



LEICESTER

THERAPEUTIC SCHOOL

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS THROUGH NURTURE AND MINDSET

Working positively with pupils Policy (often referred to as behaviour policy)

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Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are passionate about providing an inclusive education to children with special educational needs. We recognise and celebrate the individuality of our pupils and use personalised approaches, allowing pupils with SEND to feel supported during the school day. We strive to provide pupils with the same opportunities and experiences that pupils would have received at a mainstream school, believing passionately that in the right environment, with the right support, pupils will flourish in education. We do this by focusing on providing a SEND friendly environment, an adapted curriculum, and a strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social, and emotional development. The special educational needs and disabilities of all pupils at Leicester Therapeutic School is carefully considered and a central theme in through all school policies. For more information, please read the school's SEND Information Report.

Safeguarding at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are committed to providing an environment in which students feel safe and secure to access their education. All stakeholders are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff are encouraged to maintain an "it could happen here" attitude. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and bullying. Leicester Therapeutic School are dedicated to creating a strong safeguarding culture, and that the safety and well-being of children is the central thread that embeds itself through all aspects of the school. If a person is concerned about anything they read, witness, or hear with regards to the school, they should contact the school's designated safeguarding lead immediately or Headteacher. Safeguarding, and the safety and well-being of all pupils at Leicester Therapeutic School is carefully considered and a central theme through all school policies.

Legislation and statutory requirements

Leicester Therapeutic School is an independent SEND school. This policy sets out our relational approach to behaviour, reasonable adjustments, proportionate responses and safeguards when an intervention is needed. The proprietor is responsible for meeting the Independent School Standards. The policy takes account of:

- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- The school's Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy. Statutory exclusion guidance for maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units does not directly govern this independent school.
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, effective 1 April 2026)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions: relevant good practice, read with individual healthcare plans and the school's medical policy
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), as applicable to the school's status and EHCP arrangements
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Education Act 2002, section 157, and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014: safeguarding duties for independent schools
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, sections 91, 93 and 93A, as applicable; Education Act 1996, sections 550ZA–550ZD; Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025

Independent School Standards: paragraphs 7 (safeguarding), 9 (behaviour policy and records of sanctions for serious misbehaviour), 10 (preventing bullying), 16 (risk assessment), 32 (information for parents) and 34 (leadership and management).

Aim

We build trusting relationships, teach skills and provide predictable support so pupils can learn safely, communicate their needs and participate in school life. Behaviour may communicate distress, pain, anxiety or an unmet need. Staff must investigate these possibilities while protecting everyone from harm.

- **Building Connection:** Connecting with a young person helps to form strong, lasting working relationships that allow them to thrive.
- **Respectful Interactions:** Promoting respectful interactions based on empathy and understanding. Including using some of the strategies highlighted in this document.
- **Confident Communication:** Strategies for confident communication, balancing the needs of the individual with the needs of the organisation. Clear, confident communication that is consistent will support young people to make active positive choices.
- **Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Collaborative approaches to problem-solving, involving young people in decision-making processes. This could include finding resolutions to classroom issues, or even looking at ways to improve the school. Focus should be to develop pupils co-regulation skills, moving towards self regulation to promote learning.

Positive working relationships are about supporting pupils to know their place in the world, understanding the expectations of others and being provided with the tools to meet these. All pupils are taught about respect, equity & equality and the importance of tolerance. Enabling them to be active citizens within their communities and wider world is a crucial part of the work of our schools. We will not tolerate bullying (including cyber bullying) and any pupil involved in bullying or child on child abuse will have intervention tailored and targeted in line with their age and stage of social understanding.

By using positive working relationships with our pupils, we will support, encourage and model respectful treatment of others, care for the environment and develop pupils' skills to work towards independently regulating their emotional responses effectively.

Pupils do not use personal mobile phones during the school day, including breaks, unless an agreed medical, disability-related or safeguarding adjustment requires this. Devices brought to school must be switched off and stored securely under agreed arrangements. Access to communication aids and authorised assistive technology must be maintained. Any restriction must be reasonable and recorded in the pupil's plan.

Communication without demand (Expectation of adults)

Communication without demand helps to set the foundation for positive working relationships with young people. To do this, we must use appropriate communication strategies that allow pupils to feel valued, heard, and important to you. By doing this, when pupils truly need us, or when we do need to place demand on them, the relationship is already there.

