

ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW  
ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

[www.clitherow.herts.sch.uk](http://www.clitherow.herts.sch.uk)  
[admin@clitherow.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@clitherow.herts.sch.uk)



**Restrictive Physical Intervention in Schools Policy**  
**(HCC Policy)**

**Ownership:** Health, Safety & Premises Committee

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Pupils in St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and very proud of their school. They clearly understand their mission statement, 'Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him.' They can quote scripture to give examples of how they do their best to follow Jesus every day. Pupils explain that if they ever feel worried about something they are confident that adults will help them in a discreet and caring way. They are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the more vulnerable members of society and can reference Catholic social teaching when discussing their work with the local foodbank.

**Catholic Schools Inspectorate October 2024**

Pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils strive to do their best and achieve well. Pupils are extremely kind and caring. They frequently give up their free time to help each other. Lessons are free from disruption and lunchtimes are a buzz of happy and harmonious play.

**Ofsted May 2024**

*At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children*

*Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him*

## **Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force Policy**

### **1. Introduction and Purpose of Policy**

On rare occasions, school staff may need to use restrictive interventions to safeguard pupils or maintain discipline within the school environment. The school recognises that the Department for Education guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), states that there are circumstances where it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to achieve these aims and that schools must not operate a no-contact policy, as this can place staff and pupils at risk.

This policy has been developed to support the school in ensuring that any restrictive interventions used are lawful and carried out in a safe, proportionate and responsible manner. The aim of this policy is to ensure that staff are confident about the circumstances in which they have the power to use restrictive interventions and restraint in order to safeguard pupil welfare.

Restrictive interventions and reasonable force will only be used when they are necessary and proportionate, after de-escalation strategies have been attempted where appropriate, and when there is a clear risk of serious harm to the pupil or others, serious damage to property, or serious disorder.

Decisions regarding the use of restrictive intervention are matters of professional judgement. Any intervention or restraint used by staff must be proportionate and reasonable in the context of the perceived risk and in the pupil's best interests. Restrictive intervention would normally only be used after de-escalation strategies have failed.

Where restrictive intervention is used, the school will record the details of the incident, including any injury sustained, and parents/carers will be informed as soon as practicable and ideally on the same day.

This policy adopts the statutory terminology set out in DfE Restrictive Interventions, Including Reasonable Force, in Schools (2026), including the definitions of 'restrictive intervention', 'reasonable force', 'significant incident', 'restraint' and 'seclusion'. Restrictive intervention refers to any action, physical or non-physical, that restricts a pupil's movement.

### **2. Legal Framework**

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives schools the power to use reasonable force to:

- prevent a pupil from hurting themselves or others
- prevent a pupil from causing serious damage to property
- remove a disruptive pupil from a classroom
- prevent a pupil from causing disorder among pupils during school activities, including off-site visits
- prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom where there is a risk to their safety or the safety of others.

Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires schools to have procedures for recording and informing parents of significant incidents where force is used against pupils.

The schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025 require schools to maintain written records where a pupil is secluded or restrained and to provide a record to parents as soon as possible.

The school recognises that statutory guidance makes clear that restrictive interventions and restraint must never be used as a punishment.

The school will ensure that:

- effective recording and reporting systems are in place
- incidents are regularly reviewed
- safeguarding and behaviour policies are reviewed where appropriate
- staff receive appropriate training.

Section 550ZB of the Education Act 1996 also gives schools the power to use reasonable force to carry out searches for prohibited items where a pupil has not consented to the search.

Prohibited items include:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause injury or damage property.

The school will read this policy alongside the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools
- DfE Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools (2026)
- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools.

### **3. Senior Leadership Responsibilities**

Senior leaders, including governors and the Headteacher, will ensure that:

- there is a culture of respect and positive relationships between staff and pupils so that the need for high-level intervention is reduced

- all staff are aware of this policy and understand their powers and responsibilities regarding restrictive interventions and restraint
- staff use de-escalation strategies in the first instance unless an immediate physical response is required
- all staff receive appropriate behaviour management training, including de-escalation techniques
- appropriate staff receive specialist training in restrictive interventions and restraint techniques where necessary
- risks to staff are assessed and reduced wherever possible
- staff do not place themselves at unnecessary risk when using restrictive intervention
- staff are able to access medical treatment and support if injured
- restrictive intervention forms part of the school's wider behaviour management and therapeutic approach
- reasonable adjustments are made for vulnerable pupils
- staff are supported following incidents
- systems are in place to record and monitor incidents involving restrictive intervention or restraint
- this policy is reviewed annually or sooner if required.

