FRIEZLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Restrictive Intervention Policy

(including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion)

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This policy replaces the school's previous Positive Handling & Intervention Policy (September 2022).

Contents

1. Purpose and principles
2. Legal framework and guidance
3. Definitions
4. Appropriate physical contact
5. Seclusion
6. Roles and responsibilities
7. When reasonable force may be used
8. Uses of force that are not acceptable
9. Searching pupils
10. Prevention and de-escalation
11. Deciding whether restrictive intervention is appropriate
12. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities
13. Training and risk assessment
14. Recording and reporting
15. Support, reflection and review after an incident
16. Complaints and allegations
17. Monitoring, governance and policy review
18. Links with other policies

Appendix 1 – Restrictive Intervention Incident Record
Appendix 2 – Individual Restrictive Intervention / Positive Handling Plan checklist
Appendix 3 – Staff quick-reference guide

1. Purpose and principles

Friezland Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive environment for pupils, staff and visitors. Restrictive interventions can have a significant physical and psychological impact. They will therefore be used only when necessary, lawfully and proportionately, and for the shortest time required to reduce the relevant risk.

The school's first approach is prevention: building positive relationships, understanding need, making reasonable adjustments, using effective behaviour support and de-escalating situations wherever this can be done safely. In an emergency, however, staff do not have to exhaust strategies that would be ineffective, inappropriate or unsafe before acting to prevent harm.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need for restrictive intervention through early support, prevention and de-escalation.
- Give staff a clear framework for using restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.
- Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of pupils and staff.
- Set out clear procedures for recording, reporting, reviewing and learning from incidents.
- Ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs, communication differences, trauma histories or other vulnerabilities are properly considered.

Core principle: Use the least restrictive intervention, for the least amount of time, that is necessary and proportionate to reduce the immediate risk.

2. Legal framework and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) guidance Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026). It also reflects the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, sections 93 and 93A.
- Education Act 1996, sections 550ZA and 550ZB.
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- DfE guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

The April 2026 DfE guidance replaces the former 2013 Use of Reasonable Force guidance. The statutory elements relating to recording and reporting significant incidents involving force must be followed.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Restrictive intervention	An umbrella term for physical and non-physical actions used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body.
Reasonable force	Physical contact used to restrain a pupil in circumstances permitted by law. No more force may be used than is necessary, and only for the least amount of time required.

Restraint	A non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. It may or may not involve direct physical contact.
Seclusion	A non-disciplinary intervention in which a pupil is kept in a place away from others and prevented from leaving, whether by physical obstruction, blocking or by making the pupil believe they will be punished if they leave.
Significant incident involving force	Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. This includes physical force used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.
Appropriate physical contact	Ordinary, appropriate contact which does not amount to reasonable force or another restrictive intervention, for example first aid, comfort, guidance or support in PE.

4. Appropriate physical contact

Friezland Primary School does not operate a "no contact" policy. Appropriate physical contact is a normal and sometimes necessary part of school life. The school will not agree to blanket requests from parents/carers or staff that reasonable force or other restrictive interventions must never be used, because this could prevent staff acting lawfully to protect a pupil or others.

Examples of appropriate physical contact include:

- Providing first aid.
- Holding a younger pupil's hand when walking around school or on a visit.
- Comforting a distressed pupil when this is appropriate to the child and circumstances.
- Offering congratulations or reassurance, for example a handshake or pat on the back.
- Demonstrating use of an instrument, practical skill, PE exercise or sports technique.
- Guiding or escorting a pupil who is willing to move.

Staff must use professional judgement and consider the pupil's age, SEND, medical needs, known vulnerabilities, communication preferences, safeguarding information, the context and whether a less intrusive alternative is available.

5. Seclusion

Seclusion is not a disciplinary sanction. It may only be used as a safety measure where a pupil is experiencing a high level of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and confinement is necessary to protect the pupil or others from harm.

- Seclusion must never be threatened or used as punishment.
- The space used must be safe and must not feel threatening or intimidating.
- The pupil must be supervised throughout.
- Where safe and appropriate, staff should reduce the sense of confinement, for example by keeping a door open where this still manages the risk.
- As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil must be allowed to leave.
- Every seclusion incident must be recorded and reported in accordance with section 14.

Friezland does not designate a particular room as a routine "holding room". The safest suitable space will be chosen according to the circumstances, the pupil's individual needs and the immediate risks.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Governing Board

- Approve this policy and ensure it is reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.
- Ensure procedures are in place to record and report significant force, seclusion and restraint incidents.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure those procedures are followed.
- Review appropriately anonymised data to identify patterns, repeated incidents, ineffective strategies and any disproportionate use involving pupils with protected characteristics, SEND or other vulnerabilities.
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders.

