POLICY: POSITIVE HANDLING

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VERSION CONTROL

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1. Introduction and aims

1.1. This is the Restrictive Interventions (Positive Handling) Policy of Norwich Steiner School.

1.2. The School is committed to creating a safe, and supportive environment. Our primary goal is to minimise the use of restrictive interventions through early support, prevention, and de-escalation.

1.3. The aims of this policy are as follows:

1.3.1. To explain how the School promotes good behaviour and, where necessary, uses restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, non-physical restraint and seclusion, in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and applicable legislation.

1.3.2. To set out definitions, decision-making principles, unacceptable practices and our statutory recording and reporting duties so that staff and parents understand when and how much measures may be used, and how we reduce their use over time.

2. Scope and Application

2.1. This policy applies to all of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and visiting students. It applies whenever members of staff are lawfully in charge of our students, including while on school trips.

2.2. This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record and report on the use of force and seclusion at school and to provide further information about how School staff use these powers safely and appropriately.

3. Regulatory Framework

3.1. This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2025);
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

3.2. This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, April 2026) ● Behaviour in Schools – Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (DfE, 2024)
- Screening, Searching and Confiscation – Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE, updated July 2023)
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, 2026)
- Safer Recruitment Consortium 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults working with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (February 2022)

4. Definitions

Restrictive intervention:

"any action that prevents, restricts, or subdues a pupil's movement (or part of the body), including physical and non-physical measures, used to reduce immediate risk of harm to themselves or others".

Reasonable force:

"the minimum degree of physical force necessary, used for the least time, to prevent immediate risk of harm or to conduct a lawful search for a statutorily prohibited item".

Restraint:

"a form of restrictive intervention involving the use of force to hold back, physically prevent, or otherwise restrict a pupil's movement; this includes non-physical restraint (e.g., removal of a mobility aid)".

Seclusion:

"a non-disciplinary, time-limited safety measure in which a pupil is supervised away from others to reduce immediate risk of harm; it must never be used or threatened as punishment".

Significant incident:

"any use of force that goes beyond appropriate physical contact, including where the degree, duration or context of force is more than minimal. Staff will use proactive strategies and de-escalation wherever possible; restrictive interventions are used only when necessary, proportionate and time-limited to address an immediate risk of harm. We communicate this policy to staff, pupils and parents as part of our behaviour culture".

5. Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management

5.1. We will reduce the need for restrictive interventions through consistent, whole-school measures that promote safety, predictability and inclusion for all pupils. Whole school measures include:

- Having clear, positively framed routines and expectations taught through PSHE lessons and a curriculum that builds social, emotional and self-regulation skills.
- Creating a predictable School and classroom environment by modelling respectful interactions and enforcing expectations of appropriate behaviour around school; consistent application of the School's Behaviour Policy

- Practising restorative approaches including the use of recognition and reinforcement of positive behaviours and restorative conversations to rebuild relationships following incidents and build trust.

- Ensuring staff receive regular training and reminders of specific pupil needs or emerging needs in the School.

- Ensuring staff receive regular updates and professional development as required with regard to changes to School policy and procedure due to guidance changes or changes following an internal review.

- Monitoring behaviour and restrictive-intervention data to identify patterns, triggers, and disproportionality to inform improvement planning, environmental adjustments and staff training. The school management team will monitor the use of force, seclusion and restraint, reporting any patterns or trends to the Trustees.

- Communicating with parents and pupils, providing clear information on our approach to behaviour and safety and providing opportunities to share pupil preferences, regulation strategies and communication needs as required in individual behaviour support plans.

6. Physical contact with pupils

6.1. The School does not operate a "no contact" policy. Staff may make appropriate, non-force physical contact in context (e.g., first aid, assisting with personal care in line with care plans, guiding a pupil, comforting a distressed pupil, or demonstrating activities for example, to demonstrate technique in the use of a piece of equipment, adjust posture, or support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury), consistent with discharging safeguarding duties.

6.2. It is recognised in the EYFS that there will be times when staff are required to have close physical contact with a child including intimate care. It is also important for the children to feel safe, secure and cared for in their environment. We understand that children can react differently to physical contact and we respect this. If a child is very upset then the adult must ask the child if they want comfort. Should a child be particularly clingy with one member of staff for a longer period than is considered appropriate or they require more physical contact than what is normally needed for care practices, parents will be informed on the same day.

6.3. Staff should refer to the Staff Code of Conduct for further information and guidance. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and the circumstances must be reported as a Low level Concerns as soon as possible.

