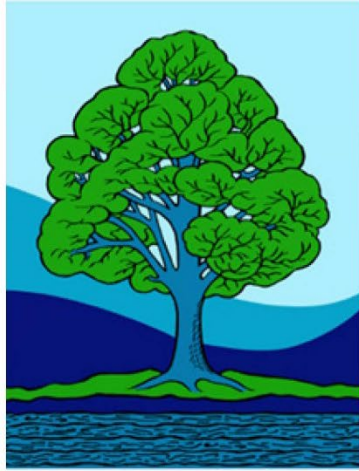




Rivertree Free School

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Article 3: *All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.*

Physical Intervention Policy

Policy Status: Recommended

Review Cycle: 2 Years

Owner: Behaviour Lead **Date:** September 2026

Approved by: SLT **Date:** September 2026

Review Date: September 2028

Introduction

Successful support for pupils who present with challenging behaviour is a core function and key feature of Rivertree Free School. Implicit in this support is the appropriate use of physical intervention as a last resort. In order to ensure that all pupils and staff are able to work together in a happy, safe and secure environment it is necessary to have in place a clear policy, principles, and procedures guiding the best practice of behaviour support and in particular the safe use of physical intervention.

[Positive environments where children can flourish](#) states:

We start from the premise that staff should work positively and confidently with children and find the least intrusive way possible to support, empower and keep children safe. The foundation of good practice in working with children should be:

- building relationships of trust and understanding
- understanding triggers and finding solutions
- if incidents do occur, defusing the situation and/or distracting the child wherever possible

Restraint is permissible. There will be times when staff feel that they need to intervene physically to keep children safe (or to keep staff safe).

This policy is informed by a range of documents and guidance, including but not limited to:

1. [DfE advice template](#)
2. [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#)
3. [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention](#)
4. [Human rights framework for restraint](#)
5. [Positive environments where children can flourish](#)

Definition of Physical Intervention

The key issue is the nature of the act, not how it is described.

In this policy restrictive interventions and restraint can include, depending on the circumstances:

- Physical restraint: a restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact where the intervener's intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body of another person.
- Withdrawal: removing a child or young person involuntarily from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to themselves and/or others and taking them to a safer place where they have a better chance of composing themselves.

In some cases, because of the effects of their impairment or condition, a pupil may actively choose to move to a quiet space for a period, for example when their anxiety levels rise and they become agitated, in order to calm down and 'self-regulate' their behaviour, averting the need for restraint. We describe this practice as 'self-withdrawal'. Staff should take steps to support them and monitor their progress. Where this is the case, appropriate provision should be made for this in the child or young person's support plan and kept under review with the child, parents and/or young person. This would not constitute restraint as the child or young person is free to leave the quiet space.

All staff should be aware of the distinction between physical touch as used appropriately in everyday school situations to support, encourage or comfort a pupil and physical intervention as described above. Please see **the Rivertree Free School Touch Policy** for further information.

Principles

A positive and proactive approach is vital to anticipate potential triggers for behaviour that challenges, and minimise the likelihood of, or avoid the need to use, restraint. Where use of restraint is necessary to safeguard pupils and others from harm, it should be consistent with clear values and sound ethical principles, comply with the relevant legal requirements and case law and be consistent with obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The following principles set the ethos within which Rivertree Free School operates:

- Uphold children and young people's rights – children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions, and mental health difficulties whose behaviour challenges have the same human rights as all children and young people and require additional help to overcome the difficulties their behaviour may present
- Treat children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions, and mental health difficulties whose behaviour challenges as full and valued members of the community whose views and preferences matter
- Respect and invest in parents and carers as partners in the development and provision of support for pupils. For example, asking parents to state explicitly that they are aware that physical restraint, and/or withdrawal maybe used and that they have granted consent.
- Recognise that it is important that professionals, services and pupil's families work together to coordinate support for pupils whose behaviour challenges

Legal Frameworks

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allows the use of **reasonable force** to:

- prevent or stop the committing of any offence by a pupil;
- prevent or stop personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the pupil themselves) by a pupil; or
- prevent or stop a pupil prejudicing the maintenance good order and discipline.

