



Restrictive Interventions Policy

Policy Type:	School Policy linked to statutory guidance
Policy Implementation/Approval	Governors' Curriculum & Pupils' Issues Committee
Policy review delegated to:	Pastoral Deputy Headteacher – Mrs A Williams
	Sponsor Governor – Mrs K Warburton
Review Frequency:	Every 3 years
Last Reviewed/Approved:	New policy in Spring 2026 (replaces the Care & Control Policy on the Use of Reasonable Force & Physical Restraint)
Date of Next Scheduled Review:	Spring 2029

Purpose and scope of the policy

This policy applies to all pupils under our care.

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents.

Reasonable force will only be used when necessary, in accordance with this policy.

Key principles

In line with DfE guidance, Cardinal Langley RC High School recognises that adopting a 'no contact' approach presents significant risks. Such a policy may place staff in a position where they are unable to fulfil their duty of care towards a pupil or prevent them from taking necessary action to reduce or prevent harm. This policy is therefore designed to ensure that staff, pupils and parents are clear about the circumstances in which restrictive intervention may be used.

When considering the use of restrictive intervention, staff must take into account the individual circumstances of the situation and consider whether the intervention is:

- **Necessary** – All less restrictive options have been explored or attempted, and the staff member reasonably believes that intervention is required to reduce the level of risk rather than escalate it.
- **Proportionate** – Only the minimum amount of force necessary is used, for the shortest duration possible, in order to reduce the risk of harm. Staff actions must reflect the pupil's needs, vulnerabilities, and level of distress.
- **Considered** – The pupil's welfare, rights and dignity must be respected at all times. Staff should use appropriate communication strategies throughout the intervention to explain what is happening, what is required of the pupil, and to gain feedback on how the pupil is feeling.

Other forms of physical contact with pupils

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions where this is proper and necessary.

Examples of this at Cardinal Langley RC High School include:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- To give first aid.

Legal framework

This policy has been written drawing on the [Department for Education Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools](#) (April 2026), [Education and Inspections Act \(2006\)](#), [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention](#) (2019), [Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools](#) (July 2022), [Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#), [Equality Act \(2010\)](#), [Behaviour in Schools Guidance \(2024\)](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)

Other linked school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Search Policy
- SEND Policy

Definitions

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. 'Restrictive interventions' is used as the umbrella term in this policy, to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain a pupil in different ways.

Reasonable force: includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances¹. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time.

Restraint (physical and non-physical): involves an intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

Seclusion: an intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving.

Strategies the school uses to reduce the need for physical intervention

Cardinal Langley RC High School recognises that physical intervention and the use of reasonable force can be distressing for children, their families and carers, and staff members. However, sometimes this is the only realistic response to a situation. Any decision made will consider what is in the best interest of the child and/or those around them in view of the risks presented.

In order to minimise the need for restrictive interventions, staff at Cardinal Langley RC High School consider how the school and classroom environment can support all pupils to achieve and thrive, share best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds, train staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation, develop good working staff-pupil relationships and trust, recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning to support de-escalation and proactive intervention.

Cardinal Langley RC High School will work in partnership with parents and individual pupils, where appropriate, to review and update personalised provision, ensuring that comprehensive and up-to-date information regarding effective support strategies is available to all staff (see 'Supporting pupils with SEND and additional vulnerabilities' for more information).

When might reasonable force be used at Cardinal Langley RC High School

- To prevent a child from hurting or harming themselves or others.
- To prevent a child from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence.
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- To prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of the school community.
- To stop a fight.
- To restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves or others through physical outbursts.

- To support a search for knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco, fireworks, pornographic images, or articles that staff reasonably suspect have been or are likely to be used to commit an offence or cause harm. **Force may not be used to search for other items banned under the school rules.**

Cardinal Langley RC High School will never use force as a punishment under any circumstances. Restraint will never be used in a manner that restricts a pupil's airway, breathing, or circulation. Pupils should not be restrained on the ground. If a restraint involves restraining the pupil on the ground, staff will release their hold as quickly as possible and, where necessary, reposition the pupil and themselves into a safer, alternative position.