- **Clear and Effective Communication:** Strategies for clear and concise communication, avoiding demands and using positive total communication strategies .
- This can just look like a 'good morning' when the children arrive at school, or even knowing what the children have for lunch
- **Active listening means giving full attention, using the pupil's preferred communication and acknowledging feelings. Do not require eye contact, speech or physical touch. Use AAC, visuals, gesture and familiar adults as appropriate.**
- **Positive informed Responses:** Interactions that build on the connections that have been made with the young person. Our positive informed responses reinforce that we care, value, and are interested in the young people in our schools that are based on knowledge of child and known triggers.
- **Allow the processing time identified in the pupil's communication profile; ten seconds may be a starting point but is not a fixed limit. Reduce spoken language and pause before repeating or adapting a message.**

Debriefs (Range of models and strategies)

A debrief helps us understand what happened, how the pupil experienced it and what adults can change. It is supportive, accessible and suited to the pupil's developmental level; it must not assume deliberate wrongdoing or require an admission of fault.

Offer debrief when the pupil is settled and ready, rather than immediately after distress. Do not make return to learning or support conditional on participation or an apology. Gather pupil and staff accounts separately where helpful, and offer support to witnesses without disclosing others' confidential information. Debrief needs to be supported by trusted adults with strong connections who can then have challenging communication. We should use a range of strategies and models to debrief. Including, but not limited to:

- Visuals
- Choice boards
- Helping a child communicate how they are feeling
- Supporting social communication e.g. pre-prepared scripts
- Offering a range of coping strategies.
- Zones of Regulation
- Through one-to-one play
- Using Talking Mats
- Role play
- Quiet space discussion (debrief models)
- Draw Talk
- Being present in a quiet space
- Comic Strip Conversations
- Going for a "walk and talk"
- Using sensory strategies to distract or comfort pupils
- Problem Solving Frames or Social Behaviour Maps

Rebuilds and restorative practice

After a difficult interaction, trusted adults offer reassurance, restore connection and help everyone feel safe. Repair is paced to the pupil's readiness and communication needs; adults also acknowledge and repair any mistakes they made.

Restorative Justice Principles

- Recognising the Impact: Acknowledging the harm caused by the incident, to all involved. This could be just between two pupils, or it could be the wider school community.
- Understanding the Consequences: Exploring the short-term and long-term consequences of the behaviour that came with the dysregulation.

Repairing Relationships

Strategies for repairing damaged relationships and restoring trust. This will be directed by the trusted adult based on the individual needs of the pupil.

- Restorative dialogue is voluntary and carefully assessed for safety. Never require a pupil harmed by bullying, sexual harassment or abuse to meet or reconcile with the other pupil. The DSL leads safeguarding action alongside support.
- Offer safe, developmentally appropriate ways to make amends, such as supported tidying, repair or a chosen apology. Do not compel apologies, impose humiliating tasks or require unsafe repairs.
- Reconciliation: Working towards reconciliation and rebuilding relationships.

Positive Culture

Bullying, discrimination and child-on-child abuse are not tolerated or dismissed as an inevitable part of SEND. Staff protect those affected, report promptly to the DSL on CPOMS and provide individual support. Restorative work cannot replace safeguarding enquiries, referrals or protective measures.

Sanctions

Responses and sanctions are individual, lawful and proportionate. Their purpose is to protect learning and safety and teach useful skills. Before any sanction, consider what the pupil understood, whether needs were met and whether the behaviour arose from disability, distress or an inaccessible demand.

When considering a sanction, staff will consider a pupil's age, level of understanding, special educational needs or disabilities, and any relevant emotional or environmental factors. Reasonable adjustments will always be made in line with the **Equality Act 2010** to ensure that sanctions are fair, proportionate, and supportive of each pupil's wellbeing.

Possible sanctions may include;

- Supported tidying after throwing items, when calm and where this is safe and achievable
- A supported opportunity to repair harm or offer an apology in the pupil's preferred form, without compulsion
- A brief, supported opportunity to finish suitable work at an agreed time; never remove break or lunchtime play, essential regulation or therapy
- A short, explained restriction of an optional activity directly related to a safety concern, with an accessible alternative and a clear route back

The school follows a **engage disengage, re-engage** approach, focusing on understanding the reasons behind behaviour and teaching appropriate alternative strategies. Sanctions are used only when necessary and are designed to help pupils reflect on their actions and make positive choices in the future.