Guidance on the use of reasonable force by is provided by the non-statutory guidance, [DfE advice template](#)

Under The Children's Act 2006, any practice or measure such as 'time out' or seclusion, which prevents a child from leaving a room or building of his or her own free will may be deemed a **'restriction of liberty'**. Under this Act, restriction of liberty of children by a local authority is only permissible in very specific circumstances.

There may be instances where it is appropriate to restrict a child who may be at risk due to a lack of awareness or danger to a room or a particular area in order to keep him/her safe, e.g. if s/he has a severe learning disability and/or their ability to make safe choices is temporarily impaired by severe anxiety or rage, resulting in challenging and unsafe behaviour. However, it must be ensured that they are always cared for under close staff supervision and the incident fully recorded and reported.

This must also be reported to a member of the senior leadership team (SLG) as soon as possible.

Staff should not unnecessarily restrict the liberty of a child.

All settings and services must ensure that they comply with the Equality Act 2010 which requires

that they do not discriminate against individuals in relation to **protected characteristics** (these are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation). The Act makes different provision for different settings, with the basic requirement that settings and services must ensure they do not:

- treat individuals less favourably because of a protected characteristic (direct discrimination);
- apply a provision, criterion or practice that puts an individual with a given protected characteristic, and others who share that characteristic, at a disadvantage compared to someone who does not share that protected characteristic, for example by having a blanket behaviour policy that is applied in the same way to all but in practice causes special problems for disabled children (indirect discrimination);
- behave in an unwanted way which relates to a relevant protected characteristic and which violates or is meant to violate the dignity of an individual or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person (harassment); and
- single out individuals for unfair treatment because they (or in some circumstances their parents or siblings) complain about discrimination or try to seek redress under the Equality Act (victimisation).

The school keeps detailed records of the use of restraint. Therefore, if there is a disparity in the use of physical intervention relating to a pupil group, leaders investigate the cause.

- Bild Association of Certified Training
- The Institute of Conflict Management (ICM)
- National Training Award (NTA)
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Decision to Restrain

[Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention](#) states: *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. To be confident in their judgement, staff should also ensure they know the scope of the legal powers authorising restraint and keep abreast of changes and developments in the understanding of what constitutes good practice in this area. When a decision is being made whether and how to restrain a child, their best interests are a primary consideration. 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.*

In addition, it is Rivertree Free School's policy and fundamental to the [Human rights framework for restraint](#) that:

- Significant physical force may only be used as a last resort.
- the means of restraint and its duration must be necessary and no more than necessary.
- Restraint must never be used to punish or with the intention of inflicting pain, suffering or humiliation
- Staff must consider pupils vulnerability to harm, such as age, experience of trauma, and disability.
- If the restraint is consistent with ordinary acceptable parental restrictions upon the movements of a child of that age and understanding, this will generally be lawful.

The above is consistent with BILTT's Professional Standards Policy which states:

Physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Non-statutory guidance is available from the Department of Education website. See ['Use of Reasonable Force in Schools'](#) Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

When considering whether to use restraint with a pupil, staff should ask themselves: 'At this moment what is in the best interests of the child and/or those around them, taking account of the risks presented?' In assessing risk, staff should take into account:

- the size, age and understanding of the child or young person;
- the specific hazards they face;
- their particular vulnerabilities, learning disabilities, medical conditions and impairments;
- the relative risks of not intervening;
- the child or young person's previously sought views and experiences, and those of parents and carers, on strategies and approaches they considered might de-escalate or calm a situation;
- the method of restraint that would be appropriate in the circumstances; and
- the impact of the restraint on the future relationship with the child or young person

Procedural Safeguards

All persons using restraint must be adequately trained. Rivertree Free have trained PRICE trainers who provide all staff training on behaviour support, including the appropriate and safe use of physical intervention. All class staff will receive PRICE training within their first year and regular refresher training thereafter.

