



Positive Handling and Restrictive Intervention Policy

At Churnet View Middle School, our vision is to inspire, nurture and enable every child to excel and fulfil their potential. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where all pupils are treated with dignity, respect and care. This policy reflects the school's restorative, relational and trauma-informed approach to behaviour and supports our commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and positive behaviour support.

The school recognises that behaviour is a form of communication and that pupils may display behaviours associated with distress, anxiety, trauma, communication difficulties, special educational needs, disabilities, unmet emotional needs or safeguarding concerns. Staff will seek to understand the underlying reasons for behaviour and adopt supportive approaches aimed at helping pupils regulate, engage and succeed.

The school is committed to reducing the need for restrictive intervention through preventative practice, positive relationships, effective communication and early support. Restrictive intervention, including the use of reasonable force, will only be used where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to maintain safety. Every effort will be made to use the least restrictive response for the shortest possible period.

Restrictive interventions can be distressing for pupils, staff and families. The school therefore places significant emphasis on prevention, de-escalation and post-incident reflection to minimise the need for intervention and continually improve practice. The welfare of the child remains paramount. All decisions made under this policy will seek to balance the rights, dignity and wellbeing of the individual pupil with the safety and wellbeing of others.

Definitions

Positive Handling

Positive handling describes a range of supportive responses designed to maintain safety and wellbeing. Positive handling may include verbal support, reassurance, redirection, de-escalation, safe escorting, guiding away from danger and, where necessary, physical intervention. Positive handling does not automatically involve physical contact.

Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention is any intervention that intentionally prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom of action.

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the minimum amount of force necessary, applied for the shortest period required, to prevent injury, damage to property, criminal behaviour or serious disorder. Any force used must be reasonable, proportionate, necessary and lawful.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving through physical obstruction, blocking or making them believe they would be punished if they attempted to leave. Seclusion will never be used as a punishment and will only be considered where necessary to prevent harm.

Core Values and Positive Handling

The school's core values underpin all interactions between staff and pupils. Positive handling is based on the belief that positive relationships, consistency, trust and mutual respect provide the strongest foundations for a safe and successful learning environment. Staff are expected to build supportive relationships with pupils, maintain high expectations and promote emotional regulation through calm, predictable and nurturing approaches.

When responding to incidents of distress or dysregulation, staff will seek to preserve dignity, minimise anxiety and maintain positive relationships. Interventions should support pupils to regain emotional regulation and successfully return to learning and wider school life.

The school does not operate a "no contact" policy. There are occasions when appropriate physical contact is both necessary and beneficial, including providing comfort, guidance, reassurance, first aid, safeguarding support or assistance with emotional regulation. Any physical contact will always be appropriate to the circumstances and in the best interests of the pupil.

Guiding Principles

The school's approach is founded on safeguarding, inclusion and respect for the dignity and welfare of every pupil. Restrictive intervention should always be viewed as a last resort and should never replace effective behaviour management, restorative practice, reasonable adjustments or proactive support.

When considering intervention, staff should ask whether the proposed action is necessary, proportionate and likely to reduce risk. Staff should continually assess whether alternative approaches would be more effective and should withdraw restrictive interventions as soon as it is safe to do so.

The school's decision-making is underpinned by:

- Safeguarding first.
- Prevention before intervention.
- Pupils' rights, dignity and welfare.
- Trauma-informed practice.
- Restorative and relational approaches.
- Inclusive practice.
- Least restrictive responses.
- Proportionate decision-making.
- Multi-agency collaboration where appropriate.

Preventative and Relational Practice

At Churnet View Middle School, we believe the most effective way to reduce the need for restrictive intervention is through strong relationships, consistent expectations and a culture in which pupils feel safe, valued and understood. Staff are expected to recognise that behaviour may be an expression of need and to seek to understand the factors contributing to a pupil's presentation.

The school promotes a proactive approach to behaviour support through high-quality teaching, effective pastoral support and early intervention. Every reasonable effort will be made to identify triggers, recognise early warning signs and intervene before behaviour escalates. Restrictive interventions should remain rare and only occur when other strategies are ineffective or impractical in the circumstances.

Examples of preventative practice include:

- Positive teacher-pupil relationships.
- Consistent routines and expectations.
- Restorative conversations.
- Positive recognition and praise.
- Learning Plans and Behaviour Support Plans.
- Reasonable adjustments for SEND.
- Sensory and emotional regulation strategies.
- Early Help interventions.
- Multi-agency working.
- Identification of patterns and triggers.

Individual Behaviour Support and Risk Management

Where a pupil presents an increased risk of behaviour that may result in restrictive intervention, the school will adopt an individualised approach to support and risk reduction. The purpose of this planning is to maximise the pupil's opportunity for success by understanding individual needs, reducing triggers and ensuring staff responses remain consistent and supportive.

Planning should focus on strengths as well as needs and should clearly identify strategies that help the pupil remain regulated, safe and engaged. Parents, carers, pupils and relevant professionals should be involved wherever practicable. Collaborative planning helps ensure that support is appropriate, consistent and effective.

The school may develop:

- Positive Handling Plans.
- Behaviour Support Plans/Action Plans.
- Learning Plans.
- Individual Risk Assessments.

These plans may identify communication preferences, sensory needs, known triggers, effective de-escalation strategies, environmental adjustments and agreed responses during periods of heightened distress. Plans will be reviewed regularly and following any significant incident.

Behaviour Escalation Framework

The school's Behaviour and Attitudes Escalation Framework provides a structured approach to behaviour support and intervention. Staff should seek to follow the framework consistently and should always prioritise preventative and restorative approaches wherever circumstances allow.

The framework encourages staff to support pupils through graduated intervention and reflection before behaviour reaches crisis point.

