ROSEMEAD PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY
DULWICH

PART OF
ST DUNSTAN'S EDUCATION GROUP

USE OF RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

Policy Owner:	Part A- Group CEO Part B – Head of School
ISSR Reference:	ISSR Part 3: Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils
Date of review:	Autumn 2026
Approved by:	Part A: Group Board Part B: Head and School Leadership Team, with assurance through the Local School Board
Date of next review	Autumn 2027

Version Control Information

Reason for Amendment	Role	Date	Main Changes
New Guidance from DFE published in April 2026	CEO	September 2026	Updated to reflect the new DFE Guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' April 2026 and new group policy framework

Part A – St Dunstan's Education Group Policy

1. Aims

The St Dunstan's Education Group is committed to maintaining safe, respectful and supportive environments in which pupils can learn and thrive.

The Group recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, are required to prevent harm to a pupil or others. Such interventions are always regarded as measures of last resort and should only be used when necessary, proportionate and lawful.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation;
- safeguard the welfare, dignity and rights of pupils;
- ensure staff understand the lawful use of restrictive interventions;
- establish consistent standards across the Group;
- ensure appropriate recording, reporting and oversight arrangements.

This policy applies to:

- all schools and nurseries within St Dunstan's Education Group;
- all employees;
- agency workers;
- volunteers;
- contractors working directly with pupils.

The policy applies to all activities organised by or on behalf of the Group, including off-site activities and educational visits.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Education Act 1996;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- DfE Use of Restrictive Interventions Guidance;
- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance;
- Independent School Standards Regulations.
- The Group will ensure compliance with all applicable legal requirements relating to the use of restrictive interventions.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The St Dunstan's Education Group Board

The Group Board is responsible for:

- approving this policy;
- reviewing assurance information;
- scrutinising trends and incidents;
- holding leaders accountable for implementation.

3.2 Chief Executive Officer

The CEO is responsible for ensuring effective Group-wide compliance and oversight.

3.3 Heads

Heads are responsible for:

- local implementation;
- ensuring appropriate training;
- monitoring incidents;
- ensuring reporting requirements are met.

3.4 Designated Safeguarding Leads

DSLs are responsible for:

- oversight of recording and reporting arrangements;
- safeguarding advice following incidents;
- liaison with parents and external agencies where required.

3.5 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy;
- applying preventative and de-escalation strategies;
- using restrictive interventions lawfully;
- recording and reporting incidents.

4. Principles

The Group adopts the following principles:

4.1 Restrictive interventions are a last resort

Restrictive interventions should only be used where:

- there is a significant risk of harm;
- less restrictive alternatives have been considered or attempted;
- the intervention is necessary and proportionate.

4.2 Prevention first
Schools should prioritise:

- positive relationships;
- behaviour support;
- reasonable adjustments;
- de-escalation strategies;
- effective safeguarding practice.

4.3 Least restrictive approach
Where intervention is necessary, staff must use:

- the least restrictive option;
- the minimum force required;
- for the shortest time necessary.

4.4 Respect and dignity
All interventions must preserve, as far as reasonably practicable:

- dignity;
- privacy;
- wellbeing;
- emotional safety.

5. Appropriate physical contact with pupils

Our schools do not have a 'no contact' policy. We do not grant any requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions.

Examples include:

Providing first aid to a pupil

- Guiding or escorting a pupil through the school building or on a school trip by holding their hand
- Comforting a pupil who is upset
- Offering congratulations or praise, such as with a pat on the back or handshake
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- When demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, staff should use their professional judgement, and have regard to:

- Our school's child protection and safeguarding policy
- The specific circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- Factors including, but not limited to:
    - The pupil's age

- Any known vulnerabilities, including whether the pupil has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Whether any alternative strategies that don't involve physical contact can be used

6. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention	Any intervention intended to prevent, restrict or subdue movement.
Reasonable Force	The use of no more force than is necessary in the circumstances to prevent harm, disorder, criminal activity or serious property damage.
Restraint	An intervention which immobilises or limits a pupil's movement.
Seclusion	Keeping a pupil apart from others and preventing them from leaving for safety reasons. Seclusion must never be used as punishment.
Significant Incident	Any incident involving force beyond routine and appropriate physical contact.

These definitions apply consistently across all Group schools.

7. Acceptable Use of Restrictive Interventions

Reasonable force may be used to:

- prevent injury;
- prevent serious damage to property;
- prevent criminal offences;
- prevent serious disruption;
- protect safety.

8. Prohibited Practice

The following are prohibited:

- use of force as punishment;
- interventions restricting breathing;
- pressure on the neck, throat, chest or abdomen;
- intentionally forcing a pupil to the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their hold or move into a safer position as quickly as possible
- seclusion used as a disciplinary sanction.

