



St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School

Working together
in an inclusive Christian environment
to allow every pupil to shine brighter and brighter.

St Mary's is an inclusive school where we believe that all people are of equal value, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, ability or sexual identity. We recognise and respect differences.

Reducing the need for restrictive intervention in Schools

This policy is GDPR compliant.

Date of issue: June 2026

Last reviewed/adopted: June 2026 (FGB)

Next review date: Summer 2028

Reducing the Need for Restrictive Interventions Policy

Date of Issue: Summer 2026

Review Date: Summer 2028

Responsible Committee: Standards Committee / FGB

1. Vision and Ethos

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, we believe that every child is uniquely created in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity, compassion and respect.

We are committed to creating an inclusive Christian environment where positive relationships enable all children to flourish academically, socially and emotionally. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that children who display distressed, dysregulated or unsafe behaviour require support, understanding and guidance rather than judgement.

Our approach is rooted in Therapeutic Thinking, restorative practice and our Christian values of:

- Respect
- Joy
- Love
- Forgiveness
- Kindness
- Courage

We are committed to reducing the need for restrictive interventions through positive relationships, proactive support, effective communication, environmental adaptations and skilled de-escalation strategies.

Restrictive interventions will only ever be used when necessary, proportionate and in the best interests of the child and others.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Diversity Scheme
- Exclusions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

This policy reflects current Department for Education guidance on restrictive interventions and the use of reasonable force in schools.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote positive relationships and emotional wellbeing.
- Reduce the need for restrictive interventions.
- Ensure pupils feel safe, valued and respected.
- Protect the dignity and rights of all pupils.
- Support staff to respond confidently and safely to challenging situations.
- Ensure any restrictive intervention is lawful, necessary and proportionate.
- Meet statutory recording and reporting requirements.
- Promote reflection, learning and continual improvement following incidents.

3. Principles

At St Mary's:

We believe:

- All members of our school community deserve unconditional positive regard.
- Positive behaviour should be taught, modelled and reinforced.
- Behaviour communicates a need.
- Children do well when they can.
- Restrictive intervention is not a punishment.
- Every incident provides an opportunity for reflection and learning.

We will:

- Be curious, not furious.
- Prioritise relationships.
- Use prevention and de-escalation before intervention wherever possible.
- Seek to understand the reasons behind behaviour.
- Work in partnership with families.
- Maintain the dignity of every child throughout any incident.

These principles mirror the relational approach established within the school's Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy.

4. Definition of Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention is any action that prevents, restricts or limits a pupil's movement.

This may include:

Non-physical restrictive interventions

- Blocking access to an unsafe area.
- Directing movement away from danger.
- Temporary restriction of movement to maintain safety.

Physical restrictive interventions

- Guiding or escorting.
- Holding.
- Restricting movement.
- Restraint.

Seclusion

Seclusion is defined as keeping a child alone in a place and preventing them from leaving.

At St Mary's, seclusion will only ever be used as an emergency safety measure where there is an immediate risk of harm and no less restrictive option is available.

Seclusion is never used as a punishment.

5. Preventing the Need for Restrictive Intervention

The most effective restrictive intervention is the one that never becomes necessary.

We reduce the likelihood of incidents through:

Whole-school approaches

- Positive relationships.
- Therapeutic Thinking approaches.
- Clear routines and expectations.
- Consistent language and responses.
- Emotion coaching and co-regulation.
- Inclusive classroom practice.
- Staff training.
- Positive recognition and reinforcement.
- Restorative approaches.

Individual support

Where children are identified as being at greater risk of dysregulation or unsafe behaviour, support may include:

- Individual Behaviour Support Plans.
- Risk assessments.
- SEND provision.
- Pastoral interventions.
- Sensory support.
- Regulation strategies.
- Safe spaces.
- Increased adult support.
- Multi-agency involvement.

Plans will be developed collaboratively with families and, where appropriate, the child.

6. De-escalation

Staff will always seek to de-escalate situations before considering restrictive intervention unless there is an immediate risk of harm.