Stages include:

- Remind
- Refocus
- Reflect
- Remove
- Reset

Restrictive intervention should only be considered where these strategies have been exhausted, where immediate risks prevent their use or where delaying action would place someone at risk of harm.

Circumstances Where Restrictive Intervention May Be Used

There may be occasions when school staff need to make immediate decisions to maintain safety. Restrictive intervention should only be used when a member of staff reasonably believes that intervention is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances. The intervention must cease as soon as the risk has reduced.

Restrictive intervention may be used to:

- Prevent injury to a pupil.
- Prevent injury to another person.
- Prevent serious damage to property.
- Prevent serious disorder.
- Prevent significant disorder affecting the safe running of the school.
- Prevent a pupil from placing themselves at significant risk.
- Prevent the commission of a criminal offence.

Examples may include physical assaults, serious self-injurious behaviour, throwing dangerous objects, attempts to access unsafe locations or behaviour presenting an immediate risk of significant harm. Each incident will be judged on its own individual circumstances.

Prohibited Practices

The school will never use restrictive intervention as a punishment. Interventions that deliberately cause pain, humiliation, degradation, fear or distress are wholly unacceptable and contrary to the values of the school.

The following practices are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment.
- Use of force as punishment.
- Deliberate humiliation or degrading treatment.
- Any intervention intended to cause pain.
- Pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen.
- Restriction of breathing.
- Covering a pupil's mouth or nose.
- Excessive or disproportionate force.

Restrictive interventions must never compromise a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation. If a pupil is unintentionally brought to the ground, staff must seek to move to a safer position as quickly as possible and discontinue the intervention when safe to do so.

Pupils with SEND and Additional Vulnerabilities

The school recognises that some pupils with SEND may experience heightened levels of anxiety, sensory overload, communication difficulties or emotional dysregulation. Behaviours that appear challenging may reflect confusion, distress, unmet need or barriers to communication rather than deliberate non-compliance. Staff will therefore seek to understand the underlying causes of behaviour and respond accordingly.

Consideration should be given to pupils with autism, ADHD, speech and language difficulties, learning difficulties, SEMH needs, medical conditions, experiences of trauma and looked after or previously looked after status. Staff should draw upon professional advice, parental knowledge and individual support plans when determining the most appropriate response.

Where there is an identified risk that restrictive intervention may be required, appropriate planning and risk assessments will be implemented. The school will work closely with families and external professionals to develop proactive support strategies and reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention being required.

Recording and Reporting

Accurate recording is an essential safeguard for pupils and staff. Recording helps the school understand behaviour patterns, evaluate practice, identify training needs and ensure legal compliance. All incidents involving restrictive intervention, reasonable force, restraint or seclusion will be recorded as soon as practicable and normally on the same day.

Records must include:

- Names of pupils and staff directly involved.

- Date, time and location.
- Approximate duration.
- Relevant SEND needs or vulnerabilities.
- Triggers.
- Preventative and de-escalation strategies attempted.
- Nature of the intervention.
- Reasons why intervention was necessary.
- Injuries or medical concerns.
- Post-incident support provided.
- Outcomes and follow-up actions.

Parents or carers will be informed in writing as soon as practicable and wherever possible on the same day. Where appropriate, the school will offer a follow-up discussion to review the incident, discuss support strategies and consider any amendments to support plans.

Any safeguarding concerns identified during or after an incident must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Recording and Reporting of Seclusion

Any use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with statutory requirements. Seclusion will only ever be used as a safety measure and never as a disciplinary sanction. Parents or carers will be informed as soon as practicable and normally on the same day.

Post-Incident Support and Restorative Practice

Following any incident involving positive handling or restrictive intervention, the school will undertake a restorative review once all parties are safe and emotionally regulated. The purpose of this process is to understand what happened, identify contributing factors, repair relationships and reduce the likelihood of future incidents. The school recognises that restrictive interventions may have an emotional impact on pupils, staff and witnesses and therefore places significant importance on effective post-incident support.

Where appropriate, pupils and staff involved will receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries sustained. Any injuries will be managed and recorded in accordance with the school's health and safety procedures.

Pupils will be supported to reflect on the incident, express their views and contribute to future planning. Staff will be offered opportunities for professional reflection, debriefing and wellbeing support. Wherever possible, restorative discussions should be facilitated by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident.

Following significant incidents, consideration may be given to:

- Reviewing Behaviour Support Plans.
- Reviewing Positive Handling Plans.

- Reviewing Risk Assessments.
- Reviewing reasonable adjustments.
- Additional safeguarding actions.
- Multi-agency involvement.

Safeguarding

The use of restrictive intervention must always be viewed through a safeguarding lens. Whilst intervention may occasionally be necessary to maintain immediate safety, repeated incidents may indicate unmet need, emerging vulnerability or wider safeguarding concerns requiring further exploration. Restrictive intervention should therefore never be considered separately from the school's safeguarding, inclusion and SEND responsibilities.

Following any incident, staff should consider whether additional support, assessment or intervention may be required. Any safeguarding concerns identified during or after an incident must be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENDCo will regularly review incident records alongside attendance, behaviour and safeguarding information. This process supports the identification of patterns, emerging risks and any disproportionate use of restrictive intervention amongst groups of pupils. Findings will inform training, policy development and targeted support planning.

Equality and Inclusion

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils are treated fairly, consistently and with dignity. When making decisions, consideration will be given to:

- Disability.
- SEND.
- Age.
- Sex.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Other protected characteristics.

Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever appropriate and monitoring information will be used to identify any equality concerns requiring further investigation or action.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Board, or sooner if changes in legislation, statutory guidance or local circumstances necessitate revision.