9. Using reasonable force to search pupils

The headteacher and any member of staff authorised by the headteacher have a statutory power to search a pupil or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds

to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance) or an item banned under our school rules.

They **can** use reasonable force to search for prohibited items (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance), such as knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs. They **cannot** use reasonable force to search for items that are banned under our school rules only, such as mobile phones.

The decision to use reasonable force to carry out a search should be made carefully, on a case-by-case basis and taking into consideration the level of risk to pupils and staff.

10. Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

10.1 Necessity and proportionality

The decision on whether to use restrictive interventions is down to the professional judgment of the staff member and will always depend on the individual circumstances of each situation.

Staff should always consider whether there are other ways to manage the situation, such as the de-escalation techniques outlined in section 8.1 of this policy and/or seeking assistance from a colleague. However, there may be times when staff have no other choice but to use restrictive interventions, to reduce the risk of harm to the pupil and/or others.

When assessing whether a restrictive intervention is required, staff should always consider:

- Is it necessary?
  - Are there other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
  - Is a restrictive intervention likely to successfully reduce the risks, or could its use escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself?
- Is it proportionate?
  - Staff should use the least amount of force or the least restrictive intervention for the least amount of time required to reduce the risks
  - If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy
  - Staff should consider the individual circumstances of the pupil, such as their age, size and any medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities

10.2 Pupil and staff welfare

Pupil welfare

The most important consideration when using a restrictive intervention is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil involved, as well as the safety of other pupils and staff. Staff should always consider the potential impact on the pupil's welfare balanced against

any actions taken. For example, staff should bear in mind that pupils who have experienced adverse life events, trauma or neglect, or who have diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, communication difficulties or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

If a restrictive intervention is needed, staff should always aim to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This includes consideration of the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.

Staff should, wherever possible, clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and what the pupil needs to do, including using verbal and non-verbal strategies where needed, and giving time for the pupil to process information and respond where appropriate.

Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Support following an incident
As soon as possible after any use of restrictive intervention, our schools will evaluate the incident to understand why restrictive intervention was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how another incident could be avoided in the future.

Our schools will make sure each pupil and staff member involved get the right support, including a medical assessment and treatment if needed, and an opportunity to reflect on and talk through the incident.

This follow-up conversation(s) will be part of the overall debriefing process to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from all parties involved. Conversations should also aim to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue.

Wherever possible, this process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident. It may also include the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support. The school will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed.

Depending on the circumstances, support may also be offered to those who witnessed the incident.

11. SEND and Additional Vulnerabilities

The Group recognises that some pupils may have:

- SEND;
- communication needs;
- sensory needs;
- trauma-related vulnerabilities;

- medical conditions.

Schools must consider these needs when planning support and responding to incidents.

12. Training

Schools shall ensure that:
- relevant staff receive appropriate training;
- competence is monitored;
- refresher training is provided as required;
- risk assessments inform training needs.

While all staff have this power, some staff, especially those who work closely with pupils who might show challenging behaviour, are more likely to need to use it than others, and their training levels will reflect this.

13. Recording and Reporting

All schools must maintain procedures for:
- recording significant incidents;
- recording restraint and seclusion;
- informing parents/carers as soon as reasonably practicable following a reportable incident, normally on the same day, and providing the required information in writing; for children in the EYFS, recording every occasion on which physical intervention is used and informing parents/carers on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable;
- retaining records securely;
- monitoring trends and lessons learned.

14. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints relating to restrictive interventions shall be managed in accordance with the Group Complaints Policy.

Allegations relating to inappropriate use of force shall be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

15. Monitoring and Assurance

The Group will monitor:
- frequency of incidents;
- trends;
- disproportionate impact on particular groups;
- training compliance;
- lessons learned.

Schools may be required to provide assurance information to the Group.

16. Associated Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Search and confiscation policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Part B – School Implementation

Rosemead Preparatory School

1. Key Personnel

Head	Christopher Woodward
DSL	Kate Simmons
SENCO	Kate Tyrrell
Deputy DSL(s)	Kate Tyrrell and Rachel Hildyard
Behaviour Lead	Katie Simmons

2. Local Definitions and Practice

At Rosemead, restrictive interventions are defined as any deliberate action—physical or non-physical—used to prevent, restrict, or subdue a pupil's body movement to protect them or others from immediate risk of harm.

