Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Purpose and relational approach

At Larkspur Community Primary School, positive relationships, prevention, co-regulation and de-escalation are central to our approach to supporting behaviour. We seek to understand children's individual needs and proactively reduce situations in which restrictive intervention may become necessary. Restrictive intervention is not a behaviour-management strategy or punishment. It may only be used where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to maintain safety.

Where intervention is necessary, staff will seek to use the least restrictive intervention and the minimum force necessary for the shortest possible time, while protecting the child's dignity and welfare. Following an incident, we will support recovery and reconnection, reflect on what happened and consider what can be learned to reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention being required again.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy, including its Searching, Screening and Confiscation section
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy

Relevant legislation and guidance

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, particularly sections 93 and 93A
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE, Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026)
- DfE, Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff
- DfE, Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Legal framework

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. This includes preventing or stopping a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder among pupils at the school. Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force or

other restrictive interventions will be adequately trained in safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

Restrictive intervention will only be used where it is necessary and proportionate in the individual circumstances. Wherever practicable, staff will use prevention, de-escalation and less restrictive approaches first. In an emergency, staff may need to act immediately to prevent harm. Any intervention will use the least restrictive approach and no more force than is necessary for the shortest period required.

Communicating our approach to physical contact

Parental consent is not required for a lawful use of reasonable force. Larkspur does not operate a no-contact policy. Appropriate physical contact that does not amount to restrictive intervention may include administering first aid, guiding or escorting a child in ordinary circumstances, or comforting a distressed child where appropriate.

Determining when restrictive intervention is appropriate

Any decision depends on the individual circumstances. Staff should consider:

Is it necessary?

- Are there other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
- Is the intervention likely to reduce the relevant risk?
- Where possible, what broader risks in the environment should be considered?

Is it proportionate?

- Use the least amount of force, or least restrictive intervention, necessary for the least amount of time required.
- If the intervention escalates the situation, reconsider the approach and, where safe, use an alternative strategy.
- Consider medical conditions, SEND, communication needs, other vulnerabilities, age and size, and relevant equality implications.

Have you considered the child's welfare and dignity?

- Consider the impact on the child's overall welfare, including known trauma, medical, sensory, communication or additional needs.
- Seek to maintain dignity, including consideration of the environment and presence of peers.
- Where possible, communicate calmly what is happening, why, and what the child needs to do.
- Use appropriate verbal and/or non-verbal communication and allow processing time where needed.
- Continuously review whether the intervention should continue, reduce or stop.

Prevention and whole-school measures

Larkspur seeks to minimise restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation. Whole-school measures include:

- calm, predictable classroom and school environments, including regulation spaces, to reduce known triggers and support children to regulate;
- consistent use of **Ready, Respectful and Resilient** expectations and agreed routines across classrooms, corridors, playgrounds and lunchtimes;
- staff training in de-escalation, calm communication, Team Teach/Positive Handling where relevant, and understanding individual needs;
- strong staff-child relationships, restorative practice, co-regulation and proactive support to build trust and prevent escalation;
- individual risk assessment and support planning where there is an identified foreseeable risk;
- analysis of significant incidents to inform improvement, reasonable adjustments, risk assessments and support plans.

Unacceptable uses of force

Force must never be used as a punishment. Pupils must not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, including covering the mouth or nose or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. Restrictive interventions on the ground carry particular risks and should be avoided wherever possible. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release or reposition the pupil into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate following an intervention, the pupil will receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injury as soon as possible.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Headteachers and staff they authorise have statutory powers to search a pupil or their possessions in specified circumstances. Reasonable force may only be used in connection with a search where permitted by law, including where searching for legally prohibited items; it must not be used solely to search for an item banned under school rules. Searches will be conducted in accordance with current DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

Individual risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan

Where there is an identified foreseeable risk that a child may require restrictive intervention, the school will consider an individual risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan. The plan will take account of SEND, disability, medical, sensory, communication and other relevant needs and will be shared with appropriate staff. Parents/carers and the child, where appropriate, will be involved in planning and review.

- environmental adjustments and reduction of known triggers;

- early signs of dysregulation and preventative/co-regulation strategies;
- helpful communication, body language and preferred adult approaches;
- agreed de-escalation strategies and approaches known to increase risk or that should be avoided;
- how additional support will be summoned;
- relevant medical and safety considerations;
- agreed restrictive intervention approaches where foreseeable and appropriate;
- recovery, reconnection and post-incident support;
- review following significant incidents and at planned intervals.