Cardinal Langley RC High School recognises that any form of restraint carries an inherent risk of causing both physical and psychological harm. For this reason, its use will be avoided wherever possible and employed only as a last resort, when no safer or less restrictive alternative is available (see 'Post-incident support and review' for further information).

How seclusion might be used at Cardinal Langley RC High School:

Seclusion will only be used as a safety measure to protect others from immediate harm when a pupil is experiencing significant emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Staff at Cardinal Langley RC High School recognise that, in such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent but is responding to overwhelming distress.

Any location used for seclusion will feel safe for the pupil, and they will be supervised at all times throughout the period of seclusion. As soon as the assessed risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave the space immediately.

Seclusion will not be implemented through threat of punishment.

Reporting and recording

Cardinal Langley RC High School will follow the procedures described below for all incidents involving restrictive intervention, including the use of reasonable force and the use of seclusion. This applies equally in circumstances where specific interventions have been agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

At Cardinal Langley RC High School, all incidents of restrictive intervention are recorded in a secure folder accessible by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher / DSL.

Records must be completed as soon as possible after the event, and wherever possible, by the staff member(s) involved. As a minimum, this record will include:

- The names of the pupil and staff directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of the incident, including:
 - the antecedents to the use of restrictive intervention, including any identified or potential triggers
 - any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
 - the type of reasonable force applied/seclusion used, the degree of force (if used), and details of any physical injuries sustained as required
- The behaviour the pupil was exhibiting that resulted in the need for restrictive intervention
- Any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Cardinal Langley RC High School will inform parents whenever reasonable force has been used with their child as soon as practicable after the incident, and wherever possible, no later than the same day. As a minimum, the report will include:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief account of the behaviour the pupil was exhibiting that resulted in the need for restrictive intervention
- A brief account of what type of force was applied/seclusion used, and the degree of force (if used)
- The details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

A copy of the record will be provided to parents and carers whenever restrictive intervention has been used with their child as soon as practicable after the incident, and wherever possible, no later than the same day.

Post-incident support and review

At Cardinal Langley RC High School we evaluate and review incidents involving restrictive intervention as soon as possible after the event, to understand:

- The impact on the child/children
- What the risks were and why restraint was the least restrictive option
- What lessons we have learned to improve our practice and avoid the use of restrictive intervention in future

Cardinal Langley RC High School will work collaboratively with staff, the pupil, and their parents/carers to review the support in place following any incident. This review will include consideration of any newly identified behavioural triggers or warning signs, the effectiveness of de-escalation strategies used, and any required amendments to the pupil's behaviour support plan and/or risk assessment.

Further follow-up conversations with the pupil and the staff involved will be undertaken to support reflection, learning, and well-being. Where possible, restorative conversations will be held to repair and rebuild relationships. Referrals for additional support will be completed as required.

Supporting pupils with SEND and additional vulnerabilities

Children and young people with SEND, mental health difficulties, or medical conditions may at times present with behaviour that challenges professionals, particularly when they have trouble expressing or regulating their emotions. In some cases, the likelihood of such behaviour can be anticipated by those working closely with the pupil.

Where the use of reasonable force or physical intervention is more likely to be required, Cardinal Langley RC High School will ensure that robust arrangements are in place to identify, assess, and manage risk effectively. This will include providing high-quality training for staff and involving children and young people, parents, carers, and advocates as appropriate in decision-making about support. Cardinal Langley RC High School will make arrangements to carefully assess each pupil's needs and the underlying causes of their behaviour, including through the development and regular review of behaviour support plans. Particular consideration will be given to children with vulnerabilities and SEND, and the school will tailor its support accordingly (as detailed in the Equality Act 2010). This may include taking into account preventative de-escalation strategies such as:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil with something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

In circumstances where there is an increased likelihood that reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be needed, Cardinal Langley RC High School will conduct a risk assessment aimed at reducing this likelihood. The risk assessment will identify potential triggers and outline planned mitigation strategies, including effective de-escalation approaches. All risk assessments and behaviour support plans will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent/carer at appropriate intervals to ensure they remain relevant, proportionate, and aligned with the pupil's evolving needs. This collaborative review process will support the pupil to participate fully and safely in school life.

Staff training

The Headteacher will consider whether members of staff require any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities by also considering the needs of the pupils and the requirements and context of the setting.

