POLICY DOCUMENT

Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Princess May Primary School's approach to preventing and responding to behaviour that puts people at risk — 2026–2027

Governing Body Representative (GBR)	Kristofer McGhee (Chair of Governors)
Signed by (GBR)	……
Date approved	Awaiting governor approval (3 December 2026)
Next review due by	September 2027
Related policies	Behaviour Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; SEND Policy; Low-Level Concerns Policy; Complaints Procedure; Equality Information and Objectives
Aligned to	DfE Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (in force from 1 April 2026); Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A); Equality Act 2010; SEND Code of Practice; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

1. Introduction

This policy replaces our previous Positive Handling Policy. It reflects the DfE guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, which came into force on 1 April 2026.

At Princess May we build calm, safe and nurturing classrooms based on positive relationships and our values of Respect, Empathy and Determination. Our priority is to prevent situations from escalating. Restrictive interventions are used only as a last resort, when necessary to keep pupils and others safe, and never as a punishment.

2. Definitions

- **Restrictive intervention:** any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. This includes physical intervention (reasonable force) and non-physical measures.
- **Reasonable force:** using no more force than is needed, for example guiding a pupil by the arm, or holding a pupil to prevent harm.
- **Restraint:** holding back physically or bringing a pupil under control, usually in an emergency to prevent injury.
- **Seclusion:** supervised confinement of a pupil in a space they are prevented from leaving. At Princess May **seclusion is not used**, except in an emergency where it is the only way to prevent serious harm, and then only for the shortest possible time.
- **Withdrawal / time out:** a pupil choosing, or being guided, to move to a calm space where they are free to leave. This is not seclusion.

3. The legal position

All members of staff have a legal power under section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- committing a criminal offence;
- injuring themselves or others;
- damaging property; or
- behaving in a way that prejudices good order and discipline.

Force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the circumstances, and must never be used as a punishment. The school must make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities and SEND, and must not discriminate.

4. Prevention and de-escalation

- We know our pupils well and plan to reduce triggers, through consistent routines, clear expectations and adapted provision.
- Staff use de-escalation strategies first: calm language and tone, giving space and time, distraction, offering choices and help, and involving a trusted adult.
- Pupils who may need a restrictive intervention have an **individual support plan and risk assessment**, agreed with parents and carers (and the pupil where appropriate). These set out triggers, early warning signs, de-escalation strategies and any planned physical intervention.
- Pupils with SEND are supported in line with their EHC plan or SEN support plan, with advice from our SENCO and external professionals.

5. When restrictive interventions may be used

Physical intervention will only be used when de-escalation has been tried, or is not possible, and the risk of not intervening is greater than the risk of intervening. Staff will:

- use the minimum force for the shortest time;
- keep talking calmly to the pupil and explain what they are doing;
- avoid any hold that affects breathing, puts pressure on the neck, chest or joints, or causes pain;
- call for help from a trained colleague wherever possible.

Staff are not required to intervene physically if they believe it would put themselves or others at risk. In that case they should remove other pupils from danger and call for help.

6. Staff training

All staff are trained in de-escalation and preventative strategies. Key staff who are most likely to need to use reasonable force are trained in safe physical intervention by an accredited provider (Team Teach) [confirm provider and named staff], with refresher training at the intervals the provider requires.

7. Recording and reporting (statutory)

- **Every significant incident** involving the use of force, restraint or seclusion is recorded on our incident recording system [CPOMS – confirm] as soon as possible, and on the same day. The record includes what happened before, during and after the incident, the strategies used, the intervention, its duration, the staff involved, and any injuries.
- **Parents and carers are told** about any significant incident on the same day, or as soon as practicable, and are offered a meeting to discuss it.
- Injuries are reported in line with our Health and Safety Policy. Any allegation that force was used inappropriately is handled under our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and allegations procedures.

8. After an incident

- The pupil is given time and support to recover, and checked for injury.
- Staff involved are offered support and a debrief.
- The pupil, parents and staff reflect together on what happened and what could prevent it in future, and the individual support plan is reviewed.

9. Monitoring and governance

- The Headteacher and SENCO review incident records regularly to identify patterns, including for pupils with protected characteristics or SEND, and to reduce the use of restrictive interventions.
- The governing body receives anonymised data on the use of restrictive interventions at least termly and takes all reasonable steps to make sure our recording and reporting procedures are followed.

10. Complaints

Parents and carers who are concerned about the use of a restrictive intervention should contact the Headteacher. Concerns that cannot be resolved informally are dealt with under our Complaints Procedure. Safeguarding concerns are always referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

11. Searching and confiscation

Searching pupils is covered by our Behaviour Policy, in line with the DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.