Any anticipated use of restraint must be planned and reviewed. For example, planned physical intervention must be part of a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan (PBS plan). When planning support and reviewing any type of plan which references restraint (such as), parents (and pupils as appropriate) should be involved. Rivertree Free also consults multidisciplinary teams, and reviews BSPs within yearly reviews of pupils education health and care plans.

If possible, the person must be consulted and involved in a decision to restrain. Best reasonable endeavours should be used to secure the views, wishes and feelings of Rivertree Free School pupils, many of whom have receptive and expressive communication difficulties. This may involve seeking the views of parents/carers as advocates. Pupil voice is pertinent to both making a decision to restrain and reviewing BSPs, PBS plans.

Use of restraint should be recorded in proportionate detail to enable the appropriateness of the restraint to be assessed. Any use of a physical intervention must be recorded on the school behaviour incident forms (IRIS) as soon as possible after the incident. The details of the incident are logged and a record kept in line with legal requirements. Whenever any form of physical intervention is used, a written record must be completed which includes the following:

- Pupil name
- The date, time, and duration of the intervention. Where an intervention takes place intermittently over a period of time, one incident form may be completed as long as the full time span is documented.
- The reason a restrictive intervention was used and the alternative interventions that were tried prior to use.
- The name of the staff involved and any witnesses.
- The specific method of physical intervention PRICE restraints)
- Any adverse outcomes, i.e. injuries to pupils, staff or others or complaints. In such

circumstances where an adverse outcome has occurred, staff must complete the appropriate records in accordance with academy policy and statutory requirements e.g. accident reporting and RIDDOR.

- Details of how parents/carers were informed of the incident.
- In the event that significant physical restraint is used parents/carers must be informed through a phone call. Leaders will support class teachers as required. It should be recorded that a conversation has taken place on My Concern in line with Rivertree Free School policy.

Post Incident Support and Management

After incidents, pupils and the staff involved will be given emotional support and first aid for any injuries as required. All injuries should be recorded in accordance with Rivertree Free procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

Rivertree Free School ensures that reflective practice is used in instances where restraint has had to be used, including any patterns and trends, and consider how use of restraint might be avoided in future. This will usually involve de-briefing and post-incident review and monitoring of the use of restraint and restrictive intervention. The process considers behaviour support plans and wider policies.

Safeguarding the Welfare of Staff

School leaders should:

- assess the risks to employees and others (including the risk of reasonably foreseeable violence) and implement steps to reduce these risks
- provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety of employees
- monitor and review arrangements put in place to reduce the risks to ensure they are effective; and
- establish transparent processes to acknowledge the hazardous nature of any foreseeable incidents and of any restrictive interventions.

Concerns and Complaints

Staff who have concerns about restraint should speak with their line manager in the first instance. Parents and carers are invited to speak with their child's class teacher or a member of the senior management team. The Complaints Policy can be found on the school website.

Related Policies and Guidance

- BILTT Behaviour Statement
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Touch Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Complaints policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Coronavirus addendum

Scope

This addendum applies until further notice.

It sets out changes and exceptions to our normal physical intervention policy. Pupils, parents and staff should continue to follow our normal physical intervention policy with respect to anything not covered in this addendum.

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

Explanation

Whilst we understand that COVID risk assessments are to follow the government '**Hands, face, space**' guidance; there will be situations that arise within school which will require staff to be closer than the defined social distancing guidelines.

One such situation will be due to a significant behavioural incident that requires a physical intervention, where staff must make physical contact with a pupil in order to be able to keep the pupil, themselves and others safe.

For any pupil that has behaviours such as spitting on their behaviour support plan, staff are advised to wear and provided with visors to protect their face.

As soon as a behaviour incident is over and it is safe to do so, staff that have been involved must wash their hands and sanitise.

All physical interventions must continue to be logged on an incident form in line with school policy.