#### **4. Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force**

The school recognises that staff have the lawful power to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils where necessary.

To ensure the welfare of pupils and to protect staff from misplaced allegations, any physical contact between staff and pupils must always be appropriate to the context, the pupil's age and understanding, and the circumstances.

The school recognises that there are many examples of appropriate positive physical contact that may be used to reassure, comfort, guide or calm a pupil.

Restrictive intervention can include a wide variety of contact with pupils of varying degrees of intrusiveness, ranging from positive handling, such as gentle guiding, to physical restraint.

The level of intervention and degree of force used will depend upon the circumstances and the assessed level of risk to the pupil and others.

Generally, low-level physical contact or positive handling may be used to manage behaviour, for example:

- comforting or reassuring a pupil
- gently guiding a pupil away from danger
- supporting a pupil to move safely.

For younger pupils, positive handling may be used to control movements in order to keep the child safe. The level of contact and force used should be similar to that which a reasonable parent would use to keep their own child safe.

In some situations, it may be necessary to use restrictive intervention involving restraint or the use of force. Where force is used, it must be reasonable, proportionate and used with the clear intention of preventing harm.

Reasonable force should involve no more force than is necessary to achieve the desired outcome and should only be used for the purposes of:

- safeguarding pupils
- preventing injury
- preventing serious damage to property
- maintaining good order.

Any use of force must be justifiable and based on professional judgement.

Staff must never use any restraint or physical restrictive intervention that restricts a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation, including pressure on the neck, chest or abdomen.

Prone or ground-based restraint must be avoided and, if it occurs unintentionally, it must be released immediately once safe to do so.

## **5. Vulnerable Pupils**

The school recognises that some pupils may exhibit challenging behaviour in response to overstimulating environments, stressful situations or difficulties communicating distress. This may make them more vulnerable to experiencing restrictive intervention and restraint.

The school will be particularly mindful of pupils who may be vulnerable, including:

- pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (with or without an EHCP)
- pupils experiencing mental health difficulties
- pupils who have experienced trauma
- looked after and previously looked after children
- refugee children and unaccompanied minors
- children living with domestic abuse
- children subject to child protection plans.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made so that policies and procedures relating to restrictive intervention do not disadvantage vulnerable pupils.

The school recognises the government guidance Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention and will take active steps to reduce the use of restrictive intervention for vulnerable pupils.

Where a vulnerable pupil is at increased risk of requiring restrictive intervention, the school may implement an individual behaviour support plan and risk assessment developed in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil.

The behaviour support plan may include:

- strategies for prevention and de-escalation
- identified triggers for behaviour
- agreed approaches to communication
- forms of restrictive intervention that may be used
- details of staff responsibilities
- arrangements for reviewing incidents and support.

Staff will adapt verbal and non-verbal communication for pupils with communication needs or sensory differences.

Specific support plans will also consider transitions between settings or locations where these may increase anxiety or behavioural risk.

The school recognises that seclusion may only be used as an emergency safety measure and must always be recorded and reported in line with statutory requirements.

Parents/carers may be consulted regarding approaches to behaviour management; however, parental consent is not required where restrictive intervention is necessary, safe and lawful.

## **6. Planning and Prevention**

### **6.1 Whole School**

The school will take proactive steps to reduce the likelihood of incidents requiring restrictive intervention.

The school will regularly review environmental and organisational factors that may contribute to incidents, including:

- the general school environment and potential hot-spots
- difficulties arising at particular times of the day
- supervision arrangements
- environmental factors affecting vulnerable pupils
- risks related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality or disability
- risks associated with gang activity
- risks during off-site activities and educational visits.

The school's planning and risk management processes will consider:

- the nature and likelihood of risk

- the potential impact on pupils and staff
- reasonable adjustments for vulnerable pupils
- preventative actions to reduce incidents
- actions to be taken in response to incidents.

## **6.2 Individual Pupils**

Pupils who are at heightened risk of experiencing restrictive intervention may have an individual behaviour support plan.

Where a pupil requires restrictive intervention on more than one occasion, or where there is a known risk that restrictive intervention may be required, the school will ensure that an individual behaviour support plan and risk assessment are in place.

