



Willingdon
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Restrictive Intervention Policy

(Including Reasonable Force, Restraint and Seclusion)

Date Adopted by the Governing Body: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Responsible Officer: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Link Governor: Safeguarding Governor

1. Values, Principles and Aims

We Are Willingdon

We are a united, vibrant community which demonstrates personal excellence in all that we do. Learning at Willingdon transforms lives by igniting curiosity and expecting the very best from staff and students alike. We value opportunities, aiming for success today to prepare for challenges and opportunities tomorrow.

We are respectful, honest and courteous to empower each other on our unique learning journeys. We look after ourselves and each other and show empathy, respect and compassion to all people and our environment. We encourage tolerance, resilience and reflection, allowing everyone to make progress every lesson.

We work together as a harmonious community to be the very best versions of ourselves.

This makes us Willingdon

Ethos

At Willingdon Community School we believe that all students have the right to feel safe, secure, respected and supported. The school is committed to promoting positive behaviour through strong relationships, restorative approaches, effective behaviour support and consistent expectations.

Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion, are never used as a punishment and should only be used where necessary, proportionate and lawful to prevent harm.

The school seeks to minimise the need for restrictive interventions through preventative strategies, risk assessment, de-escalation techniques and personalised support plans.

Aims

Willingdon School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which every student is valued, respected and able to achieve their full potential. Our approach is built on strong, positive relationships between students, staff and families, with a focus on understanding individual needs, early intervention and restorative practice. Through consistent, relationship-based engagement, we seek to promote emotional wellbeing, encourage positive behaviour and reduce the need for restrictive interventions wherever possible.

This policy aims to:

- Create a safe environment for students, staff and visitors.

- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention and early intervention.
- Ensure any use of restrictive intervention is lawful, safe, necessary and proportionate.
- Protect the dignity, welfare and human rights of all students.
- Support staff in responding effectively to situations involving significant risk.
- Ensure robust systems for recording, reporting and reviewing incidents.
- Promote learning from incidents in order to reduce future use of restrictive interventions.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is informed by and should be read alongside:

- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93).
- Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Department for Education, Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools, effective from 1 April 2026.
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- East Sussex Safeguarding Procedures, including East Sussex County Council Restrictive Intervention Guidance.

3. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention

An umbrella term describing physical and non-physical interventions that intentionally prevent, restrict or subdue a student's movement.

Reasonable Force

The use of no more force than is necessary and for the shortest time necessary to prevent harm or serious disruption.

Restraint

A restrictive intervention that limits or prevents a student's freedom of movement. This may involve direct physical contact or, in some circumstances, restriction of movement without contact.

Seclusion

A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a student confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving.

Seclusion:

- Must only be used to manage serious risks to safety.
- Must be continuously supervised.
- Must cease immediately once the risk has reduced.

Seclusion occurs where one or more members of staff detain one student alone in a place apart from any other person, except the supervising member or members of staff, otherwise than as a disciplinary penalty. This includes physically obstructing the student's way of leaving, securing the place so that the student cannot leave, or causing the student to believe that they will be punished if they leave. It is distinct from time away, withdrawal or voluntary use of a calm space where the student is free to leave.

The student must be continuously and actively supervised by a member of staff who can see and hear the student, monitor their physical and emotional welfare, communicate with them, summon assistance and end the seclusion immediately when the serious safety risk has reduced.

Significant Incident

Any incident where force is used beyond normal everyday physical contact between staff and students.

Planned Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention identified within an agreed Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessment as part of a strategy to manage foreseeable risks.

Emergency (unplanned) Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention used in response to an immediate and unforeseen risk of harm.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Approving and reviewing this policy.
- Receiving information regarding the use of restrictive interventions.
- Monitoring trends and patterns.
- Ensuring statutory duties are fulfilled.
- Holding school leaders accountable for implementation.

Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training.
- Monitoring incidents and trends.
- Ensuring systems for recording and reporting are effective.
- Ensuring compliance with safeguarding requirements.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Maintaining records of incidents.
- Monitoring safeguarding concerns arising from incidents.
- Ensuring parents are informed appropriately.
- Ensuring records are stored securely.
- Reviewing incidents for safeguarding implications.

Director of Inclusion/ SENCO/ Assistant Headteacher for Engagement

The Director of Inclusion/ SENCO/ Assistant Headteacher for Engagement are responsible for:

- Supporting risk assessments for students.
- Advising on reasonable adjustments.
- Supporting Behaviour Support Plans.
- Participating in reviews following incidents involving students.
- Monitoring proportionality and equality considerations.