6.2 Headteacher

- Provide overall leadership and oversight of this policy.
- Ensure staff who are likely to use restrictive interventions receive appropriate, high-quality training in prevention, de-escalation and safe, lawful intervention.
- Ensure staffing and risk-management arrangements support safe behaviour management.
- Monitor incidents and ensure lessons are used to improve practice.
- Ensure recording and reporting duties are met.
- Authorise staff to search pupils or possessions where the legal criteria are met.
- Ensure complaints and allegations are managed in line with the school's Complaints Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

6.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Have oversight of the safeguarding aspects of restrictive intervention incidents.
- Ensure records are accurate, secure and appropriately recorded on CPOMS.
- Ensure parent/carer reporting is completed within the required timescale and in the required written form.
- Where reporting to a parent/carer may be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil, ensure the statutory exception and local-authority reporting process in section 14 are followed.

6.4 SENCO

- Work with pupils, parents/carers and staff to develop and review support plans and risk assessments where there is an increased likelihood of restrictive intervention.
- Help staff understand individual needs, triggers, communication requirements and reasonable adjustments.
- Contribute to prevention and de-escalation planning and post-incident review for pupils with SEND.
- Advise on reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

6.5 All staff

- Read and understand this policy and related school procedures.
- Use prevention, de-escalation and positive behaviour support wherever safe and appropriate.
- Use restrictive intervention only when necessary and proportionate.
- Record every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force as soon as practicable, normally on the same day.
- Report incidents promptly to the DSL/Headteacher and record any injuries in line with school procedures.
- Participate in debrief, reflection and restorative work following incidents.
- Attend relevant training. Staff identified as likely to need physical intervention may receive additional accredited training, including Team Teach where this is the school's chosen approach.

7. When reasonable force may be used

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

- Causing injury to themselves or another person.
- Committing a criminal offence.
- Damaging property.
- Causing disorder among pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

The decision is always based on the individual circumstances. Reasonable force is not limited to staff who hold Team Teach or other physical-intervention qualifications; however, staff who are likely to need to use restrictive interventions should be appropriately trained. Where trained staff are available and it is safe to seek assistance, they should be used.

Examples may include separating pupils who are fighting, preventing a pupil from running into immediate danger, or restraining a pupil who is attempting to cause injury. Examples are illustrative only: the legal test is whether the intervention was necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

8. Uses of force that are not acceptable

- Force must never be used as punishment, a sanction, a threat or a deterrent.
- A pupil must not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, including covering the nose or mouth or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen.
- Staff must not deliberately use force on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release the hold or move to a safer position as quickly as possible.
- Any force used must stop as soon as it is no longer necessary.

Any restrictive intervention carries a risk of physical and psychological harm. Staff must continually assess the pupil's welfare and the effect of the intervention.

9. Searching pupils

The Headteacher, and staff authorised by the Headteacher, may search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil has a prohibited item. Reasonable force may be used to search for legally prohibited items where the law permits. It must not be used solely to search for an item that is banned only by school rules, such as a mobile phone.

Any decision to use force in a search must be made carefully, on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the risks, the pupil's individual circumstances and the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

10. Prevention and de-escalation

Restrictive intervention should be exceptional. Friezland seeks to reduce its use through whole-school and individual approaches.

10.1 Whole-school approaches

- Consistent expectations and routines.
- Positive relationships and knowledge of pupils.
- Thoughtful classroom and environmental organisation.
- Effective communication, including calm tone, clear language, empathy and processing time.
- Staff development in behaviour, SEND, regulation and de-escalation.
- Review of incident data to improve practice.
- Working with parents/carers and relevant external professionals where needed.

10.2 Individual approaches

- Identifying likely triggers and early signs of dysregulation.
- Individual behaviour/support plans and risk assessments where appropriate.
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities.
- Access to calming, regulation or sensory strategies.
- Agreed communication approaches for pupils with speech, language or communication needs.
- Co-production with pupils and parents/carers wherever appropriate.

10.3 De-escalation in the moment

- Use open, non-threatening body language and respect personal space.
- Reduce the audience and environmental demands where possible.
- Use calm, concise language and allow processing time.
- Acknowledge feelings and seek to understand the pupil's perspective.
- Offer choices or a safe route out of the situation.
- Use distraction or redirection where helpful.
- Offer access to a calm space the pupil can choose to use.
- Seek assistance from a colleague where this can be done safely.

