

Pathways School

Reasonable Force & Restrictive Interventions Policy

Policy Monitoring

Date of next review: November 2026

Reviewed by: Saima Ali Majid, Chair of Governors¹

Neil Jones, Headteacher This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures

¹ The Governors of Pathways School are the trustees of Positive Behaviour Support for Learning (registered charity no.1186125)

1. Introduction

The Headteacher has the responsibility to maintain the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff. This policy focuses on how we may use reasonable force and restrictive intervention (RFRI), what processes we have in place to ensure we are recording and reporting all instances of such incidents and interventions and how we are working to reduce their use.

This policy is developed in advance of government guidance due to be published in 2025 and the consultation process which concludes in April 2025.

2. Legislation and guidance

- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013
- Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools (2025)
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations, 1992 (revised 1998 edition),
- Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974.
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention 2019
- Positive Environments where children can flourish Ofsted 2018

3. Links to other school policies and practices.

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Principles Written Statement
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy
- School Discipline and Exclusions Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Manual Handling Policy

4. Terminology

Reasonable force: Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.

Restrictive interventions: Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include use of equipment, medication or seclusion.⁴ Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

Restraint: A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a

pupil. Restraint may also include mechanical or chemical restraint. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.

5. Policy Statement

Pathways School is a Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) School and requires all policy and practice to treat our students with dignity, compassion, and respect

We believe that everyone should be:

- Treated with dignity and compassion
- Valued
- Listened to
- Supported to have the best quality of life possible
- Empowered to make choices and decisions.

RFRI can undermine dignity, respect and compassion and this policy has been written to significantly minimise its use and minimise the potential negative impacts. Any interventions used must be carried out according to the principles and guidance as set out in training. Only staff who are trained in physical intervention can use it.

6. Pathways School Policy on RFRI & Restraint

- Pathways School promotes Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and providing the right support at the right time. We teach students new skills to minimise behaviours that challenge and seek for student to engage in these new skills because they improve their life/make life interesting/meaningful for them.
- For some of our students we will also pay regard to function-based interventions, motivation, and reinforcement.
- **We believe that behaviours that challenge have a communicative intent.**
- Not all behaviour that challenges require RFRI or Restraint Staff must try proactive strategies in the first instance. Only when positive reinforcement and skills teaching have been tried and failed, and the inappropriate behaviour is considered serious enough i.e. likely to cause harm to the individual or others, would RFRI or Restraint be considered. All interventions should be approved by the Behaviour Analyst, as part of the Behaviour Support Plan.
- Only staff who have received **Team Teach training** are allowed to be involved in the use of reasonable force or restraint. Team Teach provides training in the management of challenging behaviour.
- A **second member of staff** should be present during the use of intervention.
- At all times, our staff will be committed to using 'the least to most' approach to restrictive intervention.
- It must be **reasonable, proportionate, and necessary** and must never be used as a punitive measure.
- Where staff use or observe a restrictive intervention that causes them concern it is their duty to report this by following the processes set out in our safeguarding policies.
- We have a duty of care to ensure students and staff are kept safe.
- We are committed to making learning motivating and engaging.

In this policy we define 'behaviour that challenges' as 'behaviour of such intensity, frequency, or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or delay access to and use of ordinary community facilities'

Any intervention aimed to deliberately punish a student, or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation is unlawful and will be considered an act of gross misconduct. Examples of this include hitting, pushing, slapping, kicking, poking, or prodding a student. Staff who engage in any such act would render themselves liable for dismissal and being referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

7. Environment

Students' needs are either fulfilled or frustrated by their environment. The environment can serve to nurture and enrich, and facilitate development, but can also disrupt and thwart, leading to less optimal development, disharmony, defiance, developmental regression, or alienation. All of which can lead to behaviours that challenge. Meeting students' needs removes the need to employ RFRI or Restraint.

We believe in:

- **Employing impactful, high-quality teaching**

Our teachers have enhanced pedagogical knowledge relating to autism; engage in high quality instruction; create a classroom climate that has high expectations whilst recognising and promoting students' self-worth

- **Meeting physical needs.**

Our staff monitor hunger, tiredness, feeling unsafe, over stimulation and under stimulation.

- **Meeting psychological needs.**

Our staff promote:

Autonomy: Creating as many opportunities as possible for students to exercise the need for autonomy and limiting, as far as possible, practices that undermine autonomy. They also build capacity and tolerance to manage situations where autonomy is limited.

Competence: Organising the environment and tasks so learners can be effective in their interactions with the environment.

Relatedness: Developing and maintaining strong and supportive emotional bonds between staff and learners

8. Reducing the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions

All interventions should be in accordance with individual Behaviour Support Plans (BSP) and will be in place for an appropriate period. The desired outcome of the PBS approach is that over time learners' skills and quality of life will increase and inversely the rate of challenging behaviour will decrease.

Restrictive interventions will be systematically faded out as determined by data, multi-disciplinary review, and monitoring.

Assessing the need for restrictive intervention and documenting it ensures that it's remains minimum.

The need for the use of physical intervention will be assessed on an individual basis. If a student presents with Challenging Behaviour, a Risk Assessment of Challenging Behaviour will be written. Should the student meet the criteria for "planned intervention" it will be documented in the Behaviour Support Plan (BSP). The BSP will detail what are known as "planned physical interventions."

