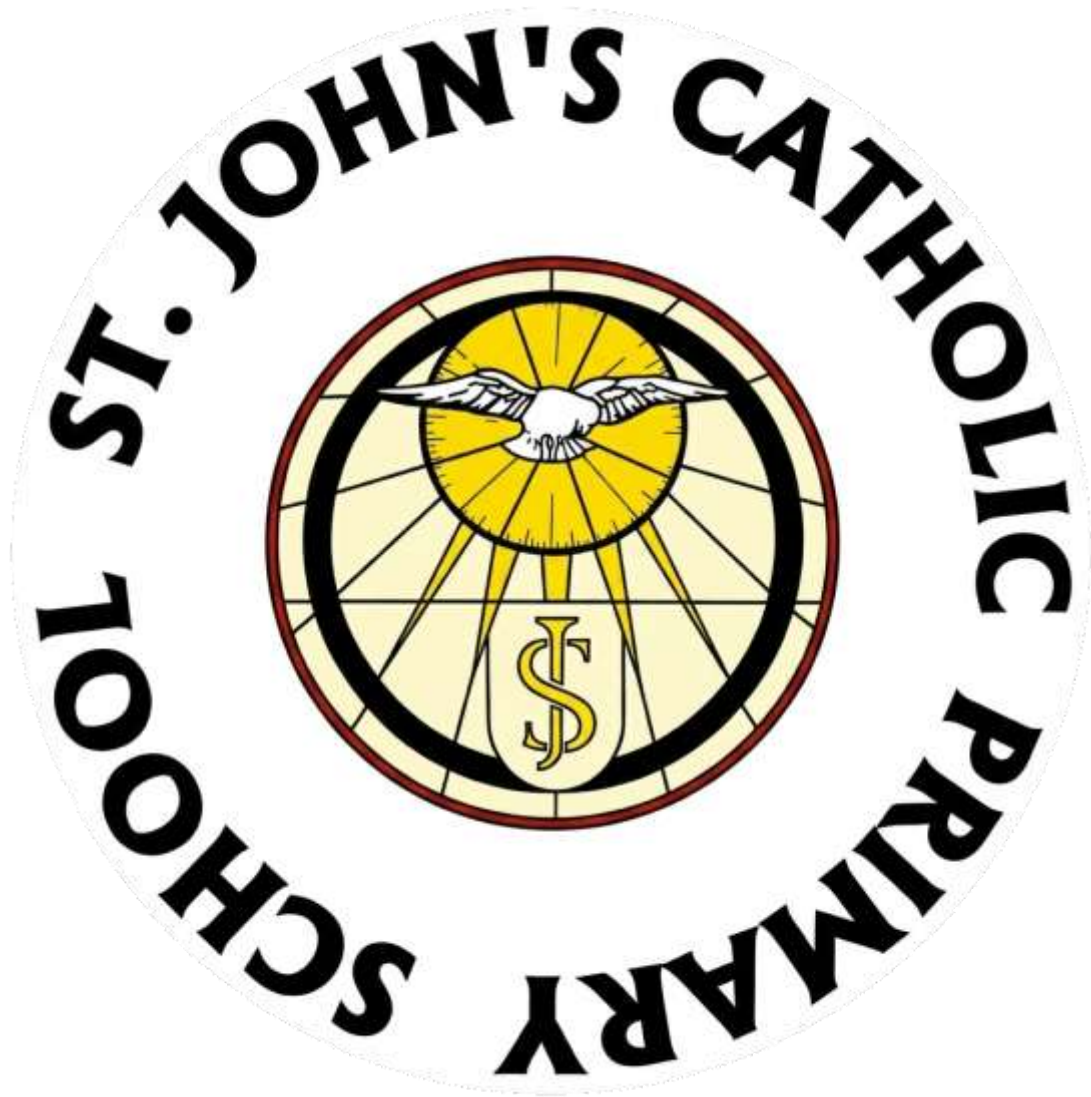




# **Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions Policy**

October 2026

## **Our Mission Statement**

The Mission of St. John's Catholic Primary School is to grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus by being: responsible, caring, prayerful, creative, independent, thoughtful, curious and respectful. We live our Mission by:

- Ensuring that our attitudes and values are transmitted through a curriculum that is consistent with the Catholic faith
- Delivering a curriculum that is relevant, varied, interesting, stimulating, balanced and appropriate
- Developing policies and schemes of work which recognise that R.E. is an integral part of the curriculum
- Developing sound teaching and effective classroom management
- Generating a positive attitude to learning where realistic expectations of pupils and high standards of work are expected
- Using a variety of teaching approaches that reflect the needs of individual pupils
- Participating in projects which focus on the needs of others including local and international charities

St. John's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, established by the Church to serve the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Trowbridge, St. Bernadette, Westbury and St. Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon.