11. Deciding whether restrictive intervention is appropriate

The decision rests on the professional judgement of the staff member and the circumstances at the time. Staff should consider the following questions:

11.1 Is it necessary?

- Is there a real and immediate risk that needs to be reduced?
- Is there a safer, less restrictive and reasonably effective alternative?
- Could the intervention increase the risk or escalate the situation?

11.2 Is it proportionate?

- Use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention required.
- Use it for the shortest possible time.
- If it is making the situation worse, reassess and change approach where possible.
- Take account of the pupil's age, size, medical needs, SEND, communication needs and other vulnerabilities.

11.3 Have welfare and dignity been considered?

- Consider the potential physical and psychological impact.
- Avoid carrying out an intervention in front of peers where this can be avoided safely.
- Explain calmly what is happening, why, and what needs to change for the intervention to stop, where the pupil can understand this.
- Use verbal and non-verbal communication suited to the pupil.
- Monitor how the pupil is responding and reduce or end the intervention as soon as it is safe.

12. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities

Some pupils with SEND may communicate distress, pain, sensory overload, fear, anxiety or confusion through behaviour. Restrictive interventions can therefore be disproportionately experienced by pupils with SEND. The school will seek to understand underlying need rather than treating behaviour in isolation.

- Use staff who know the pupil well to identify triggers, communication needs and effective regulation strategies.
- Work with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.
- Make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities.
- Where there is an identified increased likelihood of restrictive intervention, have an appropriate risk assessment in place and mitigate the risk through planning, staffing and training.
- Where appropriate, create an individual behaviour/support or positive handling plan which clearly describes adjustments, communication approaches, triggers, early interventions and any circumstances where increased physical contact may be necessary.
- Review plans periodically and after a significant incident to incorporate learning.

13. Training and risk assessment

Friezland Primary School will ensure that staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions receive appropriate training in safe and lawful practice and in preventative strategies. The school may use Team Teach as its accredited physical-intervention approach where this meets identified need.

Not every member of staff needs the same level of physical-intervention training. Training decisions will be based on role, pupil need and school risk assessment. All staff will receive sufficient information to understand the legal framework, school procedures, prevention, de-escalation, recording and reporting duties.

Risk assessments will be completed where staff regularly work alongside pupils for whom restrictive intervention is more likely to be required. Assessments will address risks to the pupil, other pupils and staff, and identify reasonable control measures.

14. Recording and reporting

Legal requirement: The school must have procedures for recording and reporting significant incidents involving force, seclusion incidents and restraint incidents. Staff should record incidents as soon as practicable and should endeavour to do so on the same day.

14.1 Recording incidents

The member(s) of staff directly involved must complete the school's Restrictive Intervention Incident Record and ensure the incident is recorded on CPOMS as soon as practicable, normally on the same day. This applies even where the intervention was anticipated in an agreed behaviour/support plan.

For a significant incident involving force, the record must include, as a minimum:

- Names of the pupil and staff directly involved.
- Relevant needs or circumstances, including identified SEND and SEN status code where applicable.
- Time, date, location and approximate duration.
- What led to the incident, including known or possible triggers.
- Preventative and de-escalation strategies used.
- The type and degree of force used.
- Any physical injuries sustained.
- Why force was assessed as necessary.
- Any medical, emotional or other post-incident support.

For seclusion or restraint incidents, the record must include the names of those directly involved, relevant pupil needs/circumstances and SEN status, time/date/location/duration, why the intervention was necessary,

any injuries and any post-incident support. If the incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, it does not need to be recorded twice.

14.2 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and the school will endeavour to do this on the same day. A telephone or face-to-face conversation may be used to make immediate contact, but this does not replace the written reporting requirement.

For each significant incident involving force, the school will provide written information to the parent/carer as soon as practicable. The written report will include, as a minimum:

- Time, date, location and approximate duration.
- Why the intervention was assessed as necessary.
- The type and degree of force used.
- Any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.
- The staff member(s) involved.

For each seclusion or restraint incident, the school will provide the parent/carer with the required written record/information as soon as practicable and will endeavour to do so on the same day. Where the school is required to provide a copy of the written record under the applicable regulations, it will do so.

The school will not include identifying information about another pupil in information shared with parents/carers. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be invited to discuss triggers, whether agreed plans were followed, the effectiveness of de-escalation and what could be changed to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

14.3 Exception where reporting may cause serious harm

If it appears to the staff member that informing a parent/carer would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil, the incident must instead be reported to any parent/carer who can safely be informed or, where there is none, to the local authority in whose area the pupil ordinarily resides. The DSL/Headteacher will oversee this decision and ensure that the rationale is recorded.

