

Lytham C of E Primary School



Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force

To inspire everyone in our school family to be the best they can be within our caring Christian community.

Our strap line is, 'Together We Grow With God'.

Lytham Church of England Primary School believes that all members of our school community have the right to a safe and positive educational environment where they can learn and thrive free from disruption, violence, discrimination, bullying and abuse. Every member of our school community has a responsibility to act in ways that uphold this commitment, in line with our school values.

This policy sets out our approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. The school recognises that restrictive interventions can have a significant physical and psychological impact on pupils and staff. They should therefore only ever be used as a last resort, when necessary, proportionate and lawful, and where less restrictive measures have been attempted or assessed as inappropriate in the circumstances.

Lytham Church of England Primary School is committed to:

- safeguarding the welfare, dignity and human rights of all members of our school community
- preventing and minimising the need for restrictive interventions
- supporting staff to meet the needs of all children
- working at a standard above basic compliance, exceeding statutory duties
- using data to continuously improve practice

Throughout this document we use the term ‘families’ to refer to pupils’ parents, carers or those with parental responsibility (PR).

Legal framework

This policy aligns with the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 2011
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools Regulations 2025 (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools: (2025)
- DfE Behaviour in Schools: (2024)
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice (2022)

Definitions

Restrictive intervention: any action that prevents, restricts, or subdues a pupil’s movement. This includes both physical and non-physical methods.

Reasonable force: physical force that is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances, used for the minimum time required.

Seclusion: keeping a pupil in a space away from other pupils and preventing them from leaving by physical obstruction, blocking, or implying consequences for attempting to leave.

Restraint: any intervention that immobilises a pupil or significantly limits their movement, with or without direct physical contact.

Significant incident: any incident where force is used beyond normal, appropriate physical contact

(as outlined below), including when force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Other physical contact with pupils

Lytham Church of England Primary School does not operate a “no contact” policy. Appropriate physical contact is sometimes necessary and can help safeguard pupils. Examples include:

- administering first aid
- guiding a pupil safely
- comforting a distressed child
- congratulating or praising a child
- demonstrating learning activities
- supporting physical techniques in PE

Staff must use professional judgement and consider:

- relevant school policies and safer-working guidance
- the context of the situation
- the child’s age, needs, vulnerabilities or trauma history
- whether a non-physical strategy could be used instead

De-escalation – preventing significant incidents

The school prioritises proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions, including:

- regulation and co-regulation strategies
- consistent routines and expectations
- trauma-informed practice
- environmental adaptations
- adaptive teaching
- early identification of SEND
- strengthening communication
- building strong relationships with pupils and families

Individual support may include regulation plans, sensory strategies, reasonable adjustments and work with external agencies.

De-escalation strategies may include:

- providing sensory or distraction activities
- removing distressing stimuli
- offering reassurance
- giving space and processing time
- changing staff support
- relocating other children if necessary
- using calm body language and tone
- using humour where appropriate

Sometimes de-escalation is not possible and immediate intervention is required to ensure safety.

Using restrictive intervention

Statutory power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in circumstances outlined in this policy. This applies on and off school premises, including during visits and activities.

When restrictive interventions may be used

According to DfE guidance (2026), restrictive interventions may only be used to prevent a child from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence (age 10 and above)
- causing serious damage to property
- causing significant disorder

Before intervening, staff must consider:

Necessity – Is immediate safety at risk? Have less restrictive options been attempted or ruled out?

Proportionality – Is this the least restrictive option? Is the minimum force being used for the shortest time?

Child welfare and dignity – What impact might the intervention have physically or emotionally?

Vulnerabilities/SEND – Are there additional factors influencing how the child experiences the intervention?

Equality implications – Could the intervention disproportionately affect pupils with protected characteristics?

Support during and after interventions

Staff must continually attempt de-escalation and monitor the child's wellbeing. Other staff should be called for support promptly.

After an intervention:

- children and staff must receive welfare checks
- medical assessment must be sought for any injury
- the child's voice must be captured safely
- staff must be supported and given time to record the incident
- risk assessments and regulation plans must be reviewed

Staff training

Staff likely to encounter situations requiring restrictive interventions will receive appropriate training.

Training includes:

- assessing necessity and proportionality
- risks to wellbeing
- the impact of trauma and SEND
- rapid professional decision-making

In emergencies, staff may need to act outside trained techniques, but must evidence why the response was necessary, proportionate and reasonable.

Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used when:

- a child is highly dysregulated **and**
- there is an immediate risk of harm to the child or others

Seclusion must:

- **never** be used as punishment or behaviour management
- be for the **shortest time possible**
- take place in a safe, appropriate environment
- involve continuous, active supervision
- be accompanied by ongoing attempts to de-escalate

After seclusion:

- staff and child de-briefing must occur
- regulation plans and risk assessments must be reviewed
- the event must be recorded and treated as a safeguarding incident

Unacceptable use of restrictive interventions

Restrictive interventions must **never** be used:

- as punishment
- to force compliance
- for staff convenience
- when no immediate risk of significant harm exists

Staff must not:

- use techniques affecting breathing, airway or circulation
- apply pressure to the neck, chest, abdomen
- cover a pupil's mouth or nose

- lift or carry a child except in an emergency

Any unacceptable practice or concerns must be reported through the school's safeguarding and allegations procedures.

Reporting and recording

All restrictive interventions are significant incidents.

Staff must:

- verbally inform senior leaders immediately
- record the incident **on the same day**, using CPOMS
- include required details such as triggers, de-escalation attempts, type of intervention, injuries and support provided

Families will be informed in writing and invited to discuss the incident where appropriate.

If informing families would place a child at risk, the school must follow safeguarding procedures and notify the local authority as required.

Post-incident support and review

The school will ensure:

Immediate checks

- medical and welfare checks for pupils and staff
- first aid and medical care as needed
- accurate recording of injuries

Emotional support

- access to pastoral support
- safe spaces and trusted adults
- support for any pupils who witnessed the event

Reflective de-brief

A structured review may include:

- what happened and why
- effectiveness of de-escalation attempts
- early warning signs
- adjustments to future strategies

Children's views will be gathered appropriately. Staff not involved in the incident should facilitate de-briefs where possible.

All relevant documentation (risk assessments, plans) will be reviewed and updated.

The school is committed to repairing relationships through restorative approaches.

Monitoring and escalation

School leaders will monitor incidents for:

- patterns
- emerging risks
- training needs
- quality of practice

Data will be shared with governors through termly safeguarding and behaviour reports.

Repeated incidents or concerning patterns will trigger further review, possible involvement of external agencies, and safeguarding or SEND escalation where appropriate.

Signed: **Miss Hannah Davies, Headteacher**

Date: **April 2026**

Review: **September 2027**

Agreed by the Governors: July 2026