The Marlborough Science Academy **Restrictive Interventions and use of Reasonable Force Policy**	
Responsible Governing Body Committee:	**Personnel Committee**
Policy type:	**Non - statutory**
Date of Origin:	**September 2022**
Adopted by:	**Full GB**
Author:	**James Griggs**
Location:	
Filename:	

Review Due Date	Review Completed	Amendments Y/N
November 2023	October 2024	Y
October 2025	October 2025	Y
October 2026	October 2026	Y
October 2028		

Other policies/procedures linked to this policy:

Whole School Behaviour Policy GP23

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Equal Opportunities GP09

CONTEXT

Purpose

Here at the Marlborough Science Academy we believe that our values create and underpin our ethos. The five core values of Dignity, Kindness, Compassion, Courage and Endeavour form the foundation of all we do as a school and help us to secure a vibrant community in which to flourish. This policy has been created to help promote and ensure that these values remain at the heart of everything we do as a school.

The Governing Body believes that in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, good behaviour in all aspects of school life is necessary. It seeks to create a caring, learning environment in the school by:

- Promoting good behaviour and self efficacy and character
- Promoting self-esteem, self-discipline, proper regard for authority and positive relationships based on mutual respect
- Ensuring fairness of treatment for all
- Encouraging consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- Promoting early intervention to remove barriers to learning
- Providing a safe environment free from disruption, violence, bullying and any form of harassment and discrimination
- Encouraging a positive relationship with parents and carers to develop a shared approach to involve them in the implementation of the school's policy and associated procedures

INTRODUCTION

Here at The Marlborough Science Academy we believe that every child and young person has a right to be treated with respect and dignity, deserves to have their needs recognised and be given the right support. All school staff need to be able to safely manage behaviour and understand what a child (or young person) is seeking to communicate through difficult or dangerous behaviours.

Parents need to:

- know that their children are safe at school;
- be properly informed if their child is the subject of a restrictive intervention (including the nature of the intervention); and
- know why a restrictive intervention has been used.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- the behaviour policy;
- the staff code of conduct
- the child protection and Safeguarding policy

This policy is designed to reduce the incidents of, and the risks associated with restrictive interventions - and to eliminate unnecessary and inappropriate use of restraint.

National guidance

This policy is based on the principles set out in, and is prepared to supplement, Government guidance:

DfE: Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools 2026
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools
DfE and DHSC: Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention, July 2019:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention

DfE: Keeping Children safe in Education, September 2026:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

DfE: mental health and behaviour in schools November 2018:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

The use of restrictive intervention will only be needed for a very small minority of children or young people. We know that the use of restraint and restrictive interventions are traumatising and this particularly so for children, who are still developing both physically and emotionally. We know that the use of restraint and restrictive interventions can be traumatic - and have long-term consequences on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. It can also have a negative impact on staff who carry out such interventions.

Children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions or mental health difficulties may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others and are at a heightened risk of restrictive interventions. Wherever possible, restrictive interventions should be avoided and proactive, preventative, non-restrictive approaches adopted.

Whenever considering restrictive interventions, the key question for everyone involved with children and young people whose behaviour is difficult or dangerous should be: -

"What is in the best interest of the child and/or those around them in view of the risks presented?"

A positive and proactive approach to behaviour

We operate a clear behaviour policy for meeting children and young people's individual needs, promoting positive relationships and emotional wellbeing.

Behavioural difficulties may signal a need for support and it is essential to understand what the underlying causes are. For example, a child or young person may exhibit such behaviours as a result of a medical condition or sensory impairment, previous trauma or neglect, or be exacerbated by an unmet need or undiagnosed medical condition. Behavioural difficulties may also reflect the challenges of communication, or the frustrations faced by children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties - who may have little choice and control over their lives. Children and young people with behavioural difficulties need to be regarded as vulnerable rather than troublesome and schools have a duty to explore this vulnerability and provide appropriate support.