Use the pupil's Engagement Support Plan (ESP), communication profile, healthcare plan and risk assessment. References to a Positive Behaviour Plan (PBP) mean the behaviour-support elements of the ESP. Apply the same principles fairly, rather than identical responses to different needs.

Behaviours requiring assessment and support may include the following. Their occurrence is not, by itself, evidence of deliberate misbehaviour or grounds for a sanction:

- Difficulty joining or remaining in a planned activity;
- Actions that interrupt others' learning;
- Difficulty waiting, taking turns or regulating vocalisations;
- Damaging property;
- Swearing;
- Defacing or destroying work;
- Leaving an activity or seeking space;
- Ignoring or excluding others;
- Insulting or bullying behaviour;
- Discriminatory behaviour;

- Sexualised behaviour requiring developmental and safeguarding assessment;
- Acting aggressively towards people;
- Absconding; and
- Acting in an unsafe manner.

The timetabled teacher or designated cover teacher coordinates safe support; all adults share responsibility. Respond to risk promptly while avoiding unnecessary attention to minor behaviour where safe. Never ignore distress, a disclosure, bullying or an unmet care need.

Whilst there must be consistency in terms of all teachers challenging concerning behaviour, the methods that teachers employ will be suitably differentiated to take account of the level of risk, the pupil's individual needs and abilities, and the context within which the behaviour is taking place. Where pupils have Engagement Support Plans (ESP) or Risk Assessments (RAs) in place, the timetabled teacher must ensure that they are familiar with the details of such documents, follow the strategies they outline, and regularly contribute new information to them through the pupil's class teacher and support staff.

Communicating expectations and choices: check understanding, reduce demands where needed, and explain boundaries calmly. Avoid threats, public confrontation or assumptions that the pupil can control distress on request.

Below is a suggested list of communication strategies for pupils which can support Positive Behaviour for Learning. These strategies are part of the EDR approach:

- Check wellbeing – consider pain, hunger, anxiety, sensory overload and misunderstanding. Offer practical help and accessible communication before redirecting.
- Use calm body language – choose a neutral, reassuring expression and tone appropriate to the pupil; a smile may not be helpful when they feel frightened or upset.
- Reflect on your approach – acknowledge unclear explanations or mistakes and try a more accessible method without blaming the pupil.
- Allow processing time – use the pupil's communication profile, pause and check understanding without repeatedly adding instructions.
- Offer space – avoid standing over pupils. Reduce pressure while maintaining the supervision and safety support they need.
- Speak respectfully – use courteous requests and explain genuine choices. Do not use language intended to secure compliance without understanding.
- Keep language brief – use familiar words, visuals and AAC, with time to respond. Gain attention in the way that works for the pupil; avoid diagnostic stereotypes.
- Recognise progress – notice each pupil's effort without comparing them with peers or using praise to shame another pupil.
- Give specific, preferred feedback – describe a helpful action or effort. Some pupils prefer quiet acknowledgement or no public praise; reflect this in their ESP.
- Offer realistic choices – provide two accessible options where useful, including help or a regulated pause. Do not present a threat as a choice.
- Listen to the explanation – a pupil's account may reveal an unmet need or an adult misunderstanding. Acknowledge it, check the facts and restate any necessary safety boundary.
- Allow recovery – do not demand an immediate apology or reflection during dysregulation. Revisit learning when the pupil is ready.
- Stay calm – avoid arguments and escalating threats. Seek support, maintain supervision and follow the ESP. Any physical intervention must meet the separate safeguards in this policy.

- Adjust timing – use an agreed visual timer only if it helps the pupil. Do not require missed work to be made up during break or lunchtime play, or remove regulation, communication or healthcare support.

All serious incidents and sanctions are **recorded and monitored** by senior staff to ensure consistency and fairness. Pupils (where appropriate) and parents are involved in discussions regarding any significant sanctions, to promote shared understanding and effective support.