When supporting a student with SEND or a disability, staff must consider the student's communication profile, sensory needs, medical conditions, trauma history, known triggers and preferred regulation strategies. The school will make reasonable adjustments, use accessible communication and involve the student, parent or carer, SENCO and relevant professionals in planning. A Behaviour Support Plan must not authorise routine restraint, override the duty to consider less restrictive alternatives or predetermine that force will be lawful in a future incident.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting positive behaviour.
- Using de-escalation strategies wherever possible.
- Acting in accordance with this policy.
- Reporting, recording and reviewing incidents.
- Maintaining students' dignity and welfare at all times.

5. Appropriate Physical Contact

Willingdon Community School does not operate a "no contact" policy.

Appropriate physical contact may include:

- Providing first aid.
- Supporting an injured student.
- Guiding or escorting a student.
- Demonstrating a skill during teaching.
- PE and sports coaching.
- Instrumental music instruction.
- Comforting a distressed student where appropriate.
- Congratulating or praising students.

Staff should always exercise professional judgement and ensure any contact is appropriate to the circumstances.

6. Prevention and Early Intervention

The school recognises that behaviour is a form of communication. Staff will seek to understand the underlying needs, experiences, circumstances and barriers that may be contributing to a student's behaviour and respond in a supportive and proportionate manner.

6.1 Whole School Prevention

The school recognises that effective behaviour support begins with Quality First Teaching, positive relationships and an understanding of social, emotional and mental health needs. Restrictive intervention should only be considered after reasonable preventative, avoidance, redirection and de-escalation strategies have been attempted unless an immediate risk of harm makes such actions impractical.

The school seeks to minimise restrictive interventions through:

- Positive relationships.
- Consistent behaviour expectations.
- High-quality teaching and learning.
- Restorative approaches.
- Trauma-informed practice.
- Effective communication.
- Staff training.
- Student voice.
- Family engagement.
- Inclusive classroom environments.

6.2 Individual Prevention

Where students present additional needs or risks, the school will:

- Work closely with families.
- Develop Behaviour Support Plans.
- Use pastoral and therapeutic support.
- Identify triggers and protective factors.
- Undertake behavioural risk assessments.
- Implement reasonable adjustments.
- Involve external agencies where appropriate.
- Review support regularly.

6.3 Primary Prevention

Primary prevention includes:

- Building trusting relationships.
- Creating predictable environments.
- Providing clear expectations.
- Teaching emotional regulation strategies.
- Promoting resilience and self-management.
- Celebrating success and positive behaviour.

6.4 Secondary Prevention

Where risks begin to emerge, staff should:

- Recognise early warning signs.
- Implement agreed support plans.
- Use known de-escalation strategies.
- Reduce demands where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for regulation.
- Seek additional support from colleagues.

6.5 De-escalation Strategies

Staff should consider:

- Remaining calm.
- Active listening.
- Open and non-threatening body language.
- Giving processing time.
- Offering choice.
- Using empathy.
- Removing an audience.

- Offering a safe space.
- Redirecting attention.
- Verbal reminders and warnings.

Restrictive intervention should only be considered when these approaches are ineffective or impractical due to immediate risk.

7. Risk Assessment

The school adopts a risk assessment approach to supporting students whose behaviour may present risks to themselves or others.

Risk assessments should consider:

- Environmental factors.
- Personal vulnerabilities.
- SEND needs.
- Medical conditions.
- Trauma experiences.
- Communication difficulties.
- Equality considerations.
- Frequency and severity of incidents.
- Likely outcomes if no action is taken.
- Risks associated with intervention itself.

Risk assessments must:

- Identify hazards.
- Assess likelihood and severity.
- Identify preventative measures.
- Clarify responsibilities.
- Be reviewed regularly.

Students requiring planned restrictive interventions must have an up-to-date Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessment. Wherever appropriate, students will be involved in the development, implementation and review of Behaviour Support Plans, Risk Assessments and post-incident reviews.

8. Planned and Emergency (Unplanned) Restrictive Interventions

Emergency (unplanned) Restrictive Interventions

Emergency (unplanned) intervention may be appropriate where:

- A student is at immediate risk of harming themselves.
- A student presents an immediate risk to others.
- Serious property damage is likely.

- Serious disorder presents an immediate safety risk.

The intervention must be:

- Necessary.
- Proportionate.
- Reasonable.
- The least restrictive option available.

Planned Restrictive Interventions

Planned interventions may only be used where:

- Significant foreseeable risks have been identified.
- A Behaviour Support Plan exists.
- A Risk Assessment exists.
- Staff have received appropriate training.
- Strategies are reviewed regularly.

Plans should be reviewed at the end of each long term and following any significant incident.

9. Circumstances in Which Reasonable Force May Be Used

All members of staff have legal authority to use reasonable force where necessary to prevent a student from:

- Injuring themselves.
- Injuring another person.
- Committing a criminal offence.
- Causing serious damage to property.
- Causing serious disorder that places others at risk.