Risk assessments will consider:

- the risks to the pupil and others from the behaviour
- the risks associated with restrictive intervention
- the risks of not intervening
- the least restrictive intervention available.

Behaviour support plans will:

- identify behavioural triggers
- include relevant background information where appropriate
- detail de-escalation techniques
- identify forms of restrictive intervention that may be used safely
- explain how incidents will be reviewed.

Individual behaviour support plans will be reviewed with pupils and parents/carers following any significant incident involving restrictive intervention.

The school recognises that planned intervention can be positive where it demonstrates a commitment to keeping pupils safe and enables pupils to participate in planning.

## **7. Dealing with Incidents**

### **7.1 Initial Consideration**

Before taking action, staff should quickly assess the situation and decide whether intervention is required immediately to prevent harm.

Staff will use professional judgement when deciding whether restrictive intervention is necessary and determining the degree of force required.

Staff must be clear about:

- the justification for intervention

- the intended outcome
- how the intervention is in the best interests of the pupil and others.

Staff should also consider the risks of not intervening.

## **7.2 De-escalation**

Where possible, staff must use de-escalation techniques before considering restrictive intervention.

Staff should:

- make it clear that they are taking control of the situation
- ask other pupils to leave where appropriate
- seek assistance from colleagues
- remain calm and respectful
- speak slowly and clearly
- be aware of tone of voice and body language
- use minimal force or positive handling where appropriate
- remain aware of their own emotional responses
- maintain a respectful distance
- avoid escalating the situation
- provide choices where possible
- adapt approaches to meet pupils' SEND needs.

De-escalation strategies may continue during restraint in order to calm and reassure the pupil.

## **7.3 Use of Reasonable Force and Restraint**

All staff have a duty of care to pupils and have the lawful power to use restrictive intervention and restraint where required.

Any use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Restraint should only be used for as long as is necessary.

Where possible:

- staff should not manage incidents involving restraint alone for extended periods
- additional staff should attend incidents as soon as possible
- pupils should be warned clearly and calmly before force is used
- pupils should be given an opportunity to comply.

During restraint, staff should:

- remain calm
- continue communicating with the pupil
- reassure the pupil throughout the incident.

Any restraint used:

- must involve the minimum force necessary
- must only continue while risk remains present
- must not restrict breathing or circulation
- should avoid bringing the pupil to the ground
- must not involve unlawful or inappropriate physical contact.

Pupils should be released slowly and safely once they are sufficiently calm and the risk has reduced.

If intervention appears to escalate the situation, staff must reassess the circumstances and modify or cease the intervention where safe to do so.

## **8. Following Incidents**

### **8.1 Recording and Reporting Incidents**

The school will maintain written records of every significant incident involving restrictive intervention, restraint or seclusion.

Records will be completed as soon as possible and ideally on the same day.

Records will include:

- names of pupils and staff involved
- relevant pupil needs or vulnerabilities
- date, time, location and duration
- details of antecedents and triggers
- preventative and de-escalation strategies used
- details of the intervention used
- reasons why intervention was necessary
- details of any injuries sustained
- details of post-incident support provided.

### **8.2 Notifying Others**

The Headteacher must be informed of all significant incidents.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed where safeguarding concerns arise.

Parents/carers will be informed of any significant use of force, restraint or seclusion as soon as practicable and ideally on the same day.

Reports to parents/carers will include:

- the date, time and location of the incident
- the reason intervention was necessary
- the type of intervention used
- the duration of the incident
- details of any injuries sustained.

Where informing a parent/carer may place a pupil at risk of harm, the school will seek safeguarding advice.

The governing body will receive regular updates regarding the use of restrictive intervention and restraint in order to identify patterns and ensure compliance with statutory duties.

The governing body will monitor whether vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected.

### **8.3 Support Following Incidents**

The school recognises that restrictive intervention and restraint can be distressing for pupils and staff.

Following an incident, the school will:

- ensure medical attention is provided where required
- provide opportunities for debrief and reflection
- offer emotional support to those involved
- review behaviour support plans where appropriate
- identify learning points to reduce future incidents.

### **8.4 Monitoring and Reviewing Incidents**

The school will regularly monitor and review incidents involving restrictive intervention and restraint.

