



**Physical Intervention & Use of
Reasonable Force Policy
Policy**

Agreed at FGB March 2026

'Learn to Love and Love to Learn'

Our school is an integral part of our village and everyone within this community is valued and nurtured as part of our school family and God's family. Christian teaching and values are at the heart of all we do, to ensure that we develop well-motivated, independent, happy children who aspire to achieve their best in all they do, respecting and valuing themselves and others.

'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' Matthew 22:39

At Long Sutton C of E Primary School, we strive to provide a caring ethos where everyone in the school community feels loved, safe, confident, valued and respected by promoting an environment where everyone can live and work together in a supportive way to develop self-motivation and self discipline enabling them to be the best they can be emotionally, socially and intellectually; achieving all they want to in life.

1. Introduction

Long Sutton Primary School is committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where children learn, feel respected, and build positive relationships. While our approach prioritises prevention, early intervention and de-escalation, there may be rare circumstances when staff need to use **reasonable force** or other **restrictive interventions** to prevent harm.

This policy complies fully with the DfE statutory guidance **Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools** (effective 1 April 2026).

The guidance establishes that restrictive interventions must always be:

- **Necessary**
- **Proportionate**
- Used for the **minimum amount of time**

The school recognises that restrictive interventions can have significant emotional and physical impact on pupils and staff and therefore must only be used when absolutely essential.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

It is underpinned by the following statutory guidance:

- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education'

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 & 93A)

Staff have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing serious disorder
- Damaging property

Section 93A underpins the statutory duty to record and report significant incidents involving force.

DfE Statutory Guidance Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)

Page 14 contains statutory requirements that schools *must* follow, including recording and reporting duties.

Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) Regulations 2025

From April 2026, schools must:

- Record every **significant incident** involving reasonable force, restraint (including non-force restraint), or seclusion.
- Provide **same-day written notification to parents** wherever practicable.

3. Definitions

Reasonable Force

Force that is necessary, proportionate and used for the shortest possible duration to prevent harm. It must never be used as punishment.

Restrictive Intervention

Umbrella term for actions — physical or non-physical — that restrict movement to prevent harm.

Significant Incident

An incident involving force beyond “appropriate physical contact” (e.g., first aid or comforting), triggering statutory recording/reporting duties.

Seclusion

A non-disciplinary safety measure used only to prevent harm when a pupil is dysregulated, and never as a punishment.

Positive Handling

Positive Handling is *the positive application of the minimum reasonable force*, used only as a last resort, to prevent a pupil from harming themselves, harming others, or causing serious damage to property.

4. Principles at Long Sutton Primary

- **Child-centred approach** - Pupil dignity, safety, emotional wellbeing and rights are central to all decisions. Interventions must account for age, understanding and individual need.
- **Minimum necessary intervention** - Staff must use the **least restrictive option** and for the **least amount of time**.
- **Never used as punishment** - Force cannot be used to enforce compliance or discipline.
- **Prevention first** - The school prioritises early help, de-escalation and positive behaviour strategies.
- **Staff must avoid dangerous techniques** - Staff must never use holds or positions that affect breathing or circulation, including pressure to the neck, nose, mouth or abdomen.

5. SEND and Vulnerability Considerations

Staff must consider a pupil's SEND profile, communication needs, sensory triggers, and vulnerabilities before deciding whether any restrictive intervention is appropriate.

Where pupils have known risks, the school will create individual risk-reduction plans and involve parents in their development.

6. When Restrictive Intervention May Be Used

Intervention may only occur when:

- A pupil is at risk of injuring themselves or others
- Serious property damage is likely

- A criminal offence may occur
- There is risk of serious disorder
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Interventions must be proportionate to the situation and used only as a **last resort**.

Positive Handling

The school prioritises prevention and de-escalation before any physical intervention. Staff are expected to assess whether a situation can be resolved without physical contact, using strategies such as recognising early signs of distress, communicating empathetically, and adjusting the environment to reduce triggers.