Behaviour that escalates and becomes difficult or dangerous may result from the impact of a child or young person being exposed to challenging or overwhelming environments, which they do not understand, where positive social interactions are lacking, and / or personal choices are limited. Children and young people exhibiting difficult or dangerous

behaviours need support and differentiation of teaching and learning to have their needs met and to develop alternative ways of expressing themselves that achieve the same purpose but are more appropriate.

We use behaviour analysis to understand children and young people's needs and the causes of poor emotional wellbeing.

By anticipating situations that may cause distress, and agreeing the steps to address them, whilst assessing, managing and reducing risk it is possible to reduce the use of restraint or restrictive intervention.

We aim to reduce restrictive practices by the proactive use of risk reduction plans drawn up with the involvement of the child(ren) (or young person) and their parents. Co-produced risk reduction plans aim to better understand the experiences of parents and children as well as the agree the steps that should be taken to avoid escalation and promote emotional wellbeing.

Our Behaviour policy sets out the steps we will take as a school to ensure that we comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

3. DEFINITIONS

The term **child** refers to all children and young people under the age of 18.

For the purposes of this policy, **appropriate physical contact** refers to contact between a member of staff and a child that does not constitute the use of reasonable force or another restrictive intervention. This may include appropriate contact for first aid, comfort, praise, guidance, curriculum activities or helping a child to access a place they have chosen to use to regulate themselves.

The term **restrictive intervention** is used as an overarching term for physical or non-physical actions intended to prevent, restrict or limit the movement of a child or part of their body. Restrictive interventions should only be used where they are necessary and proportionate, using the least restrictive intervention required for the shortest period of time.

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Reasonable force** means the lawful use of physical force by a member of staff where this is necessary in the circumstances. No more force should be used than is necessary,

and it should be used for the minimum amount of time required. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in the circumstances permitted by law.

- **Restraint** is a non-disciplinary restrictive intervention that immobilises a child or limits their movement. It may involve direct physical contact, such as holding a child's arms to prevent movement, but can also involve non-physical actions, such as removing an aid required for mobility. Restraint must not be used as a punishment.

- **Seclusion** is a non-disciplinary intervention in which a child is kept in a place away from others and is prevented from leaving, whether through physical obstruction, blocking their exit or making them believe that they cannot leave. Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a child is experiencing significant emotional or behavioural dysregulation. The child must be supervised throughout and allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

- **Withdrawal or self-regulation** refers to a child moving, or being supported to move, to a quieter or safer environment in order to regulate themselves. Where the child is able to leave freely, this would not normally constitute seclusion. Where a child is prevented from leaving, the arrangement may constitute restraint or seclusion and must be managed and recorded accordingly.

- A **significant incident** is an incident in which the use of force goes beyond the ordinary and appropriate physical contact that can reasonably occur between staff and children. Significant incidents are subject to the school's statutory recording and reporting arrangements.

Although it may not be necessary to make physical contact in cases of Withdrawal (Impose Withdrawal) or Forceable seclusion, these are still regarded as forms of restrictive intervention.

The term **difficult** used throughout this policy refers to behaviour that a child or young person displays that does not cause harm or injury. Staff may find these behaviours challenging.

The term **dangerous** used throughout this policy refers to behaviours that could cause injury to self or others, damage to property, or committing a criminal offence.

The term **'parent'** used throughout this policy refers to all those with parental responsibility, including parents and those who care for the child (as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996). Where there is a Care Order in force (within the meaning of section 31 of the Children Act 1989), the local authority has the power to restrict the

exercise by the child's parents of their parental responsibility, if the welfare of the child so requires.

ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have contact or physical intervention with children or young people; however, it is crucial that this is appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the child's individual needs.

Occasions where staff may have cause to have physical intervention with a child may include:

- To comfort a child in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age).
- For affirmation/praise.
- To gently direct a child or young person.
- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama, etc).
- First aid and medical treatment.
- In an emergency to avert danger to the child.

