



Restrictive Intervention Policy

Date of next review: January 2028

Review date	By whom	Summary of Changes	Date Implemented
08.01.26	RBR	Incorporated guidance for schools April 2026	

Introduction

Samuel Cody School is committed to providing a safe, calm and purposeful working environment for staff, students and visitors. We foster a therapeutic approach to teaching and learning where we focus on supporting students with their Special Educational Needs, as well as supporting them to access learning activities to ensure they can be successful in later life. We work hard to maintain high standards of behaviour for learning, to pre-empt issues wherever possible or deal with them at the earliest stage possible.

We recognise, however, that on rare occasions, there may be situations where reasonable force will be lawful and necessary. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act (2006) and the DfE Guidance "[Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England](#)" (April 2026) gives all members of staff the power to use reasonable force to prevent students from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property
- causing disorder among students at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

NB: The above list contains examples, but is not exhaustive, and there may be other circumstances in which the use of reasonable force is justified.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and always depends on the individual circumstances. Staff will always act to provide the necessary duty of care and in a proportionate and reasonable way.

Parental consent is not required for members of staff to use reasonable force on students. Where reasonable force has been used, the school will notify the parents of that fact by phone call at the earliest point possible. This will be confirmed in writing by a member of SLT, sharing the following information:

- 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

Parents may be invited into school for a follow-up discussion about the incident and may equally request a meeting. They can also request a copy of the written record of seclusion or restraint from the Headteacher.

Reasonable force may be used in the course of normal day to day activities and in proper and necessary circumstances. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate includes:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort students, such as holding the hand of a student at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on

a school trip, or when helping a student to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate

- to comfort a distressed student
- to congratulate or praise a student, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- to demonstrate the correct playing of a musical instrument

As a special school, we recognise that some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. In particular, students who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions.

Staff at Samuel Cody School seek to understand and remove underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support and create an inclusive environment. Staff seek to know individual students well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. They work with the student, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Terminology

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a student or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a student's arms to their sides or removing a student's crutches (non-force related restraint) would both be considered forms of restraint

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a student confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Principles

Samuel Cody School takes a therapeutic approach to education. It is illegal to use force on a student for the purpose of punishment and under no circumstances is this permitted at the school.

Reasonable force is only used in line with the duty of care. i.e. when the student is causing harm to themselves or others, causing significant damage to property or needs to be prevented from carrying out a criminal act. The use of reasonable force should not put other staff or students at risk of harm.

It is expected that staff will exhibit resilience and consistency in their endeavours to help a student with persistently difficult/challenging behaviours, and will commit to the [restraint reduction network standards](#), as well as the [PRICE principles](#).

Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort in the context of a wider behaviour for learning management strategy, based on mutual respect, fairness, and equity. It will always be a considered response in the best interests of the student.

Before using reasonable force, staff should (where reasonably possible):

- Make use of primary and secondary strategies to deescalate the situation
- Make it clear that a physical intervention may be necessary
- Clearly and calmly communicate to the student what is happening, why, and explain what the student needs to do and ensure that the student has understood this information, using appropriate methods of communication to meet their individual needs
- Ensure that restrictive intervention is proportionate
- Consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation
- Consider the personal circumstances of the student such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.¹⁴
- Consider the impact on the student's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken.
- Seek to maintain respect for a student's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers
- Seek to understand how the student is feeling and use this information to consider whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped
- Assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment and dynamically risk assess the situation and surrounding events

When using reasonable force, staff should:

- use the least amount of force, and minimal amount of restriction for the minimum time required to restore self-control to the student
- ensure that the force used must be proportionate, reasonable and necessary, in the circumstances in which it was used, using no more force than is needed
- Ensure that students have not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. If a student is unintentionally held on the ground, staff will release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible
- not deliberately cause pain/injury or humiliation, nor will they include the use of threats or intimidating language

- takes in account of age, size, gender, stage of development, health, fears and phobias, state of mind (drug/alcohol) and any previous experience of abuse
- consider their approach and consider alternative strategy if the intervention itself is escalating the situation

The Headteacher and authorised members of staff may also use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances when conducting a search of a student without their consent for certain prohibited items (see the Behaviour Policy).

Where a reasonable behaviour support plan cannot be drawn up and the school considers the risk of harm to students and/or staff to be high, we will seek support from outside agencies. It is important to note that this duty of care may require reasonable force to ensure that the student remains safe. DfE guidance states that in some instances a member of staff may breach that duty if they fail to take action in certain scenarios that may require physical intervention.

We reserve the right to call the police to support us where student behaviours present a risk to themselves, or others, and where they are not able or willing to respond to staff.

Seclusion

Seclusion is only ever used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a student is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation without intent. Seclusion is never implemented by staff through threat of punishment and is not a disciplinary measure. The place to which the student is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the student. For this reason, soft playrooms are usually used. The student is supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the student is allowed to leave.

