



Annemount

Nursery and Pre-preparatory School

Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force

This Policy is for the whole school including the EYFS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Management.

1. Purpose and principles

Annemount School is committed to promoting positive behaviour through nurturing relationships, clear expectations, preventative strategies and an understanding of children's individual needs.

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, will always be avoided wherever possible. Physical intervention is **not a behaviour-management or disciplinary technique** and must never be used as a punishment.

There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where a member of staff needs to use reasonable force or another restrictive intervention to prevent a child from causing injury to themselves or others, committing an offence, damaging property, or causing serious disorder.

Any intervention must be:

- necessary in the circumstances;
- reasonable and proportionate to the risk presented;
- the **least restrictive response** that is reasonably available;
- used for the **minimum amount of time necessary**;
- carried out with respect for the child's dignity and welfare; and
- consistent with the child's age, developmental stage, individual needs and circumstances.

The safety of the child, other children and staff is the primary consideration.

2. Prevention and de-escalation

The School recognises that behaviour is communication and that young children may display distressed or challenging behaviour because of factors such as tiredness, anxiety, frustration, sensory overload, communication difficulties, changes in routine or unmet needs.

Staff will therefore seek to understand the reasons behind behaviour and use preventative and de-escalation strategies before considering restrictive intervention.

Depending on the child and circumstances, these may include:

- using a calm and reassuring tone of voice;
- giving the child time and space to process instructions;

- reducing noise, stimulation or other environmental triggers;
- offering choices and appropriate alternatives;
- distraction and redirection;
- moving other children away from a potentially unsafe situation;
- offering a quiet or familiar space where the child can regulate;
- using familiar adults and objects to provide reassurance;
- acknowledging and naming the child's emotions;
- allowing additional processing time;
- adapting activities or expectations where appropriate; and
- seeking assistance from another member of staff.

Staff should consider whether the proposed intervention could escalate the situation or cause greater harm than the behaviour itself.

3. When reasonable force may be used

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

Reasonable force may be used where it is necessary to prevent or stop a child from:

- causing injury to themselves;
- causing injury to another child or member of staff;
- committing a criminal offence;
- causing significant damage to property; or
- causing serious disorder.

For example, this may include preventing a child from running into a road or other dangerous area, preventing a child from seriously hurting another person, or removing an object that presents an immediate danger.

The decision to use reasonable force must be based on the circumstances at the time. Staff should consider:

1. **Is it necessary?**
Could the situation be managed safely using a less restrictive approach?
2. **Is it proportionate?**
Is the level of force the minimum necessary to manage the identified risk?
3. **Is it in the child's best interests and welfare?**
What are the child's age, size, developmental stage, SEND, medical needs, communication needs and other vulnerabilities?
4. **Can the intervention be reduced or stopped?**
Staff must stop using force as soon as the immediate risk has reduced sufficiently.

The fact that a particular intervention has previously been agreed with parents or included in a Behaviour Support Plan does not mean that it should automatically be used. The circumstances of each incident must be considered individually.

4. Appropriate physical contact

The School does not operate a 'no contact' policy.

Appropriate physical contact is an important part of caring for young children and does not automatically constitute restrictive intervention or reasonable force.

Depending on the circumstances, appropriate physical contact may include:

- providing first aid;
- holding a child's hand when walking safely around the school;
- guiding or escorting a child;
- helping a child access a space they have chosen for self-regulation;
- comforting a distressed child;
- offering reassurance;
- congratulating or praising a child; and
- supporting children during physical activities.

Staff must exercise professional judgement and consider the child's age, individual circumstances, SEND or other vulnerabilities, the presence of other adults and whether a non-physical alternative is available.

5. Unacceptable use of force

Force must **never** be used as a punishment or to make a child comply with an adult's instruction simply because they are refusing to do so.

Staff must not use an intervention which:

- deliberately causes pain;
- restricts a child's airway or breathing;
- covers the child's mouth or nose;
- applies pressure to the neck or abdomen;
- otherwise compromises circulation or breathing;
- is disproportionate to the risk presented; or
- continues after the immediate risk has reduced.

Particular care must be taken with any intervention involving the ground. If a child unintentionally ends up on the ground during an intervention, staff should release the hold or move to a safer position as quickly as possible.

6. Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention in which a child is kept in a place away from others and prevented from leaving.

Seclusion is **not a behaviour-management or punishment strategy**.

It should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a child is experiencing a high level of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

Where seclusion is necessary:

- the area must be safe and non-threatening;
- the child must be supervised at all times;
- staff must not use threats of punishment to prevent the child leaving;
- the child's dignity and welfare must be maintained; and

- the child must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

Any incident that meets the definition of seclusion must be recorded and reported to parents in accordance with the procedures below.

7. Children with SEND and additional needs

The School recognises that children with SEND or other vulnerabilities may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions.

Staff will seek to identify and understand individual triggers, including sensory overload, communication difficulties, pain, anxiety, unfamiliar environments or changes in routine.