9. Seclusion, time out & withdrawal

Seclusions should be understood as a situation where a pupil may need to spend time alone against their will in a room or an area which they cannot leave.

Seclusion is a form of deprivation of liberty, regardless of the duration and should be considered only if:

- There is a definite risk that the pupil who is to be secluded presents a significant degree of danger to other people.
- The situation cannot be managed safely by any other means, and any other strategies were tried and were unsuccessful.
- The balance between the potential risks of seclusion and any other intervention, such as use of a prolonged physical restraint, indicates that it would be safer to use seclusion.

Those strategies should be discussed in a wider group involving parents, class teams, senior leaders and outside agencies, e.g. CAMHS, Educational Psychologist.

Sufficient evidence should be gathered including:

- Incidents reports
- Functional analysis of the child's behaviour
- Debriefing records
- Any other relevant information

Pupil's behaviour support plans should state very precisely when and how this strategy will be used, and appropriate monitoring and recording should take place. Staff should always seek ways to de-escalate a situation and help the pupil to return to a calm state and their usual activities.

Force cannot be used to enforce 'seclusion'.

When seclusion is used as an **emergency** response, i.e. where there is a **genuinely unforeseeable** event or when a child acts entirely out of character, the following evidence should be gathered:

- The degree and intensity of incident
- The length of time for which controls, e.g. RPI were used.
- The intentions of those controlling the person.
- How the control was exercised.
- Debriefing with a member of SLT – description of actions prior seclusion.
- Whether the person was able to indicate that they wish to leave.

All the information should be gathered, and review of the procedure outlined above needs to take place.

Key coded doors. Other forms of restriction of liberties like physical changes to the environment (fobs on doors, double-handed door) are considered as restraint. We have significantly reduced the use of key coded doors across the school. Where these are still being used it is deemed **necessary and proportionate** to the ongoing health and safety of

the students, e.g. controlling access to the kitchen/playground/office area and is under continuous review.

Mechanical restraint, such as use of safety harnesses on the mini-bus is a form of restraint and should be included in the risk assessment of the community and shared with parents.

10. Pupil & Staff Support

Following each significant incident involving the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive intervention, we will evaluate the incident to understand why reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions were used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan.

'Significant incident' refers to any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described. This includes when physical force is used to implement a restrictive intervention.

If necessary, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Any significant incident in which a member of staff uses reasonable force on a pupil must be recorded as described below. In addition, any injuries will be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

Following a significant incident in which reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are used, we will hold a debrief session with staff involved (or the whole staff team if necessary) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation should be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved; as well as to repairing and rebuilding relationships through dialogue.

This process will ideally be facilitated by the Behaviour Analyst. By engaging in this process, schools can foster a culture of continuous improvement and consider how things might be improved in the future.

We will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of reasonable force and/or restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed, should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

11. Recording

Incidents must be recorded by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable after the event. The requirement to record applies even if the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Staff has to keep a written record of restraint during the incident (RPI data sheet).

Incidents will be recorded in Arbor, RPI sheets and contain the following details:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil
- time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
- 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, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- 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

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

12. Reporting

We ensure that each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil is reported to each parent/carer of the pupil as soon as practicable after the incident except where it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect.

In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

A report of the incident made to parents will include the following details:

- time, date, location and approximate length of time the force was used
- brief account of what type of reasonable force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance

The requirement to report applies even if the use of reasonable force in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

We will make our best judgement on how best to communicate this information to parents. For example, via phone call, email or online messaging system.

If necessary, we will invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This could involve a discussion about any behavioural triggers, any warning signs of an impending incident, whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed, what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were, and what might be done differently in the future. The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

13. Monitoring and Reviewing

All incident reports are checked by the Headteacher, who reports termly to the Governors.

RFRI logs are audited monthly by the Lead Behaviour Analyst to ensure:

- RFRI is being recorded when it has been used;
- The RFRI log is completed with the appropriate information; • Interventions are used in an appropriate manner (i.e., where non-restraints have been unsuccessful in keeping the young person safe);

- To monitor the frequency of RFRI; where there is an increasing trend in RFRI the Behaviour Analyst must review the Behaviour Support Plan accordingly;
- Behaviour Analysts will archive RFRI logs monthly (following audit). These records will be stored for a minimum of 75 years

14. Communication with Parents/Carers

Partnership with parents/carers is essential. All parents/carers are asked to sign their son/daughter's home school agreement and parental/carer views are considered for the individual young persons' behaviour plan which specifies the techniques to be used with the student. In this regard, parental consent to use RPI is secured as part of admission.

Parents/carers have a right to know when RFRI is used and accordingly will be sent home notification of when any restrictive intervention occurs or if any injury occurs. They will also be offered an opportunity to discuss RPI and any on-going behaviour management strategies that are being adopted with their son/daughter's Behaviour Analyst.

15. Training

- All staff receive autism training, safeguarding training and physical intervention training as part of their induction;
- All staff take part in regular refreshers and workshops in the appropriate use of RFRI;
- All staff have training in recording RFRI.