Corporal punishment is **strictly prohibited** in all circumstances. Sanctions will never compromise a pupil's dignity, safety, or welfare, and will always be applied in line with the school's **Safeguarding Policy** and the principles of care, respect, and restorative practice.

All staff receive **regular training** in positive behaviour management, de-escalation, and safe practice to ensure a consistent, supportive, and needs-led approach across the school.

Caregiver and Parental Engagement & Support

Work collaboratively with families, recognising their knowledge and circumstances. The school remains responsible for responding to incidents at school; families are not expected to impose additional sanctions or conduct a debrief before the child can return.

- Open and Honest Communication: Maintaining open and honest communication with parents and carers is crucial.
- Collaborative Partnerships: Building collaborative partnerships with parents and carers helps to show young people that the adults working with them are there to support them together. That unity will help pupils to build trust with the staff in school.
- Effective Communication Strategies: Using effective communication strategies will help families to engage positively with their children. Staff should recognise and support the communication needs of families in the same way we do with the pupils.

Recording and Reporting

- Record every use of restrictive physical intervention, every restraint or seclusion incident, and any other significant use of force in writing on CPOMS as soon as practicable, aiming for the same day. Inform the Headteacher promptly and provide parents with written information as soon as practicable, aiming for the same day and, where possible, before the pupil arrives home. A phone call does not replace the written report.
- Staff record their own accounts, obtain appropriate medical help and take part in a supportive review. Review the ESP and risk assessment after significant incidents. Prior parental agreement to a plan does not remove the duty to record and report each incident.
- The CPOMS record must identify everyone involved, the pupil's relevant needs and SEN status, date, time, location and duration; antecedents and de-escalation; the intervention and degree of force; why it was necessary; injuries, medical assessment and support; pupil and witness accounts; and when and how parents were informed. Record any delay and follow-up actions. Log injuries through the accident process as well.
- Written information for parents must explain when and where it happened, duration, why it was necessary, the intervention and degree of force, injuries and follow-up support. If informing a parent

is likely to cause serious harm to the child, consult the DSL immediately, document the decision and report to a parent who can safely receive it or, if none, the local authority where the child ordinarily lives. Include a local authority accommodating the child under section 20 where applicable.

- Any concern about inappropriate adult force or restraint must follow the staff-allegations procedure, including LADO referral where the threshold is met. Parents and pupils can use the Complaints Policy; staff can use whistleblowing routes. A debrief must not delay a safeguarding referral.
- Report child-on-child concerns immediately to the DSL and record on CPOMS. Assess the needs and safety of all children involved without prejudging their accounts. Inform parents appropriately unless doing so may increase risk, following safeguarding advice.
- Behaviours identified as bullying are recorded on CPOMS by staff and tracked by leaders. Class teachers work with parents to ensure that they are aware of the situation for all pupils involved and personalised plans are updated.

Challenging Conversations & Tricky Truths

Offer clear, compassionate explanations at a time and in a form the pupil can manage. Support understanding of emotions and safety without forcing a difficult conversation or treating distress as a failure to cooperate.

- **Use AAC, visuals, play, trusted adults or advocacy to support reflection. Stop or postpone a discussion if it increases distress; do not make participation a condition of care or inclusion.**
- **Support safe problem-solving at the pupil's developmental level. Intervene to prevent harm, bullying or intimidation; do not simply watch a conflict escalate. Adults may need to resolve an immediate safety issue before pupils can participate.**
- **Setting Boundaries:** Establishing and maintaining clear, healthy boundaries in relationships helps pupils gain a clear understanding of their role within the school community and within their relationships. It also gives them consistency they can work with. If staff are emotionally dysregulated or unpredictable, pupils may find it difficult to trust them as reliable sources of co-regulation
- **Delivering Developmental Feedback:** Strategies for delivering what could be negative feedback in a constructive and supportive way.
- **Addressing Challenging Behaviour & Managing Difficult Situations:** Staff should address challenging behaviour based on the pupil needs, and what their Engagement Support Plans (ESP) states.

Mirroring and Modelling

Mirroring and modelling are strategies staff use to show pupils how they want them to be in difficult moments. Using mirroring can help young people feel calm, settled, and willing to try difficult things.