14.4 Children in local-authority care/accommodation

Where the law requires a relevant local authority to be notified in addition to a parent/carer, including in circumstances connected with care orders or accommodation under the Children Act 1989, the school will make that report in line with the applicable legal requirements and safeguarding procedures.

15. Support, reflection and review after an incident

As soon as practicable after an incident, the school will review what happened, why restrictive intervention was used, its impact, whether agreed strategies were followed and what can be learned to reduce future use.

- Check the pupil and staff involved for injury and arrange medical assessment/treatment where needed.
- Record and report injuries in line with the school's health and safety procedures.
- Offer the pupil and staff an opportunity to give their account separately.
- Use a restorative conversation to repair and rebuild relationships when appropriate.
- Where practicable, use a staff member who was not directly involved to facilitate reflection/debrief.
- Consider support for pupils or staff who witnessed the incident.
- Review risk assessments and individual support plans where needed.
- Continue to monitor wellbeing and arrange further support where necessary.

16. Complaints and allegations

Complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled through the school's Complaints Policy. Any allegation that a member of staff used force or another restrictive intervention inappropriately will be considered in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's safeguarding procedures.

17. Monitoring, governance and policy review

The Headteacher and DSL will monitor incident records and identify patterns, repeat incidents, emerging risks and areas for staff development. The Governing Board will receive appropriately anonymised information sufficient to discharge its oversight responsibilities, including consideration of any disproportionate use involving pupils with SEND, protected characteristics or other vulnerabilities.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if legislation, statutory guidance, school procedures or identified need changes.

18. Links with other policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Searching / Screening procedures where applicable
- Data Protection Policy

Appendix 1 – Restrictive Intervention Incident Record

Complete as soon as practicable after the incident, normally on the same day. Upload/record on CPOMS in accordance with school procedure.

Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Location	
Pupil name	
DOB	
Year group	
SEN status / identified SEND or other relevant needs	
Staff directly involved	
Other adults / witnesses	
Approximate duration of intervention	
What happened immediately before the incident?	
Known or possible triggers	
Prevention / de-escalation strategies attempted	
Type of restrictive intervention used	
If force was used: type and degree of force	
Why was the intervention assessed as necessary and proportionate?	
How was the pupil's welfare and dignity monitored?	
Any injuries to pupil and treatment / first aid	

Any injuries to staff/others and treatment / first aid	
Post-incident support provided to pupil	
Post-incident support provided to staff / witnesses	
Parent/carer informed: date, time and method	
Written information / record provided: date and method	
Parent/carer response / follow-up discussion	
Need to review risk assessment / support plan?	
Any safeguarding or LA reporting required?	
Staff completing record / date	
DSL/SLT review / date	

Appendix 2 – Individual Restrictive Intervention / Positive Handling Plan checklist

Where an individual pupil has an identified increased likelihood of restrictive intervention, planning should be co-produced with the pupil and parents/carers wherever appropriate and informed by relevant professionals.

- ☐ Pupil strengths, interests and preferred approaches.
- ☐ Communication profile and how distress is communicated.
- ☐ Known triggers, sensory factors, pain/medical factors and early warning signs.
- ☐ Reasonable adjustments and environmental changes.
- ☐ Proactive regulation and prevention strategies.
- ☐ De-escalation approaches known to work well.
- ☐ Approaches known to increase distress and therefore to avoid.
- ☐ Preferred staff / staffing arrangements where relevant.
- ☐ Circumstances in which increased physical contact may be appropriate.
- ☐ Any known medical contraindications or additional risks.
- ☐ How the pupil will be supported after an incident.
- ☐ How parents/carers will be informed and involved.
- ☐ Review date and triggers for earlier review, including any significant incident.

Appendix 3 – Staff quick-reference guide

Before intervening: Ask: Is there an immediate risk? Is intervention necessary? Is there a less restrictive safe option?

PREVENT / DE-ESCALATE

- Stay calm and reduce demands where possible.
- Use clear, concise communication and give processing time.
- Reduce audience/noise/stimulation.
- Offer choices, space and support.
- Call for help if this can be done safely.

IF INTERVENTION IS NECESSARY

- Use the least restrictive option.
- Use no more force than necessary.
- Use it for the shortest possible time.
- Protect airway, breathing and circulation.
- Do not use force as punishment.
- Monitor the pupil's welfare and dignity continuously.

AFTER THE INCIDENT

- Check for injuries and provide first aid/medical support.
- Inform DSL/Headteacher.
- Complete the written record and CPOMS entry as soon as practicable, normally the same day.
- Ensure parents/carers are informed and receive the required written information.
- Take part in debrief, restorative work and review of plans/risk assessments.

Policy basis: Department for Education, Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026), together with the legislation and statutory guidance listed in section 2.