Recording and reporting

The governing body will ensure that a procedure is in place for recording every significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, in accordance with section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and current statutory guidance.

A significant incident is an incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes where physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. In determining whether an incident is significant, school leaders will use professional judgement, including consideration of the behaviour and level of risk, the degree of force used, its effect on the pupil or staff member, and the child's age.

The school will comply with the statutory requirement to record every significant incident involving the use of force. Larkspur may additionally record other uses of reasonable force or restrictive intervention where this supports safeguarding, monitoring, individual planning or review. Significant incidents will be reported promptly to the Headteacher or another senior leader and recorded on CPOMS.

The record of a significant incident will include:

- names of the pupil and staff directly involved;
- relevant needs or circumstances, including identified SEND or disability and SEN status where applicable;
- date, time, location and approximate duration;
- what led to the incident, known or potential triggers, and preventative or de-escalation strategies used;
- the type and degree of force used and why it was assessed as necessary;
- details of physical injuries, if any;
- post-incident support, including medical treatment or support for other adverse impacts.

Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible following every significant incident and the incident will be explained. The written report will BE ON cpoms and available at parental request. It will include the date, time, location and approximate duration, why the intervention was assessed as necessary, the type and degree of force used, and details of any physical injuries sustained. The communication will be recorded. Any statutory exception to reporting will be handled in accordance with current guidance.

Seclusion

Seclusion will not be used as a disciplinary sanction. In exceptional circumstances, it may be used only where it is necessary and proportionate to manage an immediate risk of harm. It will be used for the shortest possible period in a safe environment, and the pupil will be appropriately supervised throughout. As soon as the immediate risk has reduced, the pupil must be allowed to leave. Any use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements and this policy.

Post-incident support, recovery and review

Following a restrictive intervention, appropriate support will be provided to the pupil and staff involved. Where appropriate, medical assessment and treatment for any injury will be arranged as soon as possible, and injuries will be recorded in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.

A follow-up conversation will support regulation, reflection, relational repair and learning. The purpose of review is not to establish blame, but to understand what contributed to the incident and consider whether changes to provision, reasonable adjustments, risk assessment or support could reduce the likelihood of recurrence. The school will monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support where needed.

Monitoring and governance

Senior leaders will review restrictive intervention information to identify patterns and learning and to inform prevention, staff training, individual risk assessment and support planning. The governing body will oversee implementation of this policy and the school's compliance with statutory recording and reporting duties.

Complaints and safeguarding

Any concern or complaint about the use of restrictive intervention or reasonable force will be considered in accordance with Larkspur Community Primary School's Complaints Policy and, where relevant, its Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.

Appendix A: Individual Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plan

Child details	Name: _____ Year: _____ Date of plan: _____

	Staff involved: _____
Strengths and interests	What helps staff connect successfully with the child? What interests, strengths and motivators are helpful?
Communication and individual needs	Communication profile; SEND, sensory, medical or other relevant needs; reasonable adjustments required.
Known triggers / situations of increased risk	Situations, environments or demands associated with increased risk.
Early signs of dysregulation	Observable signs that the child may need support or co-regulation.
Prevention and regulation	Environmental adjustments, helpful routines, preferred adults, calming/regulation spaces, sensory support and proactive strategies.
Helpful communication	Words, scripts, non-verbal communication, processing time and adult approaches known to help.
Strategies to avoid	Approaches, language, environments or responses known to increase risk.
De-escalation	Strategies staff should use; how the child communicates a need for help; safe people, places or objects where relevant.
If restrictive intervention becomes necessary	Foreseeable risks; agreed approaches appropriate to the child; relevant medical/safety information; how additional assistance will be summoned.
Recovery and reconnection	How the child is supported to regulate afterwards; preferred post-incident support; relational repair; how the child's views will be gathered.
Parent/carer communication	How and when parents/carers will be involved and informed.
Review and learning	What has been learned from incidents? What should change? Does the risk assessment, provision, reasonable adjustment or support plan need updating?
Review date	Planned review: _____ Earlier review following significant incident where required.
Plan shared with	Child, parents/carers and relevant staff, as appropriate. Record names/roles/dates below.

Name	Role	Date