When reviewing incidents, the school will consider:

- whether intervention was necessary, appropriate and proportionate
- whether minimum force was used
- whether incidents are increasing or decreasing
- whether vulnerable pupils are over-represented
- whether the duration of intervention was minimised
- whether alternative strategies could have been used
- whether intervention minimised pain or distress

- what support was provided following the incident
- whether debriefing took place for staff and pupils
- what lessons can be learned from incidents.

## **9. Staff Training**

The school recognises that appropriate training increases staff confidence and reduces risk.

Training will equip staff to:

- prevent the need for restrictive intervention
- use de-escalation strategies
- apply restrictive intervention safely
- assess proportionality under pressure
- understand individual risk assessments
- comply with statutory recording and reporting duties.

The school will ensure:

- all staff receive training in behaviour management and de-escalation
- appropriate staff receive specialist training in restraint techniques
- training records are maintained.

## **10. Publicising the Policy**

The school will ensure that pupils and parents/carers are aware of:

- the school's legal powers to use restrictive intervention and restraint
- the circumstances in which restrictive intervention may be used
- the school's commitment to making reasonable adjustments for vulnerable pupils
- the processes for recording and reporting incidents.

Parents/carers should be aware that consent is not required where restrictive intervention is necessary, lawful and proportionate.

## **11. Complaints and Allegations**

The school recognises that the use of restrictive intervention may result in complaints or allegations.

The school will ensure that:

- clear procedures are in place regarding restrictive intervention and restraint
- staff understand the expectations set out within this policy
- complaints are managed in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Where allegations are made against staff following the use of restrictive intervention or restraint, the matter will be managed in accordance with statutory safeguarding procedures.

The school will follow Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures for managing allegations against adults who work with children.

All allegations meeting the relevant threshold will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.

No internal investigation will take place without agreement from the LADO.

## 12. Reporting to Parents

<b>Student Name:</b>	
D.O.B:	
SEND Code	
Identified SEN or disability	

Date of Incident	
Time of Incident	
Duration of Incident	
Duration of Restrictive Intervention	

Recording staff name:	
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Location of Incident:	
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Type of Restrictive Intervention	
Physical restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-physical restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mechanical restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemical restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervised seclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>

Description of Restrictive Intervention

Justification for restrictive intervention Why the intervention was assessed as necessary (tick all that apply):	Harm prevented by physical intervention with predicted levels (see Individual Plan) e.g. bruising to peers, lacerations, destruction of computer, 20 mins of geography lost for 15 child or young person's etc.
To prevent harm to self	<input type="checkbox"/>
To prevent harm to other children	<input type="checkbox"/>
To prevent harm to adults	<input type="checkbox"/>
To prevent damage to property	<input type="checkbox"/>
To prevent loss of learning (see plan)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there any physical or emotional harm caused by the use of the restrictive intervention?	Y/N	Details:
Has the student indicated that this was caused by the use of restrictive intervention?	Y/N	Actions:

Who has received a copy of this report?		
Reported to:	Method of reporting (e.g. post)	Time and date of reporting

**13. Recording form as stated in Restrictive Intervention, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026).**

Triggers:
Additional factors:

**De-escalation techniques used (please state order in which they were used)**

Verbal advice and support	Offering services of other staff
Calm talking	Informing of consequences
Distraction	Taking non-threatening body position
Reassurance	De-escalation script
Humour	Clear instruction / warning
Negotiation	Withdrawal from activity
Offering choices and options	Diversion
Other (please specify)	

Number	Description of how technique was employed
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

**Restrictive intervention, in sequence.**

Time	Technique	Shape	Staff name
Duration of restraint:		Duration of incident:	
Additional information and justification		Additional information and justification	

**Unresolved Harm/ Details of damage to property (costs and details of harm to property and people, including medical intervention:**


<b>Management:</b>	<b>Details:</b>
How was the incident resolved?	

What are the protective and educational consequences?		
Has necessary student de-brief taken place?	Y/N	
Has necessary staff de-brief taken place?	Y/N	
Has the Risk Reduction Plan been reviewed?	Y/N	
Was there involvement of external agencies?	Y/N	

Name(s) of student witnesses:		

Verification of account by adult witnesses:			
Name	Staff signature	Verification	Date and time
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Name	Signature	Date
Recording staff	_____	_____	_____
Headteacher (or delegated member of SLT)	_____	_____	_____