They are strictly non-disciplinary measures reserved as a last resort when de-escalation strategies have failed

2.1 Physical Restraint & Holds (Direct Force)
These involve direct physical contact by trained staff to restrict movement during high-risk physical outbursts:

- **Leading or guiding by the arm**: Physically directing a distressed child away from an escalating situation or danger (e.g., toward a safe room or away from a stairwell).
- **Holding arms or legs**: Holding a child's hands or arms to their sides to prevent them from hitting, kicking, or biting staff, peers, or themselves.
- **Blocker/Barrier holds**: Two members of staff using open hands or a side-by-side stance to physically hold a child in place to prevent them from running into a busy road or playground hazard.
- **Physical separation**: Physically pulling two fighting pupils apart or stepping in to absorb physical impact.

2.2 Physical Obstruction & Environmental Control (Without Holds)
Restricting movement by using the environment or physical presence:

- Passive blocking: A member of staff standing in a doorway to physically block a pupil from leaving a safe classroom to run off the school premises.
- Seclusion / Safe Isolation: Placing a dysregulated pupil in a safe, quiet room away from others and preventing them from leaving (either by holding the door closed or physically blocking the exit) until they are safe and calm.
- Classroom Evacuation: Removing all other pupils from a classroom while keeping a dysregulated pupil inside with staff to maintain safety during a severe crisis.

2.3 Non-Physical Restraints (Mechanical or Auxiliary)
Restricting a pupil's independent movement by adjusting equipment or removing support items:

- **Removing mobility or sensory aids**: Temporarily removing a pupil's crutches, wheelchair, walking frame, or weighted equipment if they are actively using them as a weapon to cause severe harm.
- **Securing dangerous items**: Physically holding down or locking a heavy desk, chair, or door that a child is using to strike or trap others.

2.4 Examples of situations where reasonable force may be used within the school context.

2.4.1 Preventing Immediate Injury or Self-Harm

- **Intervening in a physical fight**: Stepping between two young pupils who are hitting, kicking, or biting each other and physically pulling or guiding them apart.
- **Preventing self-injury**: Holding a distressed child's wrists or arms to stop them from repeatedly banging their head against a wall, biting themselves, or gouging their skin.
- **Stopping a child running into danger**: Catching and holding a pupil who is running toward a busy road, a car park, a pond, or down a flight of stairs.

2.4.2 Preventing Harm to Others or Severe Damage

- **Disarming a pupil**: Physically seizing or holding a child's hand to remove a dangerous object they are attempting to use as a weapon (e.g., scissors, a heavy wooden block, a metal ruler, or a chair).
- **Guiding away an aggressive pupil**: Placing a hand firmly on a pupil's upper arm or back to physically escort them out of a classroom if they are actively throwing objects, smashing furniture, or trying to attack peers.

2.4.3 Maintaining School Order and Safety

- **Passive blocking**: Standing firmly in a doorway or corridor to physically block a pupil from pushing past to enter a dangerous area (e.g., a boiler room) or to leave the school premises without permission.
- **Removing a refusal from a high-risk area**: Physically guiding or gently leading a pupil by the arm off high playground equipment or off a stage if they are refusing to come down and are at risk of falling or causing someone else to fall.

2.5 Seclusion

As defined above, seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the

pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

We only use seclusion as a safety measure when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is not used as a threat or punishment. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. Please see our behaviour policy for information on our response to misbehaviour.

During seclusion:

- The pupil will be secluded in a safe place that does not feel threatening or intimidating to them for example, the Enrichment (Learning Support) room, another classroom, the library or the Rose room.
- The pupil will be supervised at all times by at least 1 member of staff

As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave. Any incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

3. Prevention and De-escalation

Restrictive intervention is used only when necessary. We aim to minimise its use as much as possible, using both whole-school and individual approaches.

Our whole-school approach includes:

- Consideration of how our school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive
- Sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- Development of working staff-pupil relationships and trust
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning
- Explicit teaching of strategies to aid emotional regulation through PSHE and My Happy Mind lessons

The individual approaches we use include:

- Working closely with parents/carers to support individual pupils
- Strategies to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including:
  - The development of behaviour support plans
  - Strategies to help pupils calm down before their behaviour escalates
  - Making 'reasonable adjustments' where a pupil has a disability, to help them participate in school life as fully as possible

- Access to emotional and wellbeing support provision such as the school counsellor, drawing and talking and lego theraputic input.

De-escalation when a situation arises

When a staff member is faced with a situation where a restrictive intervention may need to be used, they should consider using de-escalation techniques first, wherever possible. Techniques that could be used in these situations include:

- Having open body language and being aware of a pupil's personal space
- Taking a pupil away from an 'audience' – speaking to them on their own rather than in front of a group of other pupils or staff
- Using empathy – asking the pupil to help you understand their feelings
- Distraction techniques
- Offering a calm space for the pupil to go to so they can self-regulate
- Verbal warnings – calmly reminding the pupil of the consequences of their behaviour

4. Considerations for pupils with SEND

We understand that pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Pupils who have difficulty communicating verbally might show their needs and discomfort through their actions.

