SIR FRANCIS HILL
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bristol Drive

Lincoln

LN6 7UE

Positive Handling Policy

September 2026

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance with regard to the rationale, principles, strategies and expectations around positive handling.

Policy Owner	DSL/ SENDCOs
Governing Body Committee	Full Governing Body
Date Approved by Governors	September 2026
Next Review Date	September 2027

Date	Changes

Updates to the policy:

At Sir Francis Hill Community Primary School, all staff aim to help children to take responsibility for their own behaviour, in a safe and caring environment. We aim to achieve this by:-

- Positive role modelling
- Planning a range of interesting and challenging activities
- Setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
- Providing positive feedback

Staff at Sir Francis Hill Community Primary School are trained to look after pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others and to keep them safe. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy.

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force where necessary. The school expects planned restrictive interventions to be undertaken by appropriately trained staff wherever possible. Restrictive interventions will only be used when the risk of harm to the child or others outweighs the risks associated with the intervention and when no safer alternative is available.

Positive Handling

The term positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

- Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.

Unless a pupil/pupils were in immediate danger:

- Staff would be expected to follow the school's behaviour policy and/or a pupil's risk management or behaviour support plan in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour.
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continued to escalate, staff would then be expected to employ behaviour de-escalation techniques for which they have been trained.

Only if all of the above are unsuccessful and pupils/staff are at risk or there is a risk of significant damage to property should staff consider any other form of physical restraint.

The overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used.

Definitions

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This is used as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

Use of reasonable force

See '**Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' (DfE implemented from April 2026)** (See also Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026).

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. To prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. As a result of this, the school will carry out risk assessments and/or behaviour plans, to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another trained member of staff before intervention.

Before using restrictive interventions or restraint:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop
- Reminding them about rules and likely outcomes
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

Restrictive Interventions and Restraint

At Sir Francis Hill Community Primary School we only use restrictive interventions and physical restraint when there are no realistic alternatives. We expect staff to risk assess and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. Before considering any use of restrictive intervention or restraint staff should consider the following-

Is it necessary?

• Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
• Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
• Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

• Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
• If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
• Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

• Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

• 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.
• Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
• For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
• Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also consider other relevant considerations.

The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it **reduces rather than increases risk**. Restrictive interventions and physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming itself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should not usually be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and must be reported in written form to the parents or carers **no later than the same day**.
- Where appropriate, parents/carers will also be contacted by telephone on the day of the incident.

In addition, during or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. I am doing this to keep you safe.

Whenever positive handling is used, staff will keep talking to the pupil. Following the incident, the child will be debriefed, once calm, and encouraged to reflect on their actions.

Seclusion

Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour.

Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

Pupils with Additional Needs

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

At Sir Francis Hill, we seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND. We utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being needed. We aim to work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies and where appropriate, seek to work with parents to develop a behaviour support plan.

Risk Assessments and Behaviour support plans

Behaviour support plans will be created for pupils who may be at risk of increased need for restraint or restrictive interventions. They will be discussed with parents and will outline any adjustments, such as addressing aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively.

Behaviour support plans will include the detail as to any circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil which will be discussed in conjunction with other professionals and the family.

Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, we will ensure we have risk assessments in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through training and prevention strategies.

Any behaviour support plans will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the pupil.

Post Incident Procedure

If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible.

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of the school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective.

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the needs of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Headteacher or Deputy will make arrangements for the class group to be supported.

Recording and Reporting

Incidents involving restrictive interventions, restraint or seclusion, must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded, in writing, by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. This will be recorded even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

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

All incidents involving restrictive interventions or restraint will be recorded on the appropriate form *(see Appendix 3)*.

All incidents **must** be reported to parents/ carers of the pupil on the same day the incident happened **in writing**. The only exception to this is if it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident. Where appropriate, parents/carers will also be contacted by telephone on the day of the incident.

A report of the incident made to parents will include the following details as a minimum:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

The requirement to report applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Wherever possible, we will invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This discussion may include:

- any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- what might be done differently in the future

We will use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as appropriate.

Safeguarding

Any safeguarding concern arising during or following a restrictive intervention must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Headteacher and recorded in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

Complaints

Any complaints will follow the school's complaints procedure.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy, Anti-bullying policy and the Safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1 List of those qualified to use positive handling techniques.
Appendix 2 Serious incident/restraint of pupil incident report
Appendix 3 individual risk assessment and behaviour management plan

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 2

Sir Francis Hill Community Primary School
Record of Restrictive intervention, restraint or seclusion of Pupil(s)

Type of intervention used- Restrictive Intervention Restraint Seclusion	
Date of incident: **Location of incident:**	**Time of incident:** **Approximate duration:**
Name (s) of staff involved:	
Name (s) of pupil(s) involved:	
Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil (including any identified SEND differences)	
Name (s) of other staff/pupils who witnessed incident:	

Brief description of incident:
(Please include what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of restrictive intervention, restraint or seclusion and details of any physical injuries sustained or damage that has occurred).

Reason that restrictive intervention, restraint or seclusion was necessary:

Pupil's response & outcome of incident:
Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

SIGNED ..... DATE .....

SIGNED ..... DATE .....

SIGNED (PARENT/CARER) ..... DATE.....

APPENDIX 3

Pupil Specific Risk Assessment

Name	
DOB	
Date of Assessment	

Hazard/Behaviour	Opinion Known O/K	Deliberate Accidental Involuntary D/A/I	Seriousness Of Outcome A 1/2/3/4	Probability Of Hazard B 1/2/3/4	Severity Risk Score A x B
Harm to Self					
Harm to Peers					
Harm to Staff					
Damage to property					
Harm from Disruption					
Criminal Offence					
Harm from Absconding					
Other Harm					
Other Harm					

Seriousness	
4	Foreseeable outcome is loss of life or permanent disability, emotional trauma requiring psychological support/treatment, or critical property damage
3	Foreseeable outcome is hospitalisation, significant distress, extensive damage
2	Foreseeable outcome is harm requiring first aid, distress or minor damage
1	Foreseeable outcome is upset or disruption
Probability	
4	The Risk of Harm is persistent and constant
3	The 'Risk of Harm' is more likely than not to occur again
2	The 'Risk of Harm' has occurred within the last 12 months, the context has changed to make a reoccurrence unlikely
1	There is evidence of historical risk, but the behaviour has been dormant for over 12 months and no identified triggers remain

Now complete the Risk Management Plan overleaf

Risk Management Plan

Name	Class	Date	Review Date

	Potential Triggers / Key Themes

What we want to see •	**Strategies to maintain** •
First signs that things are not going well. •	**Strategies to support** •
Where this behaviour leads next	**Strategies needed** •
What we are trying to avoid • Other children being hurt • Staff being hurt • _____ harming themself • _____ being excluded	**Interventions necessary**

Signature of School rep..... Date .....

Signature of Parent / Carer..... Date .....