Where appropriate, the School will develop an individual **Behaviour Support Plan** with the child, parents/carers and relevant professionals.

A Behaviour Support Plan may include:

- known triggers and early warning signs;
- preventative strategies;
- communication approaches;
- reasonable adjustments;
- de-escalation strategies;
- preferred calming or regulating activities;
- strategies for keeping the child and others safe; and
- where relevant, clearly defined circumstances in which increased physical contact may be required.

Where there is an identified risk that reasonable force or another restrictive intervention may be required, the School will ensure that an appropriate **risk assessment** is in place and that preventative measures are considered.

Behaviour Support Plans and risk assessments will be reviewed periodically and following any significant incident, so that practice can be adapted in response to what has or has not worked.

The School will comply with its duties under the **Equality Act 2010**, including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities.

8. Staff training and responsibilities

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions should receive appropriate training in:

- prevention and de-escalation;
- recognising triggers and early signs of distress;
- assessing risk;
- the lawful and safe use of reasonable force;
- appropriate alternatives to physical intervention;
- the specific needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities; and
- recording and reporting requirements.

The Headteacher will determine the training required according to the needs and risks within the School.

Where a child has an identified risk of requiring restrictive intervention, the School will consider whether additional staff training, individual planning or environmental adaptations are required.

Staff have a duty to use their professional judgement in an emergency. Where appropriately trained staff are not immediately available, any response must remain reasonable, proportionate and limited to the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or maintain safety.

9. Recording incidents

The School will maintain a clear written procedure for recording restrictive interventions.

Every significant incident involving the use of force must be recorded as soon as practicable and, wherever possible, on the same day.

The record will include, as a minimum:

- the name of the child;
- the name(s) of staff directly involved;
- the child's relevant needs or circumstances, including SEND where applicable;
- the date and time;
- the location;
- the approximate duration;
- what happened before and during the incident;
- known or possible triggers;
- preventative and de-escalation strategies attempted;
- the type and degree of force used, where applicable;
- why the intervention was considered necessary;
- any injury sustained; and
- any post-incident support or medical treatment provided.

Any injury must also be dealt with and recorded in accordance with the School's first-aid, accident and health and safety procedures.

All incidents of seclusion and restraint must also be recorded, including restraint which does not involve direct physical contact.

10. Informing parents/carers

Parents/carers will be informed **as soon as practicable and, wherever possible, on the same day** following a significant use of force, or an incident of seclusion or restraint, in accordance with the statutory requirements.

The information provided will include, as appropriate:

- the date, time and location;
- the approximate duration;
- why the intervention was considered necessary;
- the type and degree of force used, where applicable; and

- details of any injury sustained.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be invited to discuss the incident with the School.

Such discussions may consider:

- possible triggers or warning signs;
- the preventative and de-escalation strategies used;
- whether the child's Behaviour Support Plan was followed;
- what worked and what did not work; and
- whether changes should be made to the child's support or risk assessment.

Parental agreement to a planned intervention does **not** remove the School's obligation to record or report an incident when the statutory recording and reporting requirements apply.

11. After an incident

Following any significant restrictive intervention, the School will consider the wellbeing of the child, staff involved and any other children who witnessed the incident.

Where appropriate:

- the child will receive first aid or medical assessment;
- staff will be supported to reflect on the incident;
- the child will be given an opportunity to recover and, where developmentally appropriate, talk about what happened;
- relationships will be repaired and reassurance provided;
- parents/carers will be consulted;
- the Behaviour Support Plan or risk assessment will be reviewed; and
- any necessary safeguarding or health and safety action will be taken.

The purpose of review is not to assign blame but to understand what happened, identify learning and reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention being required again.

12. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and proprietor/governing body will monitor the use of restrictive interventions.

Records will be reviewed regularly to identify:

- recurring incidents or patterns;
- potential triggers;
- whether preventative strategies are effective;
- whether staff require further training;
- whether individual Behaviour Support Plans or risk assessments need to be amended; and
- whether there is any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions affecting children with SEND, disabilities or other protected or vulnerable characteristics.

The School will seek to reduce the need for restrictive interventions over time through effective relationships, early identification of need, preventative strategies, reasonable adjustments and appropriate support.

13. Complaints and allegations

Any complaint concerning the use of reasonable force or another restrictive intervention will be dealt with under the School's Complaints Procedure.

Any allegation that a member of staff has used inappropriate or unlawful force will be managed in accordance with the School's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and the procedures set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, including the school's procedures for allegations against staff.

14. Legal and guidance framework

This section should be read alongside:

- Department for Education, **Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools – Guidance for schools in England (April 2026)**;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including sections 93 and 93A;
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- the School's SEND Policy;
- the School's Behaviour Policy; and
- the School's Complaints Procedure.

This policy will be reviewed in response to changes in legislation or statutory guidance and as part of the School's normal policy review cycle.

Date: September 2026

Review: July 2027