Prevention

We aim to minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation. Preventative measures are tailored to meet the individual needs of each student. The following measures may be deployed:

- ensuring the best possible match between the student's needs/aspirations and the school's curriculum offer.
- ensuring the best possible match between the student's needs and the staff's ability to meet those needs.
- developing a culture, and ethos, that students will respect each other and the environment around them, where they will feel safe and secure to be supported by the adults around them
- developing positive, respectful and professional relationships between staff and students and between students

- adopting a non-confrontational, pragmatic, problem-solving and restorative approach to signs of mounting anger and anxiety in our students.
- explaining clearly what is expected and will tell and model to the student how to behave in an acceptable manner
- boundaries outlined along with meaningful and protected consequences and take-up time will be given to the student/student to make a choice
- consideration of how the school and classroom environment can support all students to achieve and thrive
- the use of Zones of Regulation to support the teaching of regulation strategies
- 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, empathy and the use of scripts to aid de-escalation
- development of working staff-student relationships and trust
- recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning
- the involvement of parents and outside agencies.

As a general rule, parents will be invited into school for a meeting following restrictive intervention on three occasions, however this threshold is dependent on the profile of the young person and the term in which restrictive intervention takes place (e.g. the threshold may be higher where a student is new to the school and their SEND profile suggests that they may need support in this way to adjust to a new school setting).

Student and Staff Wellbeing

Staff attend a debrief with a PRICE trainer/school leaders on the same day following any restrictive intervention. This is supportive measure to allow staff the space to reflect on the incident and sharing their feelings. This debrief also serves to evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention to understand why it was used and the impact on students and staff.

Risk assessments are carried out with staff where there are concerns that carrying out restrictive intervention could put their health, safety and welfare at risk and PRICE leads share a list of staff who are unable to carry out restrictive intervention each time that changes.

When reasonable force has been used, students are given the opportunity to reflect and restore, as well as learn from their experiences, to improve their self-regulation and avoid similar situations in the future. This takes place at a time when they are sufficiently regulated to be able to manage the conversation positively but always within two school days of the incident. Staff are expected to record details of this conversation as an action on the restrictive intervention log on CPOMS, sharing any wider outcomes from that meeting with staff.

Strategies include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress

- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the student to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the student in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the student in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Classroom support plans are adjusted to reflect this information and are shared with all staff in the local area of the school and staff working across the whole school.

Training

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force/restrictive interventions are trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. School leaders have chosen PRICE training because it places significant emphasis on the importance of primary, secondary and non-restrictive strategies and restrictive interventions are trauma informed.

The school has six PRICE trainers who provide training and support for staff across the whole site. In Cody Oaks and Samuel Cody Primary all staff receive training as part of their induction and on an annual basis. Once a week, staff practice techniques on each other. RPI data is analysed and staff surveyed to identify when other training might be required and this is also implemented throughout the year on an individual, small group or whole staff basis.

Injuries

Despite rigorous risk assessment and high-quality training, it is unfortunately not possible to totally remove all risk when applying restrictive physical interventions. By their very nature they are physically demanding and, when there is resistance and struggle involved there is a possibility of bruising and/or other injuries to the student concerned.

PRICE and Samuel Cody Schools training methodology, as well as any technique risk assessments, are carefully designed to minimise these risks. As we acknowledge a residual risk, we commit to ensuring robust reporting and recording procedures and also post incident support for students and staff involved.

This is not to be seen as necessarily a failure of professional technique but a potential side effect of making sure the child and others remain safe.

During any physical intervention, staff are required to monitor a student's health and wellbeing. If at any point the student's health appears to be at risk, then staff are to end the hold as quickly and safely as possible. A record of this must be kept as part of the CPOMs reporting process.

All students are offered a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible after restrictive intervention.

Injuries to staff or students are reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

Recording and Monitoring

Any restrictive intervention (including non-force related restraint) and seclusion is recorded by the staff involved in the incident on CPOMS using a PRICE form that includes:

- names of student and staff directly involved
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- 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 (which technique) was applied and details of any physical injuries sustained
- 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

This reporting takes place as soon as practicable after the event but no later than the same day.

Staff record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the student's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

These reports are reviewed by a member of the school leadership team who will address any issues which arise as well as ensure that the hold is carried out effectively in the least restrictive way possible.

PRICE leads analyse the data to make informed decisions about staff training needs and to support SLT in decision making. SLT analyse RPI data on a weekly basis to identify patterns and trends and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future on an individual basis and as a local area.

The governing body takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with. The governing body regularly reviews and interrogates data on restrictive interventions to ensure school leaders:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand students' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of student support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those students to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.

- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to students who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

The governing body considers the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis is proportionate and avoids over-interpreting small subgroups of people.

Complaints

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions are dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure. A copy of this procedure can be found on the school website or requested from the school office.

If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education are followed.