Our school is committed to understanding what might trigger challenging behaviour in pupils with SEND, and to providing the right support and an inclusive environment.

We will carry out risk assessments for pupils with SEND, where we identify that there is an increased likelihood of needing to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. Our school is aware of its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities to avoid disadvantage and ensure they can take part in school life as fully as possible.

We will 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. We will also work with the pupil, their parents/carers and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

These strategies might include:

- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress to the pupil
- Staff members changing how they communicate with the pupil, such as being more mindful of body language, facial expressions and/or tone of voice
- Helping the pupil express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- Engaging the pupil in activities to help them regulate their emotions
- Distracting the pupil with familiar objects or activities to redirect their attention

- Encouraging use of learnt strategies, such as five-finger breathing or counting to 10 to help with regulation

Where appropriate, we will create individual pastoral and behaviour support plans for pupils with SEND. The plan will be reviewed regularly, and following any significant incident, with the pupil and parents/carers to make sure it's still working well. The plan will:

- Outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging
- Outline the pupil's motivators, rewards and natural consequences
- Explain the best ways to communicate with the pupil
- Set clear and achievable targets for the pupil
- In some cases, specify when increased physical contact with staff might be appropriate. These situations will be discussed with everyone involved and clearly written down in the plan

5. Recording Procedures

We have a legal duty to record and report all:

- Significant incidents involving force
- Seclusion incidents
- Restraint incidents

Recording incidents

Our school has a clear process in place for recording the incidents listed above. Incidents are recorded on CPOMS, our safeguarding system. The incident is categorised under use of restrictive intervention and the body map function is used.

Staff must record incidents on CPOMS, as soon as possible after the event, and should endeavour to do this on the same day. Staff should do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's pastoral and behaviour support plan.

For significant incidents involving force, we will record:

- The names of the pupil and staff members directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether they have an identified special educational need or disability
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A clear and brief description of what happened, including:
  - What led up to the incident
  - Any known or potential triggers for the behaviour
  - Any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
  - The type and degree of reasonable force used
  - Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- A brief explanation of why using force was assessed as necessary in that situation
- Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support

- Details of any pupil or witness accounts
- Follow up actions including contact with parents

For seclusion incidents and restraint incidents, we will record**:**

- The names of the pupil and staff members directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether they have an identified special educational need or disability, and their SEN status code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support
- Details of any pupil or witness statements
- Follow up actions including contact with parents

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will record it in line with our procedure for recording significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be recorded twice.

Completed reports will be kept securely and retained in line with our data protection procedures.

6. Reporting incidents to parents/carers

When reporting an incident to parents/carers, we will take the following steps:

- The incident will be sent via CPOMS to the safeguarding team and SLT
- Next steps will be discussed and agreed
- A member of SLT will contact the parent/carer as soon as reasonably practicable and will endeavour to do so on the same day. Initial contact may be made by telephone, but the required information about the incident will also be provided in writing, for example by email, secure parent communication system or letter.
- For children within the EYFS, the School will keep a written record of every occasion on which physical intervention is used. The child's parents/carers will be informed on the same day or, where this is not reasonably practicable, as soon as reasonably practicable. The notification will be confirmed in writing.
- The incident will be reviewed by the safeguarding team and/or SLT to ensure correct procedures were followed

We will inform parents/carers about an incident as soon as we can after it happens and will endeavour to do this on the same day. We will do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a pupil's pastoral and behaviour support plan.

There is 1 exception to this:

- If a member of staff thinks that telling the pupil's parents/carers would likely result in significant harm to that pupil. In these cases, we will report the incident

to any parent(s)/carer(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily resides (see section 12.3 of this policy)

When we report **significant incidents involving force** to parents/carers, we will include the following details:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- An explanation of any follow up procedures

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will report it in line with our procedure for reporting significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be reported twice.

When reporting to parents/carers, we will have regard to data protection requirements when deciding what information to share. For example, we will not include any identifying details of any other pupil.

Following up with parents/carers after an incident

It is best practice to invite parents/carers to have a follow-up discussion about the incident, where appropriate. The discussion might include:

- Any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- Whether any agreed pastoral and behaviour support plans were followed
- What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- What might be done differently in the future

7. Reporting incidents to the local authority

In cases where we have assessed that an incident needs to be reported to the local authority where the pupil ordinarily resides (as outlined in section 12.2), this report will include all the information that we would normally share with the pupil's parents/carers, as well as the reasons why we thought it was unsafe to tell the pupil's parents/carers directly.

In cases where a pupil has parents/carers and is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, we will report the incident to the relevant local authority in addition to the parents/carers (unless we deem it unsafe to inform the parents/carers).