Staff should use the minimum force necessary and for the shortest possible duration.

The school will not agree requests from parents or carers that reasonable force should never be used.

10. Seclusion

Seclusion must only be used as a safety measure and never as a punishment.

Where seclusion is used:

- The location must be safe.
- The student must be continuously supervised.
- The environment must not be intimidating or degrading.
- The student must be allowed to leave as soon as risk reduces.

- The duration must be kept to an absolute minimum.
- The incident must be recorded and reported.

The threat of seclusion must never be used as a behavioural sanction.

11. Determining Whether an Intervention is Appropriate

Before intervening, staff should consider:

Necessity

- Is intervention required to prevent harm?
- Is there a less restrictive alternative?

Proportionality

- Is the intervention proportionate to the risk?
- Is the level of force the minimum required?

Welfare

- What are the student's individual needs?
- Could the intervention cause distress or trauma?
- Have SEND, disability and equality needs been considered?

Staff should seek to explain calmly to students what is happening whenever possible.

12. Unacceptable Practice

The following practices are prohibited:

- Use of force as punishment.
- Deliberate infliction of pain.
- Pain compliance techniques.
- Mechanical restraint.
- Restricting breathing.
- Covering the mouth or nose.
- Pressure to the neck.
- Pressure to the throat.
- Pressure to the abdomen.
- Dangerous floor restraints.
- Humiliating or degrading treatment.
- Seclusion used as punishment.

If a student is unintentionally brought to the ground, staff must move to a safer position and release the intervention as soon as safely possible.

13. Searching Students

Authorised staff may search students in accordance with current statutory guidance.

Reasonable force may be used when searching for prohibited items where permitted by law.

Reasonable force must not be used solely to search for items that are prohibited under school rules but not prohibited by legislation.

14. Recording and Reporting

Recording

All significant incidents involving:

- Reasonable force,
- Restraint, or
- Seclusion

must be recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and preferably on the same day.

Records should include:

- Student name.
- Staff involved.
- Date and time.
- Location.
- Duration.
- Antecedents and triggers.
- Risk presented.
- De-escalation strategies used.
- Intervention used.
- Injuries sustained.
- Outcome.
- Follow-up actions.
- Debrief information.

Records should be maintained securely through the school's safeguarding and recording systems. Staff should fill in the Restrictive Intervention Google form as soon as possible after the event and record it on My Concern. [Restrictive Interventions Reporting Form](#)

Reporting to Parents and Carers

Parents or carers will normally be informed as soon as practicable and preferably on the same day.

Written information should include:

- Date and time.
- Location.
- Reason for intervention.
- Nature of intervention.
- Duration.
- Any injuries.
- Actions taken afterwards.

Parents should be offered an opportunity to discuss the incident where appropriate.

15. Debrief and Post-Incident Support

Following any restrictive intervention:

- Students should be offered an opportunity to discuss the incident.
- Staff should participate in a review and reflection process.
- Witnesses should receive support where necessary.
- Injuries should be assessed and treated.
- Relationships should be repaired through restorative approaches.
- Behaviour Support Plans and Risk Assessments should be reviewed.
- Additional support should be arranged where required.

Debrief should focus on learning, understanding and prevention rather than blame. The school also has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff. Risk assessments and support arrangements will therefore consider risks presented to both students and staff.

16. Training

The school will ensure that appropriate staff receive training in:

- Positive behaviour support.
- De-escalation techniques.
- Trauma-informed practice.
- Restrictive interventions.
- Risk assessment.
- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Recording and reporting procedures.

Refresher training will be provided in accordance with school requirements and identified needs.

17. Monitoring, Evaluation and Governance

The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review:

- Numbers of incidents.
- Types of intervention used.
- Frequency by student.

- Frequency by cohort.
- SEND representation.
- Equality and protected characteristic data.
- Staff training needs.
- Lessons learned.

The Senior Leadership Team will review restrictive-intervention data at least termly, and the Governing Body or a designated committee will receive an anonymised termly report. Reports will include trends, repeat incidents, injuries, complaints, timeliness of recording and parent notification, disproportionality, training compliance, lessons learned and actions taken. Governors will record challenge, monitor completion of actions and seek assurance that practice is reducing restriction and improving safety.

Monitoring will include analysis of any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to students with SEND, students eligible for Free School Meals, looked after children, previously looked after children and groups sharing protected characteristics.

18. Complaints and Allegations

Concerns and complaints regarding restrictive interventions will be dealt with through the school's complaints procedures.

Where allegations are made against staff, the school will follow:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Local safeguarding procedures.
- Staff disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns will always take precedence.

19. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Relationship and Engagement Policy. Where behaviour concerns do not meet the threshold for restrictive intervention, responses will be managed in accordance with the Relationship and Engagement Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives