

FAIR OAK JUNIOR SCHOOL

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION

POLICY

(Including the Use of Reasonable Force)



Name of School	Fair Oak Junior School
Date of Policy Issue	March 2026
Review Date	March 2027
Name of Interim Headteacher	Jim Hartley
Signature of Interim Headteacher	<i>J. Hartley</i>
Signature of Chair of Governors	<i>T. Dancer / R. Holmes</i>

Policy Statement

At Fair Oak Junior School we are committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive environment for all pupils and staff. The school aims to promote positive behaviour through a culture of respect, inclusion and restorative practice (See Behaviour and Relationships policy)

This policy outlines the circumstances in which **restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force**, may be used by staff.

The policy is written with regard to the Department for Education guidance **Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools** (April 2026) and other relevant safeguarding and behaviour guidance.

The school recognises that restrictive interventions should **only be used when absolutely necessary** and that prevention, early intervention and de-escalation strategies are always the preferred approach.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors.
- Provide clear guidance for staff on the lawful use of restrictive interventions.
- Reduce the need for restrictive interventions through preventative strategies.
- Ensure that any intervention is **reasonable, proportionate and time-limited**.
- Ensure incidents are **recorded, monitored and reported appropriately**.
- Ensure the school meets its legal responsibilities under education and safeguarding legislation.

Definition of Restrictive Interventions

Restrictive interventions are actions that **restrict a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently**.

These may include:

- Physical restraint (holding)
- Physical intervention (guiding, blocking)
- Seclusion (as defined in Appendix A)

Reasonable force refers to **the degree of force necessary to prevent harm**, and covers a wide range of actions involving physical contact with pupils.

Restrictive interventions **must never be used as punishment, discipline, or to enforce compliance** with school rules.

Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Behaviour in Schools Guidance (DfE)
- Safeguarding and child protection guidance

School staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from harming themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, causing serious damage to property, or causing significant disruption. This includes teachers, support staff and any other adults authorised by the Headteacher. Staff have a duty of care to take reasonable action to prevent harm to pupils and others.

Principles

At Fair Oak Junior School:

- The **safety and dignity of pupils is paramount**.
- Restrictive interventions are a **last resort**.
- Interventions must be **proportionate, reasonable and necessary**.
- The **least restrictive option** should always be used.
- The intervention should **stop as soon as the risk has reduced**.

Prevention and De-escalation

The school prioritises preventative approaches to behaviour management.

Strategies include:

- Positive behaviour support
- Clear routines and expectations
- Relationship-based practice
- Restorative approaches including coaching conversations
- Emotional regulation support including through the use of Thrive time and support in the hive.
- Individual behaviour support plans called co-regulation plans
- Close working with families
- Risk assessments
- Staff training in de-escalation strategies

Understanding pupils' triggers and providing appropriate support can significantly reduce the need for restrictive interventions.

Pupils with SEND or Additional Needs

The school recognises that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may require additional support.

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that any use of restrictive intervention does not discriminate against pupils with disabilities.

Where appropriate:

- Individual co-regulation plans, as well as specific SEN support as detailed in for example EHCPs, will be developed.
- Risk assessments will be carried out.
- Reasonable adjustments will be implemented.
- Staff who know the pupil well will support interventions where possible.

Staff will always consider the **individual needs, communication style and triggers** of the pupil before deciding to intervene.

When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Restrictive interventions may only be used when it is necessary to:

- Prevent injury to a pupil or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Prevent serious disruption that threatens safety or order in the school environment.

Staff should always attempt **verbal de-escalation and other preventative strategies first**, unless there is an immediate risk of harm.

Acceptable Physical Contact

There are occasions when physical contact is appropriate and necessary in schools, including:

- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Guiding or supporting pupils
- Preventing an accident
- Supporting pupils with medical or personal care needs

Such contact is **not considered restrictive intervention** where it is appropriate and consensual.

Types of Restrictive Intervention

Examples of possible interventions may include:

- Physically separating pupils involved in a fight
- Blocking a pupil's path to prevent harm
- Holding a pupil to prevent injury
- Removing a pupil from a dangerous situation
- Seclusion (See Appendix A)

The method used must always be the **least restrictive and safest option available**.

Prohibited Practices

The following must **never be used**:

- Interventions that cause pain or humiliation
- Restrictive interventions used as punishment
- Techniques that restrict breathing
- Prolonged restraint
- Unsupervised seclusion

Recording and Reporting

All **significant incidents involving restrictive interventions** must be recorded in the restrictive interventions file. This will need to be seen and signed by the HT or DHT.

Records will be reviewed regularly by senior leaders to identify patterns, inform risk assessments and ensure appropriate support is in place.

The record will include:

- Date, time and location
- Pupils and staff involved
- Description of events leading to the incident
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type of intervention used
- Duration of the intervention
- Any injuries
- Follow-up actions

Parents or carers will be **informed as soon as reasonably possible** following a significant incident.

From April 2026, schools must have procedures to **record and report every significant use of force or seclusion**, (See Appendix A seclusion) and governing bodies must ensure these procedures are followed.

Post-Incident Support

Following any incident:

- Staff and pupils will be given the opportunity to debrief.
- Injuries will be assessed and treated.
- Parents/carers will be informed.
- Behaviour support plans may be reviewed.
- Risk assessments may be updated.

The aim is to **learn from incidents and prevent recurrence**.

Staff Training

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- Staff receive training in behaviour management and de-escalation.
- Staff likely to use restrictive interventions are appropriately trained.
- Training reflects the principles set out in national guidance.

Monitoring and Governance

The governing body will:

- Monitor the use of restrictive interventions.
- Review incident data regularly.
- Ensure procedures for recording and reporting incidents are followed.

This helps ensure that restrictive interventions are used **lawfully, safely and only when necessary**.

Summary for Staff

Staff should:

- Use calm, clear communication
- Use minimum force necessary

- Stop as soon as safe

Staff must not:

- Use force as punishment
- Act in anger
- Use unsafe holds

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Concerns

Any concerns or complaints regarding the use of restrictive intervention will be managed in line with the school's complaints policy."

Appendix A Seclusion

1. Seclusion is a Restrictive Intervention

The guidance classifies seclusion as a **restrictive intervention**, meaning it restricts a pupil's **liberty or movement**.

2. It Must Only Be Used for Safety

Seclusion may only be used when **necessary to reduce immediate risk**, such as:

- preventing **serious harm to the pupil**
- preventing **harm to others**
- managing **serious safety risks**

It **must never be used as punishment, discipline, or to enforce compliance**.

3. It Must Be Time-Limited

Seclusion should:

- last **only as long as the immediate risk remains**
- stop **as soon as the situation becomes safe.**

4. Continuous Supervision Is Required

The pupil must be **continuously monitored by staff** while secluded.

5. Incidents Must Be Recorded and Reported

Under the April 2026 guidance, **every significant incident involving seclusion must be recorded and reported**, including informing parents.

Seclusion vs Removal (Important Distinction)

The guidance makes a clear distinction between **seclusion** and **removal**.

Seclusion	Removal
Preventing a pupil from leaving a space	Sending a pupil out of class
Used only for safety	Used for discipline or behaviour management
Classified as a restrictive intervention	Covered under behaviour guidance
Requires recording and reporting	Normal behaviour management