Not all children feel comfortable with certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the child's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed.

Staff should acknowledge that some children are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with a child, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. In all situations where physical contact between staff and children takes place, staff must consider the following:

- The child's age and level of understanding.
- The child's individual characteristics and history.

- The duration of contact.
- The location where the contact takes place (staff should consider the circumstances and, where practicable, avoid unnecessary private physical contact).
- The purpose of the physical contact

Here at the Marlborough Science Academy we feel that physical intervention to comfort a child in distress or affirm praise will be at the discretion of the member of staff and their knowledge of the students in their care. In the case of the curriculum such as Drama and PE physical intervention will always be with the consent of the student.

Physical intervention must not become a habit between a member of staff and a child. Physical intervention should always be in the child's best interest and staff must have an awareness of children and young people who may not have secure primary attachments. Staff must have an awareness of the need to differentiate physical intervention to ensure that children or young people are able to distinguish and separate the attachment to staff (who are transient adults in their life) from the primary attachment to key adults such as parents and siblings.

Physical contact must never be used as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact **must not** be made with the child or young person's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, or any other sensitive body areas, or to put pressure on joints or affect airways, breathing and circulation.

Safer working practice

To reduce the risk of allegations, all staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the staff handbook / school code of conduct / staff behaviour policy and Safer Recruitment Consortium document, **Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (September 2022)**
http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/allegations/safe.shtml

RESTRAINT OR RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS

Restraint or restrictive interventions may be used when necessary and proportionate and less restrictive approaches would not safely manage the situation. All staff should focus on promoting a positive and proactive approach to behaviour and emotional wellbeing, including de-escalation techniques (appropriate to the child), to minimise the likelihood of, and avoid the need to use, restraint.

There will, however, be times when the only realistic response to a situation will be a planned restraint or restrictive intervention

Before implementing a planned restraint or restrictive intervention it is necessary to undertake a careful risk assessment. This will need to include a record of the child's needs (including their vulnerabilities, learning disabilities, medical conditions and impairments), evidence of the risks to self and others and the extent to which a restrictive intervention would be in the child's best interests.

If it is necessary to undertake a restrictive intervention, then staff should employ the planned and agreed approaches/techniques as set out in the child's individualised risk assessment.

The planned intervention will be based on the following principles: -

- The assessment of risk to safeguard the individual or others i.e. restraint will only be used where it is necessary to prevent a student injuring themselves or others, committing an offence or damaging property. (as opposed to if no intervention or a less restrictive intervention was undertaken).
- An intervention will be in the best interests of the child - balanced against respecting the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Restraint will never be used to force compliance or with the intention of: inflicting pain, suffering or humiliation.
- If restraint is appropriate then techniques used will be reasonable and proportionate to the specific circumstances and risk of seriousness of harm; they will be applied with the minimum force needed, for no longer than necessary, by appropriately trained staff.
- When planning support and reviewing any type of planning document that references restraint or restrictive interventions (such as a risk assessment) children, parents and where appropriate (for example, where the child or parent/carer wants it) advocates should be involved.

In an emergency such as a child running into a road, or a child attacking a member of staff and refusing to stop when asked, then reasonable force may be necessary. This would be an unplanned intervention which: -

- requires professional judgement to be exercised in difficult situations, often requiring split-second decisions in response to unforeseen events or incidents where trained staff may not be on hand.

- will include judgements about the capacity of the child at that moment to make themselves safe.
- requires responses which are reasonable and proportionate and use the minimum force necessary in order to achieve the aim of the decision to restrain.

An unplanned intervention should trigger a multidisciplinary discussion to look at what support is needed to reduce the risk of future incidents. Staff should update and/or implement a new risk reduction plan depending on the circumstances of the unplanned incident.

Staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other children and themselves from escalating situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for all children or young persons.