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## 1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 We are committed to providing excellent education for every child, every day, and aim to strengthen and work with our community to continue to improve.

## 2.0 Scope and Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines on the use of reasonable force and restrictive intervention by staff members to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils, staff, and visitors within the school environment. The policy aims to create a safe and supportive learning environment while respecting the rights and dignity of all individuals. This policy applies to all staff members, including teachers, administrators, support staff, and any other individuals authorized to supervise pupils within the school premises or during school related activities

## 3.0 Definition

3.1 For clarity, this policy will use the following definitions:

- o **Reasonable force:** Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.

- o **Restrictive interventions:** Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include use of equipment, medication or seclusion. Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

- o **Restraint:** A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. Restraint may also include mechanical or chemical restraint. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.

- These terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. For example, depending on the circumstances, if two members of staff briefly physically pull apart two pupils who are fighting, all three definitions could be relevant

- Please note- as with the interchangeable terminology noted above, references to reasonable force within the rest of this policy also apply to the terms restrictive interventions and restraint

## 4.0 Legal Framework

4.1 The policy is guided by the following legislation: Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006. Section 93A Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) Regulations 2025

## 5.0 Who can use reasonable force?

5.1 All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are trained regularly in its safe and lawful use and in

preventative strategies by fully qualified instructors. Our preferred training and approach is to use Team Teach.

## 6.0 Guiding principles

6.1 The decision on whether it is reasonable to use force and/or other restrictive interventions, depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. In assessing whether force and/or other restrictive interventions are reasonable in a situation, the member of staff should use their professional judgement. Factors staff might want to consider include but are not limited to:

6.2 **Necessary:** Staff will consider whether there are reasonable alternative ways to manage a situation and achieve the desired outcome. Staff will assess whether the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the consequences of the behaviour that it intends to address. Where possible, staff will communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

6.3 **Proportionate:** Staff will use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks. Staff will consider the personal circumstances of the student such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

6.4 **Pupil's Welfare:** Staff will consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions particularly distressing. Staff will seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers. Where possible, staff will clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why it is happening, and explain what the pupil needs to do. For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies will be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.

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

## 7.0 Application

7.1 Using reasonable force in a school setting involves careful consideration of various factors to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. Here are the key practical considerations.

#### 7.2 Assessment of the Situation

- **Immediacy of Threat:** Evaluate whether the situation poses an immediate threat to the safety of pupils, staff, or property.
- **Severity of the Threat:** Identify whether the threat involves physical harm, significant disruption, or damage to property.
- **De-escalation Attempts:** Ensure that all non-physical de-escalation techniques have been attempted and proven ineffective before resorting to physical force.

#### 7.3 Proportionality and necessity

- **Minimum Force:** Use the least amount of force necessary to control the situation.
- **Duration:** Apply force for the shortest possible time to achieve the desired outcome
- **Proportionate Response:** Ensure that the level of force used is proportionate to the severity of the threat

#### 7.4 Training and Preparedness

- **Staff Training:** Ensure all staff members are aware and have an understanding of the use of
- **reasonable force and restrictive intervention policy and principles.** All relevant staff will have enhanced training.
- **Refresher Courses:** Provide regular refresher training to maintain staff competence in handling such situations

#### 7.5 Physical and Emotional Safety

- **Avoiding Harm:** Take care to avoid causing unnecessary pain or injury to the student.
- **Emotional Support:** Be mindful of the emotional impact on the student and provide support following the incident.

#### 7.6 Legal and Ethical Considerations

- **Compliance with Laws:** Ensure that any use of force complies with current legislation and law.
- **School Policies:** Adhere to the school's policies and procedures regarding the use of force.
- **Rights and Dignity:** Respect the rights and dignity of the pupil at all times.

#### 7.7 Documentation and Reporting

- **Incident Reporting:** Document the incident in detail, including the circumstances leading up to the use of force, the actions taken, and the outcomes.
- **Parental Notification:** Inform the pupil's parents or guardians about the incident as soon as possible.
- **Review and Follow-up:** Participate in a review of the incident to identify any lessons learned and to plan any necessary follow-up actions, such as counselling or additional support for the pupil.

