on guidance from Dynamis (the school's training provider).

1. Purpose and Strategic Context

This policy sets out the legal, ethical and professional framework for the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions within the school.

The school is committed to:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils
- Protecting the safety and wellbeing of staff
- Minimising the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early support and de-escalation

This policy reflects statutory duties under:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 & 93A)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

This policy must have regard to the DfE guidance (active from 1st April 2026) on the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions.

2. Key Principles

- The use of force is a **last resort**
- Force must never be used as punishment
- The least restrictive option must always be used
- Interventions must be:
 - Necessary
 - Proportionate
 - Reasonable in the circumstances
- The dignity, wellbeing and rights of the pupil must remain a priority at all times
- The school adopts a preventative, relational and trauma-informed approach

The school will **not operate a “no contact” policy**, as this could prevent staff from fulfilling their duty of care.

3. Terminology and Definitions

The school uses the following definitions in line with DfE guidance:

Restrictive Interventions

Any planned or reactive action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently.

This may include physical, mechanical, chemical or environmental restriction.

A 'plain English' definition for a restrictive intervention is one in which a person is prevented from doing what they appear to want to do.

Reasonable Force

Reasonable Force is a legal test, used to determine if force - usually a physical contact - used by staff to control or restrain a pupil's actions is justifiable under law.

Force must be necessary and therefore used for the least amount of time. It must be proportionate to the circumstances it is attempting to prevent or stop.

Restraint

A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact intended to prevent, restrict or subdue movement.

Seclusion

The supervised confinement and isolation of a pupil, away from other pupils, in an area from which the pupil is prevented from leaving of their own free will.

Important Note: These categories are **not mutually exclusive** and may overlap depending on the circumstances.

Significant Incident

'Significant incident' refers to any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff.

Appropriate Physical Contact

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include giving first aid, guiding or escorting pupils, comforting a distressed pupil, congratulating or praising a pupil (for example, a pat on the back or a handshake), demonstrating how to use a musical instrument, and demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement, have regard to the school's Child Protection (including online safety) Policy (or any other relevant policy), the applicable circumstances (including whether there are other adults present), the individual pupil's age, and any other material factors. This includes, but is not limited to, whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities, and whether any alternative strategies which do not include physical contact can be used.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is a suitable and sufficient process for identifying hazards and judging the level of risk by weighing:

- Frequency (likelihood): how often the harmful event could happen, given the context and triggers.
- Severity (impact): how serious the harm could be if it happens, for everyone affected.

It then records the controls needed to reduce the risk to a level that is reasonably practicable, balancing the level of risk against the time, effort, and resources required to reduce it. Carrying out Risk Assessments is a duty under Health and Safety management regulations.

4. Prevention and De-escalation (Core Approach)

The school prioritises preventing situations that may lead to the use of force.

Whole-School Measures

The school promotes a positive behaviour culture built on clear expectations that are explicitly taught, consistently reinforced, and applied fairly. This includes shared language for behaviour, predictable routines, and proportionate responses that support learning and help pupils understand what good order and discipline look like in practice.

The school also maintains safe, supportive learning environments that reduce unnecessary stressors and help pupils regulate and engage. This includes thoughtful classroom and corridor expectations, supervision in higher-risk spaces, and proactive adjustments for pupils who may be more vulnerable to distress, sensory overload, or anxiety.

Staff are trained and supported to use prevention and de-escalation as the default approach.

Training focuses on de-escalation skills, effective communication strategies, and practical ways to support emotional regulation, so that staff can recognise early warning signs, respond calmly, and reduce the likelihood that situations escalate.

Strong staff–pupil relationships are treated as a core protective factor. Staff are expected to build trust through consistent, respectful interactions, to repair relationships after incidents, and to use relational approaches that preserve dignity, particularly when a pupil is distressed.

The school maintains consistent behaviour systems so that pupils experience predictable boundaries and staff responses are aligned across teams. Finally, the school regularly reviews incident and behaviour data to identify patterns, triggers, and any disproportionality. Learning from this data is used to improve practice, target training, and strengthen preventative planning.