7. When restrictive interventions may be used

7.1. Like all schools, we reserve the right for our staff to use reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil in specific circumstances. Staff may use restrictive interventions only when necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others;

- seriously damaging property where this creates a risk to safety; or
- posing an immediate risk of disorder that presents a risk of harm.

7.2. Any intervention used will be the least restrictive option likely to be effective and used for the minimum time to reduce the immediate risk.

7.3. Before intervening, and while an intervention is ongoing, staff will always consider:

- Necessity: Is there an immediate risk of harm that cannot be addressed safely by de-escalation or other less restrictive alternatives?
- Proportionality: Is the degree and duration of restriction the minimum necessary to reduce the risk?
- Welfare and context: Has the pupil's age, size, medical conditions, SEND, trauma, dignity, communication needs and the environment been considered?

7.4. Staff will pause or stop where the intervention escalates the risk. It is unlawful to use force as punishment. Staff will not restrain a pupil in a way that affects the airway, breathing or circulation (for example, pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen, or covering the mouth or nose). Prone or ground restraints carry elevated risk and will be avoided wherever possible; if a pupil is taken to the ground, staff will release or reposition as quickly as possible. Holds designed to inflict pain will not be used and staff will immediately ensure that a medical assessment is undertaken where any injury may have occurred.

7.5. All of our staff are trained in the circumstances in which reasonable minimum force may be used, both as part of their induction and through Step On training. Staff likely to use restrictive interventions will receive relevant training, including prevention and de-escalation. The school will undertake risk assessments to support staff to act safely and lawfully, in line with our duty to protect staff health, safety and welfare.

7.6. In particular, they are advised always to use their voices first and to use the minimum force necessary to restrain a pupil for the shortest possible period of time. The use of force can include either passive contact (such as standing between pupils or blocking a path) or active contact (such as leading a pupil by the arm away from a situation).

7.7. Members of staff (including non-teaching staff) may use reasonable force at any time off the School premises when they have lawful charge of the pupil elsewhere (e.g. on a school trip or other authorised out of School activity).

8. Recording and reporting

8.1. The School will record and report restrictive interventions, including significant uses of force, seclusion and non-physical contact.

8.2. Incidents will be recorded as soon as practicable, and where possible the same day. The staff member directly involved will make a record on CPOMS. Additionally, the member of staff who enforced the intervention or seclusion must complete the Restrictive Interventions Recording Form. Each record will include:

- the names of staff and pupils involved;
- details of the pupil's needs/SEND status, if any;
- the time, date, location and duration of the incident;
- a description of the incident;
- details of any de-escalation attempted;
- the type and degree of force used;
- the rationale for necessity and proportionality;
- any injuries sustained and medical attention provided;
- details of any post-incident support and/or follow-up provided and/or required;
- any additional information which could support the evaluation of incidents such as witnesses' accounts of what happened; and
- the time and date on which the incident was reported to parents.

8.3. Incidents will be reported to parents as soon as practicable, in writing and, where possible, the same day or as soon as is reasonably practicable. The report will include:

- the time/date/location/duration of the incident,
- details of why the use of force was necessary,
- the type and degree of force used, and
- details of any injuries sustained, if applicable.

8.4. Parents may be invited to the School, so that we can, if necessary, agree a plan for managing their child's behaviour.

8.5. There are limited exceptions to this procedure where safeguarding is a consideration and there is any risk that reporting the incident would likely result in serious harm.

8.6. The School will ensure that records kept will be accurate, factual and completed by any staff involved. We will retain records in line with our retention schedule.

9. Support following an incident

9.1. The immediate focus following an incident will be on the wellbeing and safety of any pupils and staff involved. The School will provide medical assessment/treatment for injuries where appropriate and, once appropriate to do so, will facilitate a debrief conversation(s) with the pupil and involved staff led by a non-involved member of staff to learn and repair relationships. The School will provide ongoing wellbeing support for pupils, staff, and any witnesses as needed.

9.2. As soon as practicable the School will evaluate the incident to understand why it occurred and identify how to reduce any future need for the use of reasonable force and/or restrictive interventions.

10. Seclusion

10.1. Seclusion is a non-disciplinary safety measure used only to protect others from immediate harm when a pupil is highly dysregulated and not acting with intent. It will never be threatened or used as punishment. Seclusion may occur by removing the dysregulated pupil from others, or removing others to leave the dysregulated pupil secluded.