#### 7.8 Debriefing and Support

- **Debriefing Sessions:** Conduct debriefing sessions with the staff involved and the pupil to discuss the incident and address any ongoing concerns.
- **Support Services:** Provide access to support services for both staff and students affected by the incident, including counselling if necessary.

## 7.9 Environmental Considerations

- **Safe Environment:** Ensure that the environment where the force is used is as safe as possible, minimizing the risk of accidental injury (e.g., removing obstacles that could cause tripping or falling).
- **Witnesses:** When possible, have another staff member present as a witness to the intervention.

## 7.10 Communication

- **Clear Instructions:** Communicate clearly with the student throughout the intervention, explaining why the force is being used and what is expected of them.
- **Calm Demeanour:** Maintain a calm and controlled demeanour to help de-escalate the situation and reassure the student.

## 8.0 Use of Reasonable force to search students

8.1 Head teachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items. The decision to use reasonable force should be made on a case-by-case basis. Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

## 9.0 Reporting and Recording

9.1 Governing bodies of maintained schools and the proprietors of other schools must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, as part of the school's duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

9.2 Incidents must be recorded by the staff member(s) involved as soon as possible after the event and must be made in writing using the form below.

9.3 The requirement to record applies even if the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

## 10.0 Complaints

10.1 If any complaints are raised regarding reasonable force or restrictive interventions the matter will be investigated using our complaints process. The school will initiate the investigation as soon as possible and report any findings back through the appropriate channels.

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

Head teacher: ***Mrs K O'Rourke***

Chair of Governors: ***Mrs C Doogue***

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Review cycle:    | Annually       |
| Next review due: | September 2027 |

## 11. Appendices

### Appendix 1. Reasonable Force & Restrictive Practice – Staff Toolkit

#### CORE RESPONSE FLOW (Follow in order)

**Recognise escalation:** Identify triggers, rising behaviour, risk indicators

**Use de-escalation:** Calm voice, space, PACE, distraction, support strategies

**Assess risk:** Is there immediate risk of injury, damage, or serious disruption?

**Intervene if necessary:** Use reasonable, proportionate, least restrictive approach

**LAST RESORT: Reasonable force ONLY if necessary**

**LEAST RESTRICTIVE:** Minimum force | Shortest time | Preserve dignity

**MONITOR:** Breathing | Distress | Medical risk | Environment

**STOP:** Immediately when safe

**Post-incident actions:** Reassure pupil, restore relationships

**Report:** Inform SLT / DSL immediately (same day)

**Record:** Full CPOMS log before end of day (See appendix 2)

**Inform parents:** Same day wherever possible

**Review:** Update behaviour plan, risk assessment, consider patterns

#### DO NOT

Use de-escalation as first response Jump straight to physical intervention

Act only when necessary to prevent harm Use force for compliance or punishment

Use least restrictive option Use excessive or prolonged force

Keep dignity and safety central Ignore signs of distress

Follow individual behaviour plans Act outside agreed strategies

Record factually and objectively    Use opinion or emotional language

Report concerns immediately    Delay safeguarding reporting

Reflect and learn from incidents    Treat incidents as isolated events

### **Critical Safeguarding Expectations**

- Reasonable force must be lawful, proportionate and necessary (DfE guidance)
- Restrictive practice must always be the least restrictive option
- Any injury, distress or repeated incident must trigger DSL review
- All incidents must be recorded before the end of the day on CPOMS
- Parents/carers must be informed as soon as possible
- Consider SEND needs, triggers, and preventative strategies in all reviews

## **Reasonable Force & Restrictive Practice – Staff Toolkit**

### **Report Record Review**

#### **Reporting (As soon as safely possible)**

- Notify:
  - o Senior leader / Head
  - o DSL (if safeguarding concern)
- Record on school system (e.g. CPOMS)

**There will be a need to duplicate this record if your Local Authority has a bound book as well.**

#### **Recording must include:**

- What led to the incident
- What strategies were attempted
- Why intervention was necessary
- Type and duration of force/restriction
- Pupil response and outcome
- Any injuries

#### **Follow-up**

- Inform parents/carers (same day or ASAP)
- Review risk assessment / behaviour plan
- Consider:
  - o SEN needs
  - o Staff training
  - o Pattern analysis (repeat incidents)