De-escalation Strategies

Staff will, wherever possible:

- Treat others with dignity by showing them respect in their communication
- Be sensitive to behaviour triggers and environmental stressors
- Adjust tone, body language and proximity
- Listen with Empathy
- Offer choices and time to process
- Redirect attention
- Seek support from colleagues

5. Legal Powers

Under **Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**, all school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force.

This includes:

- Teachers and support staff
- Any person authorised by the Headteacher

The school does not accept requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

6. When Force May Be Used

Force may only be used to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Seriously disrupting good order and discipline

7. The “Reasonableness” Test

Staff must apply professional judgement using the following framework:

1. Necessity

- Is there an imminent risk of harm?
- Can the situation be verbally de-escalated?
- Can the team wait or withdraw from the situation?
- Are there any other viable options rather than use of force?

2. Proportionality

- A proportionate amount of force prevents a greater harm from occurring.

3. Welfare and Dignity

When making decisions about any physical contact, staff must actively consider the pupil's welfare and dignity throughout the incident. This means taking account of the pupil's age and size, any medical needs, any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and any known history of trauma, distress, or vulnerability that may affect how the pupil experiences the intervention.

Staff must also consider the pupil's communication needs. Where a pupil has speech, language and communication needs, is non-verbal, or has English as an additional language, staff should use clear, calm language and appropriate non-verbal strategies, and allow time for the pupil to process what is being communicated.

Where possible, 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. Staff should explain what is happening and why, using simple, respectful language, and should continuously monitor the pupil's wellbeing so that the level of intervention can be reduced or stopped as soon as it is safe to do so.

8. Considerations for Pupils with SEND

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately affected.

The school will identify individual triggers that can increase the likelihood of distress or escalation, including sensory overload, anxiety, and pain, and will respond by putting proactive and preventative strategies in place. Where a pupil may be more vulnerable, the school will work in co-production with parents, the pupil, and relevant professionals to agree supportive approaches and clear planning. The school will also ensure that reasonable adjustments are identified, implemented, and reviewed so that the pupil can be supported effectively and the need for restrictive intervention is reduced wherever possible.

Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) or Risk Assessments

Where risk is identified, plans will include:

- Triggers and early warning signs
- De-escalation strategies
- Agreed responses
- Any agreed physical interventions (if applicable)

Plans will be reviewed:

- Regularly
- After any significant incident

9. Training and Risk Assessment

The school will:

- Ensure staff likely to use force are adequately trained in the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions and in preventative strategies
- Ensure training reflects the principles set out in DfE guidance, including prevention, de-escalation, and the safe and lawful use of force.
- Carry out risk assessments where there is foreseeable risk of intervention
- Ensure staff understand:
 - Safe practice
 - Legal boundaries
 - De-escalation techniques

10. Prohibited Practices and Risk Management

Prohibited Practices and Safety Requirements

Staff must never:

- Use force as a punishment
- Use any technique that restricts breathing or circulation
- Cover the mouth or nose
- Apply pressure to the neck, chest, abdomen or ribcage

High-Risk Positions

- Prone restraint (face-down) is prohibited
- Ground restraint must be avoided wherever possible

If a pupil is unintentionally in contact on the ground, staff must:

- Release or reposition immediately to a safer position (e.g. seated or standing)
- Continuously assess the pupil's condition

Risk Awareness (Breathing and Circulation)

Staff must be aware of the risks associated with restraint, including those relating to breathing and circulation (sometimes referred to as positional asphyxia).

Staff must:

- Monitor the pupil continuously
- Look for signs of distress (e.g. breathing difficulty, collapse, panic)
- Act immediately to reduce or stop the intervention if risk is identified. Staff must continuously assess the situation and reduce or cease the intervention as soon as it is safe to do so.

11. Use of Force for Searching

Force may be used to search a pupil, or their possessions, for **prohibited items only** where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil has such an item. This power applies to headteachers and to staff members they have authorised to carry out searches.

Staff must not use force to search for items that are banned under school rules only (for example, mobile phones or non-uniform items). Where a search is required, staff should follow the school's safeguarding procedures and have regard to relevant DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

12. Recording of Incidents (Statutory Requirement)

All significant incidents must be recorded **as soon as practicable** after the event by the staff member(s) involved. The requirement to record applies even if the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan or Risk Assessment.