Teaching staff should respond to behaviour in a way that reflects each pupil's individual needs, including their behavioural patterns, medical conditions, and support requirements.

Physical intervention or reasonable force will not be used unless absolutely necessary. Before intervening, staff consider whether:

- Verbal de-escalation may work
- Environmental triggers can be removed
- The pupil can leave the situation independently
- The pupil has conditions that make physical intervention unsafe
- Staff have the training, ability and support to intervene safely

Reasonable force is avoided unless there is immediate risk of harm, serious property damage, or dangerous disruption. In urgent situations requiring rapid action—such as preventing a pupil from running into a road or stopping a violent fight—staff may use necessary physical intervention and will not be penalised.

Positive handling is always a last resort, used only to prevent harm, and aims to restore verbal control and help the pupil regain self-control. It is never used as a form of punishment or routine behaviour management.

De-escalation

The school employs a range of de-escalation strategies designed to prevent incidents from escalating and to support pupils in regulating their emotions safely and respectfully. Staff use active listening to acknowledge pupils' feelings and demonstrate understanding, maintain a calm and non-threatening presence, and offer positive, solution-focused choices to help pupils feel empowered rather than controlled. Techniques such as distraction, asking supportive questions, and choosing not to escalate minor issues are used to redirect behaviour constructively.

Staff also use non-threatening body language, calm low-level verbal communication at the pupil's height and agreed school scripts—including structured phrasing that acknowledges emotions, offers help, and guides the pupil towards a safe space.

Where appropriate, other children may be removed from the area to reduce risk or prevent further escalation.

These approaches ensure that staff prioritise emotional regulation, safety, and dignity, using consistent, proactive, and child-centred strategies in line with the school's behaviour policy.

7. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff

- Use de-escalation techniques as the first response
- Only use restrictive intervention when absolutely necessary
- Ensure another adult witnesses the intervention where possible
- Report and record the incident immediately after
- Pass incident details to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Headteacher

- Ensures staff training is up to date
- Oversees incident reporting, parent communication and follow-up
- Ensures compliance with statutory guidance
- Reviews patterns and ensures governors receive required information

Governing Body

- Ensures the school meets statutory duties
- Receives anonymised reports of incidents to monitor trends
- Ensures policies remain compliant with current legislation

8. Recording and Reporting Procedures

In line with statutory requirements:

Recording

The school must record every **significant incident** involving:

- Reasonable force
- Restraint (including non-force restraint)
- Seclusion

Records must include:

- Time, date, location, duration
- Why the intervention was necessary
- De-escalation attempted beforehand
- Type and degree of force used

- Injuries or follow-up care

Reporting to Parents

Parents must receive a **written report** as soon as practicable, ideally on the **same day**.

Internal Oversight

The Headteacher and safeguarding team will review incidents to identify patterns, training needs or safeguarding concerns.

9. Post-Incident Support

After any incident involving reasonable force, the school ensures that all pupils and staff receive prompt first aid for any injuries and appropriate emotional support. Staff and pupils involved are given separate opportunities to reflect on the incident.

Pupils are supported to understand why the intervention was used, reassured that it was a safety measure rather than a punishment, and guided to reflect on what happened, how they felt, what triggered the situation, how staff actions affected them, and what could be done differently in the future.

Staff are also encouraged to reflect on their actions and are reassured, where appropriate, that they acted in good faith and in the best interests of pupil safety. This reflective process promotes learning, emotional regulation, and improved future responses for both pupils and staff.

10. Training

All staff receive annual training, including:

- De-escalation strategies
- Understanding triggers and pupil needs
- Safe, lawful restrictive intervention
- When and how to record/report incidents

Additional training may be provided for staff working with pupils at higher risk of dysregulation, where necessary.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes. Governors will be updated regularly on incident data (non-identified) to ensure safeguarding oversight.