

Restrictive Interventions Policy (Including Use of Reasonable Force)

Authorised by:	The Board of Governors of CFBL
On:	WR 27.03.26
Effective from:	1 April 2026
Frequency of reviews:	Annually or following updates to statutory guidance if earlier
Next review due:	February 2026
Circulation:	Governors / All staff / Volunteers Parents: on request / School Website Staff: School website + Staff shared drive > Policies

1. Introduction and Purpose

CFBL is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. This Policy sets out the School’s approach to the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, in accordance with statutory duties, regulatory requirements and national best practice.

This Policy aims to ensure that restrictive interventions are:

- used only when necessary to keep pupils and others safe;
- lawful and proportionate;
- time-limited and respectful of dignity;
- recorded, reported and reviewed appropriately.

Restrictive interventions are not disciplinary sanctions and must never be used as punishment.

This Policy should be read alongside the School’s:

- Behaviour & Discipline Policy,
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy,
- SEND Policy,
- Staff Behaviour Policy, and
- School Rules (Règlements Intérieurs).

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This Policy has been prepared with reference to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93–96 and 93A)
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (Part 3 – Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils)
- Equality Act 2010

- EYFS Statutory Framework
- Human Rights Act 1998
- DfE Guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (2026)

Under the Independent School Standards, the School must demonstrate effective safeguarding arrangements, including safe systems for managing incidents where restrictive interventions are used.

3. Scope and Application

This Policy applies to all staff at CFBL (teaching and non-teaching) when responsible for pupils, including during off-site activities such as trips and sporting fixtures. It applies to all pupils, including those in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

4. Definitions

The definitions below are taken directly from the statutory and non-statutory sections of the DfE guidance:

- 4.1 Restrictive intervention** : any action that prevents, restricts or subdues the movement of a pupil's body or part of it (physical or non-physical).
- 4.2 Reasonable force** : the use of proportionate physical force, permissible when necessary to prevent a pupil from causing harm, committing an offence, damaging property or causing serious disruption. It must be the least amount of force necessary for the shortest period and used only when all de-escalation options have been exhausted.
- 4.3 Restraint** : a restrictive intervention that immobilises or limits movement, which may or may not involve physical contact (e.g., holding or removing a mobility aid).
- 4.4 Seclusion** : a non-physical intervention where a pupil is kept apart from others and prevented from leaving, through physical obstruction, blocking or making the pupil believe they will be punished if they try to leave. Seclusion is a safety measure, not a punishment.
- 4.5 Significant incident** : any occurrence where a staff member's use of force goes beyond everyday physical contact (e.g., guiding or comforting) and requires statutory recording and reporting.

5. Principles and Ethos

CFBL adopts the following principles for restrictive interventions:

- Prevention first : effective behaviour support and de-escalation strategies are prioritised to minimise the likelihood of needing restrictive interventions.
- Least restrictive option : only the minimum necessary force or restriction is used, for the shortest time.
- Proportionate response : interventions are proportionate to the risk of harm.
- Respect for dignity and welfare : pupils' dignity must be preserved and their welfare safeguarded throughout.
- Transparency and accountability : all incidents are transparently recorded, reported and reviewed by leadership and governors.
- SEND and equality : additional care and reasonable adjustments are made where a pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities, recognising their increased likelihood of involvement in such incidents.

6. Understanding and Decision-Making

6.1 When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

A restrictive intervention may only be used where:

- There is an immediate risk of harm to the pupil or others;

- There is a risk of serious damage to property;
- There is significant disorder posing risk to safety.

Use of restrictive interventions must never be driven by convenience, punishment, or to enforce compliance with rules.

6.2 Criteria for Judgement

Before using any restrictive intervention, staff should consider:

- Is the action necessary to reduce imminent risk?
- Is the action proportionate to the risk?
- Will the action reduce, not escalate, risk?
- Does it take account of the pupil's age, SEND, medical needs or vulnerabilities?
- Does it respect the pupil's welfare and dignity?

Training will equip staff to apply these criteria under pressure.

7. Acceptable and Unacceptable Physical Contact

Routine physical contact (e.g., guiding a pupil, comforting a distressed pupil, first aid) is not restrictive intervention and is permitted if appropriate and safe.

