POLICY ON REASONABLE FORCE AND RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS

APRIL 2026

REVIEWED

APRIL 2027

Albrighton Primary School and Nursery Policy on Reasonable Force & Restrictive Interventions

(Including CPI Crisis Prevention Intervention® Principles)
Effective from April 2026

---

1. Introduction

This policy outlines how our school meets the requirements of the **DfE statutory guidance "Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools"**, which becomes effective **1 April 2026** and replaces the 2013 guidance. [gov.uk], [wslaw.co.uk]

The new framework introduces **clearer definitions**, **strengthened safeguarding expectations**, and **new statutory duties to record and report** significant incidents involving force, restraint, or seclusion. [safeguardi...upport.com], [wslaw.co.uk]

This policy applies to all school staff, leadership, governors, volunteers and external professionals working with pupils.

---

2. Key Principles

Our school operates under the following principles, drawn directly from the DfE guidance and CPI's prevention focused philosophy:

- Restrictive interventions should be **minimised wherever possible**, with prevention and de-escalation as core practice. [safeguardi...upport.com]
- Any use of force must be:
    - **Lawful**
    - **Necessary**
    - **Proportionate**
    - **Used for the minimum time** required to reduce risk [safeguardi...upport.com]
- Restraint must **never** be used as punishment. [safeguardi...upport.com]
- Safeguarding, dignity and emotional wellbeing must always be prioritised.
- CPI's focus on **safety for all**, **least restrictive intervention**, and **professional, respectful practice** is embedded throughout this policy.

---

3. Definitions

3.1 Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the minimum physical intervention needed to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others

- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing serious disorder among pupils [safeguardi...upport.com]

3.2 Restrictive Interventions

These include:

- Physical restraint
- Reasonable force
- Seclusion
- Non-force restraint (e.g., removing a walking aid) [forbessoli...tors.co.uk]

3.3 Seclusion

A pupil being supervised alone in a room or area from which they cannot freely leave. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

---

4. When Staff May Use Reasonable Force

Staff may use reasonable force **only** when necessary to prevent:

- Harm to the pupil or others
- Serious property damage
- A criminal offence
- Serious disorder in the school environment [safeguardi...upport.com]

Force may **not** be used to enforce compliance without risk or as a disciplinary measure.

---

5. Prohibited Practices

In line with statutory safeguarding expectations, staff must **not**:

- Use holds that restrict breathing or circulation
- Apply pressure to the **neck, nose, mouth, or abdomen**
- Intentionally hold a pupil on the ground
- Use force as punishment or for convenience
- Use a restraint or hold for longer than necessary.
  These prohibitions reflect recognised risks outlined in the updated DfE guidance. [safeguardi...upport.com]

---

6. Prevention, De-Escalation & Whole-School Support

The guidance places strong emphasis on early intervention, emotional regulation and relationship based practice. [wslaw.co.uk]

Our school will:

- Use early identification of triggers
- Use an approach that seeks to prevent the use of physical intervention wherever possible, so that physical intervention is used **as a last resort**
- Apply de-escalation strategies before any restrictive intervention
- Promote staff training in verbal and non-verbal calming strategies
- Implement individual behaviour support plans for children identified with specific needs
- Foster a relational, trauma-informed environment

---

7. Pupils with SEND

The DfE stresses enhanced consideration for pupils with SEND when assessing risk or selecting strategies. [assets.pub…ice.gov.uk]

Staff must ensure:

- Children's individual needs are identified, understood and planned for.
- Adjustments are made under and in-line with the Equality Act 2010
- Personalised regulation strategies are used to meet the needs of individual children
- Collaboration with the SENDCo / SEND Staff (including assistant SENDCos and HUB staff)
- Awareness and understanding of how SEND needs impact behaviour, or responses that could be perceived as behaviour, and the knowledge and understanding that how children respond to a given situation may look very different from child to child.

---

8. CPI Crisis Prevention Intervention® Principles (Fully Integrated)

Our school uses the CPI framework to guide safe practice that aligns directly with national statutory expectations.

8.1 CPI Principle 1 — Safety for All

CPI emphasises ensuring the physical and emotional safety of pupils and staff. This aligns with DfE expectations that restrictive interventions be lawful, proportionate and focused solely on reducing immediate harm. [safeguardi…upport.com], [assets.pub…ice.gov.uk]

8.2 CPI Principle 2 — Prevention First

CPI teaches that prevention and early support are the foundation of safety. This supports the DfE's clear requirement for **proactive minimisation of restrictive interventions** and prioritising de-escalation. [safeguardi...upport.com], [wslaw.co.uk]

8.3 CPI Principle 3 — Least Restrictive Intervention

Staff must use the least restrictive option capable of keeping people safe. This is consistent with the expectation that force be **necessary**, **proportionate**, and **time-limited**. [safeguardi...upport.com]

8.4 CPI Principle 4 — Respect & Dignity

CPI reinforces non-threatening communication and dignity-preserving interactions. This aligns with the DfE's emphasis on welfare, safeguarding and relationship-based practice. [wslaw.co.uk]

8.5 CPI Principle 5 — Professional, Reflective Practice

CPI stresses emotional regulation, consistency and professionalism during incidents. This directly supports the DfE's requirement for **clear documentation**, oversight, and safeguarding accountability. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk], [securicare.com]

8.6 CPI Principle 6 — Post-Incident Support

CPI encourages structured debriefing for pupils and staff.
This reflects DfE guidance that pupils may require medical assessment and emotional support following incidents. [safeguardi...upport.com]

---

9. Staff Training

Staff training will cover:

- CPI-aligned de-escalation and safety techniques
- Safe decision-making under the DfE legal framework
- Avoidance of prohibited restraint positions
- Trauma-informed practice
- Accurate incident recording and reporting
- Understanding of different SEND needs and how they impact on behaviour (or perceived behaviour).

