

Amendment to Merriott & Haselbury Plucknett Primary Schools Federation

Behaviour Policy, May 2026 (Replaces Annex A)

12. Restrictive interventions including use of reasonable force

12.1. The Trust strives to provide a safe learning environment for all pupils. All members of staff (and anyone whom the Headteacher has given the responsibility to be in charge or in control of the pupils) are lawfully permitted to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline.

12.2. This power extends to times when staff are lawfully in charge of pupils but are off the school premises e.g. on a school trip. There is no definition of when it is reasonable to use force, and every situation will have to be judged by the person in charge at that time.

12.3. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have physical contact with pupils which does not constitute the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions. Examples include:

- Giving first aid.
- Guiding or escorting pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil when walking around the school or on a school trip.
- Comforting a distressed pupil.
- Congratulating or praising a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake.
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument.
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

12.4. Staff may in limited circumstances need to use restraint, which is a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a student or limits their movement, and this may or may not include direct physical contact. This can include holding a pupil's body or depriving them of an aid usually used to help them move. This will be avoided where at all possible.

12.5. Staff will only use seclusion – a non-disciplinary intervention to keep a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving – as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high level of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Staff will seek to ensure that the place of seclusion is not threatening or intimidating. The pupil must be always supervised during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil must be allowed to leave. Reasonable force does not have to be used for an intervention to be seclusion. Seclusion includes:

- Physically obstructing the pupil's way of leaving the place
- Securing the place so that the pupil cannot leave it
- Causing the pupil to believe that they will be punished if they leave the place

12.6. Whenever any restrictive intervention is used, including reasonable force, staff will consider the following:

- Necessity – considering whether there is a less restrictive way to achieve the same thing, the risks involved, whether it may escalate and communicating, where possible, with other staff

- Proportionality – using the least amount of force, potential alternative strategies and the personal circumstances of the pupil including any relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

- The pupil's welfare – including that pupil's context and circumstances, overall welfare, the importance of their dignity, the need to communicate with them about the decisions being taken, any EAL, and how the pupil is feeling.

12.7. Use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions will generally be rare and may need to be determined by staff in the moment in many cases.

12.8. Consideration will also always be given to the rights of the pupil concerned, including under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Trust recognises that some pupils 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. Pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. The Trust/school will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour to provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment, and 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. Parent/carers should consult the school's SEND policy that sets out the provision for SEND pupils and the school's approach generally, but in the context of restrictive interventions this might include:

- Pupil behaviour plan and/or pastoral support plan and/or individual provision maps.
- Risk assessments.
- Specific adjustments for that pupil that are known to reduce the need for restrictive interventions.
- Distracting techniques.

12.9. The school will minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation measures, employing specific whole-school measures as well as tailored approaches for individual pupils.

12.10. Whole-school measures include:

- Consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive.
- Sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds.
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation.
- Development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust.
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning.

12.11. Individual approaches could include:

- Working closely with parent/carers to support individual pupils
- Implementing strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including the development of [behaviour plans and/or pastoral support plan and/or individual provision maps]. Where a pupil has a disability, the school has a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to support pupils with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers
- Giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates

12.12. Every significant incident in which reasonable force is used will be recorded by staff members, as required by s.93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This requirement only applies where it is a significant incident, so will not include cases where physical contact is made for other reasons, such as giving first aid. This recording will take place as soon as practicable after the event and should be done by the member of staff the same day as the incident. The following information must be recorded in the school's safeguarding system:

- Names of pupils 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.
- A 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.
- A 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.
- The pupil's account of what happened, as well as any witness accounts.

12.13. A report will also be made to parent/carers where there is a significant use of force, apart from where:

- The pupil is 20 or over at the time; or
- 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 will report the incident to any parent/carer(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.

12.14. A report of the incident made to parent/carers 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.

12.15. Every incident which results in seclusion or restraint, which may not include reasonable force, must be recorded on the school's safeguarding system. Incidents must be recorded as soon as possible and no later than the same day, in writing. The information recorded must include:

- Names of pupil and staff directly involved.
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- 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.
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.
- Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

12.16. Apart from in the circumstances as set out in 11.13, a report must be made to parent/carers where a pupil is subject to seclusion, restraint or immobilisation, even if that is included within a pupil's behaviour plan and/or pastoral support plan and/or individual provision maps. Staff will endeavour to do this the same day, but this may also involve a subsequent follow up discussion with parent/carers to include any de-escalation strategies and what can be done differently in future.

12.17. Where an incident resulted in both a significant use of force as well as seclusion/restraint, only the procedure set out at 11.12-11.14 will be used, with parent/carers not needing to be informed twice.

12.18. The school will evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive interventions as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future.

12.19. Where appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved will receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Any injuries will be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

12.20. Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions will be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. The school will carry out risk assessments 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, in accordance with the school's duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

12.21. The Trust will ensure that the data around the use of force and restrictive interventions is considered by school leaders to ensure there is not a disproportionate use of force in the school, to identify learning and patterns. and to make improvements to policies and practices.