The circumstances when reasonable force may be used will need to meet the following criteria: -

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (this applies even if they are below the age of criminal responsibility)
- To prevent a child from injuring themselves or others
- To prevent or stop a child or young person from causing damage to property (including their own property)

Legal defence for the use of force is based on evidence that the action taken was:

- Reasonable, proportionate and necessary

Staff should have reasonable grounds for believing that restraint is necessary to justify its use. They should only use restraint where they consider it is necessary to prevent serious harm, including risk of injury to the child or young person or others. Staff should use their professional judgement to decide if restraint is necessary, reasonable and proportionate.

Since children are developing both physically and psychologically this makes them particularly vulnerable to harm. The potentially serious impact of restraint on their development requires that the child's best interests is the paramount consideration when reaching a decision on whether to, and how to, restrain a child. However, this does not mean that the child's best interests automatically take precedence over other considerations such as other people's rights, but they must be given due weight in the decision.

Deprivation of liberty or segregation

Deprivation of liberty is unlawful – unless sanctioned by process of law (Mental Health Act 1983, Mental Capacity Act 2005 – Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) and / or by way of court order (inherent jurisdiction – or s16 Mental Capacity Act Order);
Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice

ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISKS

Staff will use the minimum force needed to gain safe outcomes.

Restrictive intervention which have any of the following 3 effects are wholly inappropriate:

- If there is a negative impact on the process of breathing
- The child feels pain as a direct result of the technique
- The child feels a sense of violation.

Clearly the use of a restraint technique that negatively impacts on a child's breathing presents a real risk of causing serious harm

The following interventions have elevated risks and can result in a sense of violation, pain or restricted breathing and must be avoided:

- The use of clothing or belts to restrict movement
- Holding a person lying on their chest or back
- Pushing on the neck, chest or abdomen
- Hyperflexion or basket type holds
- Extending or flexing of joints (pulling and dragging)

The following can result in significant injury and must also be avoided:

- Forcing a child or young person up or down stairs
- Dragging a child or young person from a confined space
- Lifting and carrying

- **Ground restraint.** If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release or reposition them into a safer/standing position as quickly as possible.
- Seclusion, where a person is forced to spend time alone against their will.

The principles relating to Restrictive Intervention are as follows: -

- Restrictive intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met.
- Restraint or restrictive intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for restrictive Intervention through dialogue and diversion.
- Where possible staff will explain what is happening, why, and what the student can do,
- Staff will use the minimum force necessary to ensure safe outcomes.
- Staff will only use force when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the child's and/or other children's best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will be able to evidence that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident.
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses.
- As soon as it is safe, the restrictive intervention will be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs.
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual child will always be considered.
- In developing a risk reduction plan, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each child or young person's circumstance.
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing children or young persons and staff after every incident of restrictive intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

DEVELOPING A RISK REDUCTION PLAN

If a child is identified as presenting a risk that restraint or restrictive intervention may be required, a risk reduction plan will be completed. This plan will help the child and staff to avoid situations that escalate through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs in an effort to manage and reduce risk.

The plan will include: -

- "Roots and fruits" to explore the link between experiences, feeling and behaviours
- Anxiety mapping to understand the factors that underlie or influence the behaviour as well as the triggers for it (e.g. staff, peers, activity, location etc.)
- Analysis of both conscious and subconscious behaviour with solutions and differentiation of environment or teaching and learning
- An understanding of the wider causes of behaviours - such as those that stem from medical conditions, sensory issues and unmet need or undiagnosed conditions.
- Recognition of the early warning signs that indicate that poor emotional wellbeing is beginning to emerge.
- Alternatives to restraint, including effective techniques to de-escalate a situation and avoid restrictive interventions.
- Details of the safe implementation of restraint, including how to minimise associated risks, particularly taking into account the growth and development of children and young people.
- Details of a communication plan with the children including for those who are non-verbal (including those with speech, language and communication needs).
- Co-produced with parents/carers and the child to ensure their views and experiences are considered.
- A dynamic risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens.
- Explanation of how to record any planned or unplanned interventions.
- How to find the record in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used.
- A Clear description stating at which point a restrictive intervention will be used
- Identification of key staff who know exactly what is expected and how to build positive relationships
- A system to summon additional support if needed
- Identification of training needs or unresolved risk factors