At Cardinal Langley RC High School staff training includes: annual CPD regarding de-escalation strategies and the key principles of restrictive intervention that is only ever used if necessary, that is proportionate or considered.

Governance and oversight

Records of reasonable force are reviewed half termly by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher alongside the Chair of Governors in the termly Safeguarding link meetings. and strategies are considered where possible to reduce the likelihood of the need for reasonable force.

To monitor, understand and review our practice we analyse our records to consider:

- Improvements to practices
- Areas of learning and development for staff
- Identified patterns and triggers for individual pupils, and the effectiveness of strategies employed
- Any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, including those with SEND

Complaints, concerns and allegations



School will resolve all complaints regarding the use of force as quickly as possible, being mindful of the need to appropriately investigate the incident. Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property, disorder or a criminal offence being committed – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action. When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably. Suspension will not be an automatic response to a member of staff being accused of using excessive force and the school will refer to statutory guidance in relation to this, liaising with the LADO where necessary. As employers, School have a duty of care towards their employees and appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident. This will include having a named contact at the school who can provide support.

Complaints should be made in line with Cardinal Langley RC High School’s complaints policy.

Policy review

Every 3 years or following change.

Policy approval:

Chair/Vice-Chair of C&P Committee		Date:	10.03.2026
Headteacher:		Date:	10.03.2026

Restrictive Interventions Recording Form (Effective from 1 April 2026)

This form must be completed for all incidents involving restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force. It supports statutory recording, review and governance requirements in line with Department for Education guidance effective from 1 April 2026. It should be retained in line with the school’s behaviour and safeguarding policies.

DfE-aligned definitions:

- Reasonable force: Physical contact used by staff to prevent a pupil from harming themselves or others, damaging property, or seriously disrupting good order and discipline, where such action is lawful, proportionate and necessary.
- Restraint: The restriction of a pupil’s movement, either through physical contact or non-physical means (such as blocking movement or removing mobility or communication aids), to manage a risk of harm.
- Seclusion: The supervised isolation of a pupil in a room or area, from which they are prevented from leaving, used as a last resort to manage an immediate risk of harm.

Staff must use their professional judgement and consider individual circumstances, including any additional vulnerabilities (e.g. SEND, medical or mental health needs). Schools should plan proactively to reduce the need for restrictive interventions, for example, through agreed behaviour plans.

[KCSIE 2025](#) has further information on the use of ‘reasonable force’ in schools and colleges (paras. 163-165)

Further guidance and information is also available at:

- [Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools](#) – DfE
- [Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention](#) – HM Government

Section A: Pupil Details

Name:		DOB:	
Year Group:		SEN Status (Yes/No) and SEN Code	
Other vulnerabilities (if applicable)			

Section B: Incident Details

Date:		Time:	
Location			
Staff involved (names and roles):			
Other witnesses:			

Section C: Type of Restrictive Intervention (tick all that apply)

Restrictive intervention:	✓	Any further details:
Significant use of reasonable force		
Seclusion		
Physical restraint		
Non-physical restraint		

Section D: Context and Triggers

Antecedents / triggers	
De-escalation strategies attempted	

Section E: Decision-Making

Why intervention was necessary	
How necessity, proportionality and pupil welfare were considered*	

** Including whether this was the least restrictive option and used for the shortest time necessary.*

Section F: Intervention Details

Description of intervention	
Duration (approx.)	
Degree of force used	

Section G: Injuries or Impact - Include injuries to pupils or staff, where applicable.

Physical injury (pupil or staff)	
Psychological / emotional impact	
Medical attention required	

Section H: SEND and Equality Considerations

Link to behaviour support plan (Yes/No)	
Repeat incident? (Yes/No)	
Risk assessment updated? (Yes/No)	
Equality considerations	

Section I: Parent / Carer Communication

Date and time informed	
Method of communication	
Was information shared in writing? (Yes / No – if no, explain)	
If not informed, statutory reason	

Section J: Post-Incident Support and Reflection

Support provided to pupil	
Support provided to staff	
Learning points and next steps	

Section K: Leadership / Governance Review - Does this incident indicate emerging patterns or training needs?

Reviewed by:		Date:	
Actions identified			

Body Maps

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