10.2. Any seclusion will occur in a safe, non-threatening space. The pupil will be continuously supervised and the seclusion will last only as long as necessary, and end as soon as the immediate risk reduces.

10.3. All incidents of seclusion will be recorded and reported via CPOMS

11. Pupils with SEND and individual support

11.1. The School recognises the risk that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions. The School also recognises that some pupils, without SEND, such as those who have experienced past trauma, may require individual support.

11.2. The School understands the importance of identifying and understanding any underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide individual, proactive support and create an inclusive environment.

11.3. The School will, where possible utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used.

11.4. The School will work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to:

- Develop prevention and de-escalation strategies. This may include removing stimuli that may be causing distress, giving pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates or engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings.

- Develop a behaviour support plan to include details of any adjustments required and the pupil's communication preference. The behaviour support plan will also clearly set out the parameters where staff may have increased physical contact with a pupil.

- Review the behaviour support plan with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil.

11.5. The school management team and trustees will regularly review data on use of force, seclusion and restraint to identify any disproportionate use affecting pupils with protected characteristics or SEND.

12. Searching a student and confiscation of property

12.1. The School reserves the right to search pupils and their possessions. The School will balance pupils' right to respect for private life with the need to conduct a search, seeking the pupil's co-operation wherever possible and ensuring any search is justified and proportionate in the circumstances.

12.2. Reasonable force will only be used only when searching for legally prohibited items under the Education Act 1996, and never to search for items banned only under the School Rules. Any decision to use reasonable force will be taken on a case-by-case basis, using no more force than is necessary and for the least amount of time, and with regard to de-escalation wherever possible.

13. Records, monitoring and review

13.1. All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's GDPR

3.2. The school management team will regularly review incidents of and analyse data relating to restrictive interventions in order to:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective;
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice;
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan;
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEND, or other types of vulnerability.

13.3. Overall statistics are reported to and monitored by trustees.

13.4. This policy will be reviewed and updated on at least an annual basis, or earlier as required.

14. COMPLAINTS

14.1. Any complaints will be dealt with under the School's Complaints Policy.

14.2 If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the School will follow the procedures set out in its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy alongside the Low Level Concerns Policy.

15. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

15.1. Please also refer to the policies below:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

STUDENT RESTRAINT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

(This form is to be used for seclusions and physical restraints lasting five (5) minutes or more)

Student: _____ School: Norwich Steiner School

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Staff directly involved in restraint (include names and titles; attach supplemental statements, if any):
_____
_____
_____

Staff witnesses (include names and titles):
_____
_____
_____

Description of events immediately before the behaviour occurred, including the antecedent to the student's behaviour, if known:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Alternatives attempted and/or efforts made to deescalate the situation prior to the use of restraint (if none could be used due to emergent nature of behaviour, explain why):

_____ Teaching interaction

_____ Offered self-control strategy

_____ Verbal de-escalation

_____ Other(s) (please describe): _____
_____
_____

Type/description of restraint used (i.e., type of physical hold or nature of seclusion used):
_____
_____

Time restraint began: _____ Time restraint ended: _____

Chronological description of incident (include behaviour, statements made, actions taken):
_____
_____
_____
_____

Resolution of the incident:

_____ Student calm/reintegrated into classroom/educational programming

_____ Student calm/additional time provided for de-escalation outside of instructional setting

_____ Additional support requested (medical/mental health/parent/police)

_____ Other (please describe): _____
_____
_____

Injuries or property loss/damage that occurred, if any:
_____
_____
_____

Recommendations for adjustment of procedures based on staff review, if appropriate:
_____
_____
_____

_____ _____

Name and title of person writing report Signature

SCHOOL STAFF CHECKLIST

Checklist	Date	Comments
If an injury to staff or student has occurred, submit student accident report and/or staff incident report.		
Verbal and written notification to parent by the end of the school day that the restraint was used (indicate name/title of person who made, and method of, notification).		
Conduct internal staff review of incident of restraint.		
If requested by parents or the school, convene a meeting to review the incident.		

Copy to: Parent and pupil's safeguarding file

MONITORING, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE

This policy belongs to Norwich Steiner School, which is the operational name for the Charity the Norfolk Initiative Steiner School, registered charity number 1099377, company number 4815492

Compliance is monitored through internal audits, policy review as part of self-evaluation, and annual reporting to Trustees on concessions awarded, value, and any compliance issues.