As a minimum, records must include:

- Names of pupil and staff directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- Time, date, location, and approximate length of time the intervention was used
- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to it, identified or potential triggers (if known), any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained (if applicable)
- A brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- Any post-incident support, including details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

The school may also record additional details to support evaluation and learning, for example the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

As a matter of best practice, the school will also record non-force restrictive interventions where a pupil's freedom of movement or liberty is restricted beyond ordinary classroom management, in order to support monitoring, safeguarding and preventative practice.

13. Reporting to Parents (Statutory Requirement)

Parents must be informed as soon as practicable, unless doing so would risk significant harm to the pupil.

Reports will include:

- Time, date, location and duration
- Type of force used
- Any injuries
- Reason for use

The requirement to report to parents applies even where the use of reasonable force is anticipated or agreed as part of a Behaviour Support Plan or Risk Assessment.

Where reporting to parents is not appropriate, the incident will be reported to the Local Authority.

14. Post-Incident Support and Review

Following any significant incident, the school will take prompt action to support the wellbeing of the pupil, any staff involved, and the wider school community, and to reduce the likelihood of recurrence. The purpose of the post-incident process is to ensure any immediate health needs are met, that recording and reporting duties are fulfilled, and that the school learns from what happened in a way that protects dignity, rebuilds relationships, and strengthens preventative practice.

As soon as practicable after the incident, staff must consider whether the pupil or any member of staff requires a medical assessment or treatment for injury. Any injuries must be recorded in line with the school's procedures and escalated where required.

Support will be offered to the pupil, to any staff involved, and, where appropriate, to witnesses who may have been distressed by what they saw or heard. This support will be proportionate to need and may include reassurance, time and space to regulate, and follow-up conversations, as well as access to additional pastoral or wellbeing support where required.

A debriefing process will be completed to support reflection and learning. This should include separate opportunities for the staff member(s) involved and the pupil to share their reflections. Where possible, the debrief should be facilitated by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident and may include an additional person to support impartiality. The debrief should focus on understanding what happened, what contributed to escalation, what helped, and what could be done differently in future. A specific aim of the process is to repair and rebuild relationships through respectful dialogue.

Following the debrief, the school will review any relevant Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), Risk Assessment or other planning documents. The review will identify preventative improvements, including adjustments to support strategies, environments, staffing approaches, communication plans, or risk management measures, and will ensure these changes are communicated to the relevant staff.

15. Monitoring and Governance

The school will:

- Regularly review incident data to:
 - Identify patterns
 - Improve practice
 - Identify training needs
 - Monitor disproportionality
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties

An annual review will be conducted by:

- Headteacher and presented as part of the Safeguarding Report to the Governing Body

16. Complaints and Allegations

Any concerns or complaints will be handled in line with:

- The school's complaints procedure
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

Allegations against staff will be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

17. Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions and Suspensions Policy
- Child Protection (including Online Safety) Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Report
- Equalities Policy

18. Local Implementation Details

- Behaviour Support Plan or Risk Assessments: See Inclusion Team and Edukey Provision Map
- Recording system used: CPOMs
- Designated leads: Peter Hipkiss (Headteacher) and Joseph Endersby (Deputy Headteacher and SENCo)
- Training programme used: Dynamis
- Authorised staff list: All staff are allowed to positively handle pupils in an emergency situation. However, wherever possible, this will be carried out by the staff who have had the latest training below:

Name	Position within school	Date of Training
Peter Hipkiss	Headteacher	February 2026
Joe Endersby	Deputy Headteacher	February 2026
Georgina Newton	Assistant Headteacher	February 2026
Chloe Adams	Teacher	February 2026
Claire Hodgson	Teacher	February 2026
Emily Scott	Teacher	February 2026
Jo Wiltshire	Teacher	February 2026
Liz Dargie	Teacher	February 2026
Urszula Saganoska-Kearney	Teacher	February 2026
Emma Hancock	Teaching Assistant	February 2026
Clare Mitchell	Teaching Assistant	February 2026
Sarah Hayward	Teaching Assistant	February 2026
Sian Roebuck	Teaching Assistant	February 2026
Kirsty Alfredson	Teaching Assistant	February 2026
Nicola Greensmith	Teaching Assistant	February 2026