Unacceptable uses of force include:

- Any force used as a punishment;
- Restriction of breathing or circulation;
- Pressure to neck, throat or abdomen;
- Techniques that cause pain or distress;
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground.

Where restraint has occurred, appropriate medical assessment should be arranged.

8. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used as a last-resort safety measure to manage risks when a pupil is in acute distress or dysregulated and only where no less restrictive option exists.

The area used for seclusion must be:

- Safe and free from threats or intimidation;
- Supervised at all times;
- Reversible : the pupil should be able to leave as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

Seclusion used as a disciplinary punishment is strictly prohibited.

9. SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

Pupils with SEND may be more likely to exhibit behaviours that risk harm. CFBL will:

- Develop behaviour support plans with specific strategies to reduce escalation;
- Work with parents and multi-agency professionals to tailor approaches;
- Review plans periodically and after significant incidents.

Behaviour support plans may explicitly outline situations where increased contact or support might be necessary and agreed parameters.

10. Recording and Reporting Duties

10.1 Statutory Recording

Under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, CFBL must ensure that procedures exist to record every significant incident involving force or seclusion.

Significant incidents must be recorded on CPOMS as soon as practicable and no later than the same working day. A dedicated form is available on CPOMS and include :

- Names of pupil and staff involved;
- Relevant needs or SEND status;
- Time, date, location and duration;
- Account of the incident, including triggers and de-escalation attempts;
- Type and degree of force or form of seclusion;
- Rationale for intervention;
- Any injuries and post-incident support;
- How and when parents were informed.

10.2 Reporting to Parents

School leaders must ensure that each significant use of force or seclusion is reported to parents as soon as practicable, and normally on the same day. Exceptions apply only if reporting would likely result in serious harm, in which case alternative arrangements with DSL are made.

11. Post-Incident Support and Review

Following any restrictive intervention:

- Staff and pupils involved should receive immediate care and time to calm;
- A debrief should be conducted, ideally with an independent facilitator;
- Medical needs should be assessed and recorded;
- Wellbeing support should be offered to pupils and staff;
- The incident should inform future behaviour support planning.

Patterns and trends should be analyzed to reduce reliance on restrictive interventions over time.

12. Staff Training

All staff will receive training in:

- Behaviour management and de-escalation techniques;
- Safeguarding and legal duties;
- Safe and lawful use of reasonable force and seclusion;

13. Governance and Oversight

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this Policy and ensuring compliance with statutory duties.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) reviews all incidents and patterns of use.

The Board of Governors monitors:

- Compliance with statutory recording and reporting;
- Patterns and trends in use;
- Impact on pupil welfare and safeguarding;
- Training provision and policy effectiveness;

- Governance reporting to meet Independent School Standards.

14. Complaints and Allegations

Any complaint or allegation that staff have used restrictive interventions inappropriately will be dealt with under the School's Safeguarding & Allegations Against Staff procedures.

15. Policy Review

This Policy is reviewed at least annually and also whenever statutory guidance changes.

Last review by management and the Safeguarding trustees: March 2026

V0 - Current

Document Owner and Approval

The Deputy Head to the Primary School is the owner of this document and is responsible for ensuring that it is reviewed in line with the School's policy review schedule.

CFBL – Whole School Staff Guidance

Restrictive Interventions (Including Reasonable Force)

Core Principle

Restrictive interventions are a safeguarding response – not a punishment. They may only be used when there is an immediate risk of harm, serious damage, or significant disorder, and no safer option is available.

Before Any Intervention

- Prioritise calm, clear communication
- Use de-escalation strategies
- Seek support from colleagues or senior staff
- Consider SEND, age, vulnerability and proportionality

If Intervention Is Necessary

- Use the least restrictive option
- Use only the force necessary
- Keep the intervention as short as possible
- Preserve the pupil's dignity at all times
- Stop immediately once the risk reduces

Never Permitted

- Force used as punishment
- Pain-inducing techniques
- Restricting breathing
- Pressure to neck, throat or abdomen
- Humiliating or degrading treatment
- Seclusion as discipline

After an Incident

- Ensure the pupil is safe and emotionally supported
- Seek medical support if required
- Inform DSL / Senior Leadership
- Record factually on CPOMS the same working day
- Parents informed (normally same day)
- Review support or behaviour plans if needed

When in doubt: Pause. Call for support. Safeguard first.