Strategies may include:

- Remaining calm and respectful.
- Using the child's name.
- Offering reassurance.
- Allowing processing time.
- Providing choices.
- Reducing demands.
- Removing an audience.
- Supporting the child to access a safe space.
- Using agreed communication strategies.
- Following personalised support plans.

Staff should continue using calming and reassuring communication throughout any intervention.

7. When Restrictive Intervention May Be Used

Restrictive intervention may only be used where it is:

Necessary

To prevent:

- Injury to the pupil.
- Injury to others.

- Serious damage to property.
- Serious disorder.
- A criminal offence.
- A child leaving a situation where doing so would place themselves or others at risk.

Proportionate

Staff will use:

- The least restrictive option.
- The minimum force required.
- For the shortest possible time.

Reasonable

Staff must consider:

- The child's age.
- Size and physical development.
- SEND needs.
- Communication needs.
- Medical conditions.
- Trauma history.
- The specific circumstances of the incident.

The welfare and dignity of the child must remain central to decision-making.

8. Prohibited Practices

The following practices must never be used:

- Restrictive intervention as a punishment.
- Any intervention that restricts breathing.
- Pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen.
- Deliberate prone restraint.
- Any intervention that causes pain as a means of compliance.
- Any intervention likely to humiliate or degrade a child.

If a pupil unintentionally ends up on the ground, staff must move to a safer position or release as soon as possible.

9. Vulnerable Pupils

Particular care must be taken with pupils who:

- Have SEND.
- Are autistic.
- Have communication difficulties.
- Experience mental health difficulties.
- Have experienced trauma.
- Are looked after.
- Have safeguarding vulnerabilities.

Reasonable adjustments will be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Staff will seek to understand the causes of behaviour and adapt support accordingly.

10. Recording and Reporting

The school will comply fully with statutory requirements.

All significant incidents involving restrictive intervention, restraint or seclusion must be recorded as soon as possible and on the same day wherever practicable.

Records will include:

- Names of pupils and staff involved.
- Date, time and location.
- Duration.
- Antecedents and triggers.
- De-escalation strategies used.
- Description of intervention.
- Reason intervention was necessary.
- Any injuries.
- Follow-up actions and support provided.

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

The Headteacher will be informed of all significant incidents.

The DSL will be informed and copies of record forms will be saved on the child's CPOMS record.

Record Form can be found in Appendix 1.

11. Repair, Restore and Reflect

Following any incident:

The child will receive

- Emotional support.
- Opportunity to reflect.
- Restorative conversation.
- Help to repair relationships.

Staff will receive

- Opportunity to debrief.
- Support and supervision where required.
- Access to medical attention if necessary.

The school will review

- What happened.
- What worked well.
- What could be done differently.
- Whether plans or risk assessments require updating.

This process reflects our commitment to restorative practice and continual learning.

12. Monitoring and Governance

The Headteacher and Governors will monitor:

- Frequency of incidents.
- Patterns and trends.
- Use with vulnerable groups.
- Staff training requirements.
- Effectiveness of preventative strategies.

The governing body will receive regular anonymised reports and will review data to ensure that restrictive interventions are not being used disproportionately with any group of pupils.

Policy Statement

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, our goal is always to build relationships, develop self-regulation and create an environment where restrictive interventions are rarely needed. When they are required, they will be used safely, lawfully, compassionately and for the shortest time necessary, always with the welfare, dignity and best interests of the child at the heart of our decision making.

Appendix 1

Student Name:		Date of Incident	
D.O.B:		Time of Incident	
SEND Code		Duration of Incident	
Identified SEN or disability		Duration of Restrictive Intervention	
Recording staff name:		Description of Restrictive Intervention	
Location of Incident:			
Type of Restrictive Intervention			
Physical restraint	☐		
Non-physical restraint	☐		
Mechanical restraint	☐		
Chemical restraint	☐		
Supervised seclusion	☐		
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	☐		
To prevent harm to other children	☐		
To prevent harm to adults	☐		
To prevent damage to property	☐		
To prevent loss of learning (see plan)	☐		
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

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.
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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:		
Management:	Details:	
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
		☐	
		☐	
		☐	

Name Signature Date

Recording staff

Headteacher (or delegated member of SLT)

Signed: _____

Date: _____