Appendix A:

Recording the Use of Restrictive Intervention

School / Establishment name: Stocks Green Primary School

PART 1A — Incident Details

(Completed by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable after the incident)

Name of establishment: Stocks Green Primary School

Pupil's name: _____

Day and date of incident: _____

Time of incident: _____

Location of incident: _____

Approximate duration of physical restraint (minutes): ____

Staff directly involved: _____

Other pupils involved: _____

Witnesses to incident: _____

If appropriate, please attach any witness statements.

Pupil Needs & Circumstances

(Statutory requirement: DfE 2025, Recording the use of force)

Does the pupil have an identified Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)?

Yes No

If yes — SEN status: ____

Relevant needs, circumstances or vulnerabilities of the pupil

(e.g. medical conditions, sensory needs, communication difficulties, known trauma, EAL, diagnosis):

Events Leading to the Incident

(What was happening for the pupil before the incident, what seemed to trigger the behaviour, who else was involved or present.)

Identified or potential triggers *(if known)*:

Behaviour of the Pupil

(What behaviour indicated that the pupil was struggling to cope or presented a risk?)

Response from Staff - De-escalation strategies used

*(Which techniques did you use to de-escalate the situation before physical intervention?
What was the pupil's response?)*

Reason for the Use of Reasonable Force

(What was the specific risk to the welfare of the pupil or others?)

Remember: Use of reasonable force must be:

1. **Necessary** — no reasonable alternative was available to prevent harm
2. **Proportionate** — no more force than was necessary for the least amount of time

Equality Act 2010 — considerations taken into account

(e.g. protected characteristics, disability-related factors, age, size, vulnerability)

Description of the Use of Force

Type of hold or method used *(What method or type of hold was applied?)*

Degree of force applied

(e.g. minimal, moderate, significant — describe the level of force and any factors that influenced it)

Complications during the use of force *(Any complications that arose?)*

Conclusion of the Incident

How did the use of force come to an end?

(What was the outcome and what immediate help and support did you offer to the pupil?)

Staff signature:

Date: _____

Print name: _____

PART 1B — Independent Review

(This section must be completed by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident)

Injuries

Was the pupil injured? Yes No

If yes, describe the injuries:

Was a member of staff injured? Yes No

If yes, describe the injuries:

Did someone receive medical help? Yes No

Was first aid given? Yes No

Was an accident form completed? Yes No

Were the police involved? Yes No

If yes, note why, who called, when, and the outcome:

Post-Incident Support

(Statutory requirement: DfE 2025 — post-incident support must be recorded)

What post-incident support was offered to the pupil?

(e.g. debrief conversation, follow-up discussion, counselling referral, wellbeing check-in, regulation support)

What post-incident support was offered to the staff member(s) involved?

Was a follow-up debrief conversation held or planned?

(Ideally facilitated by a staff member not involved in the incident)

Yes No Planned Date: _____

Were any other pupils who witnessed the incident provided with support?

Yes No N/A

Who Was Told About the Use of Force?

Person	Name of person told	Date	Time	Method of contact	Follow-up offered?	Initials
Appropriate manager						
Parent / carer						
Social worker (<i>if applicable</i>)						
Witness to the incident						
Other						

Reporting note: Parents must be informed as soon as practicable after the incident. If reporting to a parent would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil, report instead to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident. (*DfE 2025, s.93A Education and Inspections Act 2006*)

Reviewing staff signature:

Date: _____

Print name: _____

Confirmation: I was not directly involved in this incident.

PART 2 — Behaviour Support Plan or Risk Assessment Review

(To be completed following review of the incident against the pupil's existing plan)

Was this action in line with the pupil's behaviour support plan? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

Does the behaviour support plan need to be updated? Yes No

If yes, please explain what changes are needed: _____

Is a formal review of the plan required? Yes No

If yes — has a review date been scheduled? Yes No Date: _____