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Guidance and training are essential in this area. We adopt the best possible practice in at the Marlborough science academy and provide training for all staff at several levels including: -

- Awareness of issues for governors, staff and parents,
- Positive behaviour management - all staff
- Emotional well-being and trauma informed practices - all staff
- Managing conflict in difficult situations - all staff

Training and development play a crucial role in promoting positive behaviour and supporting those whose poor emotional wellbeing has the risk of becoming difficult or dangerous. Settings have a statutory responsibility to enable staff to develop the understanding and skills to support children and young people and help parents to secure consistent approaches.

Additional training will be tailored to take account of the needs of the children and young people being taught and/or cared for and the role of the specific tasks that staff will be undertaking, should the need arise for planned physical intervention or restraint of a young person.

RECORDING AND REPORTING

Statutory Duty to Record and Report

From April 2026, the school has a statutory duty to **record and report every significant incident involving the use of reasonable force**.

- A **significant incident** is defined as any use of force beyond appropriate, everyday physical contact (such as guiding a pupil, first aid, or curriculum-related contact).
- All incidents must be:
    - Recorded by staff as soon as practicable, and no later than **24 hours** after the event.
    - Reported to parents/carers of the child involved, ideally within **one school day**.
    - Reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Records will include the nature of the incident, the intervention used, duration, the outcome, and any injuries or distress caused.
- These records will be recorded on MyConcern and form a part of the termly governors safeguarding update.

The use of a restraint or restrictive intervention, whether planned or unplanned (emergency), must always be recorded as quickly as practicable (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident) by the person(s) involved in the incident on the restrictive interventions form (Annex A). This must then be passed to the DSL and will be uploaded

- the names of the staff and child or young persons involved;
- the type of restrictive intervention employed;
- the reason for using a restrictive intervention (rather than non-restrictive strategies);
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the child 's behaviour, what was said by all those involved, and the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation;
- the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long;
- the date and the duration of the whole intervention;
- whether the child or young person or anyone else experienced injury or distress and, if they did, what action was taken.

All records should be open and transparent and enable consideration to be given to the appropriateness of the use of restraint.

Governing bodies and proprietors must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must also have regard to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their schools or colleges are always effective and comply with the law.

Governing bodies and proprietors should have a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take **leadership** responsibility for their schools or college's restraint arrangement.

The nominated governor is:

NAME James Roach

COMPLAINTS

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or education setting's safeguarding arrangements.

Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, should be in place for such concerns to be raised with the school or college's senior leadership team.

If staff members have concerns about another staff member then this should be referred to the Head Teacher or Principal. Where there are concerns about the Head Teacher or Principal, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors/ Chair of the Management Committee/Proprietor as appropriate. Where the head teacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, allegations should be reported directly to the designated officer(s) at the local authority. Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the school's designated safeguarding lead and make any referral via them.

Who/what was consulted:

- Leadership team
- DFE guidelines on the use of reasonable force
- Governing body
- Local authority guidance on reducing the need for restrictive interventions
- Ofsted guidelines on school inspection
- Mental health and behaviour in schools 2018
- DfE Restrictive Interventions including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (April 2026)
- KCSIE 2026
- Behaviour in Schools; Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- Equality Act 2010
- current Hertfordshire Steps/Therapeutic Thinking guidance

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body no less than every 2 years.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in October 2026.

It is due for review in October 2028 (up to 24 months from the above date).

Signature ……. Date ……

Head Teacher

Signature ……..……. Date ….……

Chair of Governors