DfE guidance requires schools to strengthen staff training in these areas. [wslaw.co.uk]

---

10. Recording Significant Incidents (Statutory Requirement)

From **April 2026**, schools **must** keep a written record of every "significant incident" involving force. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

Each record must include:

- Time, date, location and duration
- Why the intervention was necessary
- De-escalation attempts made
- Type and degree of force used
- Injuries sustained if applicable
- Pupil's SEND status
  These minimum requirements are specified in the new statutory framework. [forbessoli...tors.co.uk]

Records should be created **as soon as possible**, ideally **within the same day**. [securicare.com]

---

11. Reporting to Parents (Statutory Requirement)

Parents must receive written notification **as soon as practicable and no later than the same day**, unless doing so would likely cause serious harm. [wslaw.co.uk]

In cases of seclusion or non-force restraint, formal written information **must** be provided. [forbessoli...tors.co.uk]

---

12. Medical Assessment After Incidents

Pupils involved in restrictive interventions may require medical assessment, as some injuries may not be immediately apparent. This requirement is highlighted in the DfE guidance. [safeguardi...upport.com]

---

13. Monitoring, Oversight & Data Review

Governors and leadership must ensure systems to:

- Review incident patterns
- Analyse data for safeguarding risks
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties
- Update policies and practice

These expectations stem from the updated legal framework. [wslaw.co.uk]

---

14. Complaints and Allegations

Concerns or allegations about misuse of force are handled according to the school's safeguarding and complaints procedures. The DfE guidance stresses transparency and alignment with statutory processes. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]

---

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- New DfE guidance is issued
- Monitoring indicates updates are needed

Appendices-

Appendix 1

Serious Incident Form – Safety Intervention Restraint

CPI Guiding Principle:

CARE WELFARE SAFETY SECURITY

Child's Name_____

Date _____ **Time**_____ **Duration** _____

Staff members involved:

Name_____ **Signature**

Name_____ **Signature**

Antecedent (What happened before the behaviour?) **Describe the context or situation immediately before the behaviour occurred.**

Behaviour -What did the pupil do? - Describe only the observable actions, without emotional labels or interpretation.

What verbal deescalation strategies did you use?

How did the behaviour escalate? What led to the need for a restraint?

What restraint(s) were used? Please circle

- Young person's seated: Low level Medium Level High Level
- Young person's standing: Low Level Medium Level High Level
- Children's standing: Low Level Medium Level High Level
- Children's seated chair: Low Level Medium Level High Level
- Children seated floor: Low Level Medium Level High Level

- Transition

Additional Comments:

Was the child injured in any way?

Actions following the event in the short term:

Long term action or learning:

Have the parents and carers of the child been informed? When? How? By who?

Any comments following the conversation with parents/carers

Signed: Date:

Headteacher

Signed: Date:

Chair of Governors

Appendix 2

Trauma-Informed Guide for Completing the Serious Incident Form – Safety Intervention Restraint

A trauma-informed approach emphasises **safety, dignity, emotional regulation and understanding**. The purpose of this guidance is to support staff to record incidents clearly, non-judgementally, and in ways that respect the young person's experience.

---

1. Antecedent

Prompt on form: *What happened before the behaviour? Describe the context or situation immediately before the behaviour occurred*.

How to write this trauma-informed:

- Be factual and neutral – avoid assumptions about intent.
- Consider sensory, relational, environmental or emotional triggers.
- Note any known trauma-sensitive factors (e.g., changes in routine, transitions, conflict, overwhelm).
- Record what adults were doing and any demands placed on the pupil.

Examples of trauma-informed phrasing:

- "The classroom environment became louder, and the pupil appeared increasingly tense."
- "A sudden change in activity was communicated, which may have created uncertainty."
- "The pupil was asked to stop an activity they were highly focused on."

---

2. Behaviour – Observable Actions Only

Prompt: *What did the pupil do? Describe only observable actions, without emotional labels or interpretation*.

How to write this trauma-informed:

- Describe **only actions**, not motives ("hit table with hands", not "was angry").
- Avoid judgemental language ("non-compliant", "defiant").
- Focus on behaviour that you directly witnessed.

Examples of neutral, trauma-informed phrasing:

- "Pupil pushed the chair backwards and raised their voice."
- "Pupil moved quickly toward the door and attempted to leave the area."

---

3. Verbal De-escalation Strategies Used