- **The Power of Modelling:** The importance of modelling positive behaviours and attitudes.
- **Model calm, predictable communication. Do not mimic a pupil's distressed actions, facial expressions or vocalisations in a way that could shame or escalate them.**
- **Supporting and Modelling Social Communication:** Social communication can be nurtured through modelling, practice, and real-life interactions. If a pupil uses language that may not match the context or their intent, we can support them by offering alternative ways to express themselves that align with the situation while respecting their individual communication style.

Environment

How the school looks and feels helps to promote a positive learning environment. It is important that staff have a positive attitude towards their learning spaces. Showing love, care, and pride in our environment will help the pupils understand that we have a positive relationship with our jobs.

- **Creating a Positive Environment:** Utilising physical and social environments that promote positivity and care.
- **Sensory Considerations:** Understanding and addressing individual sensory needs to create a comfortable and supportive environment.
- **Routine and Structure:** The importance of routine and structure cannot be understated. When expectations are clear, children can thrive. Routine and structure can take time to embed but once embedded it should be maintained throughout the school year.
- **Visuals-** Using visuals in each classroom will ensure consistency and embed routines.

Continual professional development

All staff receive induction in this policy, safeguarding and pupil-specific plans before taking responsibility for pupils. Pupil-facing teams revisit practice at least half-termly; other staff receive annual updates. Physical-intervention competence requires separate practical training and refreshers appropriate to the role and provider's requirements.

Leadership and Management

Leaders in school are responsible for ensuring that actions taken to deal with situations are reasonable and proportionate, supporting learning to continue and addressing concerns for all pupils involved. Working positively with pupils is focused on understanding their stage of learning and the impact that their needs can have on meeting expectations. The systems in place support leaders to reinforce the principles of restorative justice and the actions that can be taken include:

- Updates to Engagement Support Plans identifying personalised strategies to manage situations for pupils
- Environmental adaptations including changes to locations that pupils can access to ensure that everyone can continue to learn.
- Modifications to curriculum (guided by the needs of the pupil)
- Restorative acts to support pupils to repair with their school communities (on an individual and group level)

Only the Headteacher, or formally authorised acting Headteacher, may decide a suspension or permanent exclusion under the school's separate policy. Unmet SEND or disability alone is not a proper basis for exclusion. Review adjustments and provision with the family, SENCO and placing authority, seeking an urgent EHCP review where necessary. Do not send pupils home informally to "cool off", make attendance conditional on a parent staying, or use a reduced timetable as a behaviour sanction.

The Headteacher reviews incidents, sanctions and restrictive interventions at least termly, including frequency, duration, injuries, pupil experience and patterns affecting pupils with particular needs or protected characteristics. Check whether support reduces risk and whether reporting is timely.

The proprietor body oversees implementation and receives suitably anonymised analysis through governance arrangements. Review the policy by September 2027, and earlier after serious incidents or changes in law. Make the policy available to parents and explain it accessibly to pupils. Approval of this revision is pending proprietor-body ratification.

Engage Disengage Reengage (EDR)

Leicester Therapeutic School uses Engage, Disengage, Re-engage (EDR) as its behaviour-support framework. It supports positive relationships, prevention, de-escalation and reflective practice; it does not create authority to use force or replace current law and safeguarding guidance.

Engage allows staff to engage with behaviour professionally and accurately in order to improve outcomes for pupils.

Disengage focuses on reducing demands, creating safe space and de-escalating distress. Physical intervention is exceptional and subject to this policy. EDR awareness is not a qualification to use Team Teach or any other physical technique.

Reengage focuses on reflective processes needed to secure and demonstrate the impact of EDR and how accurate reporting and recording systems can generate meaningful data to drive whole-school improvement.

Leaders check training records and competence and provide support tailored to pupils' needs. Any named physical-intervention programme must be delivered and refreshed by appropriately qualified trainers; do not assume internal EDR training certifies staff in that programme.

There are 5 frameworks that EDR is based upon:

1. Behaviour for Learning

Adults can support children and young people by the quality of our relationships with each other and them. These relationships are crucial. Each adult is a significant adult for our children and young people. Supporting Positive Behaviour for Learning is the result of the designated teacher or staff's commitment and dedication to building positive relationships with groups of pupils and with each individual pupil within the group. Pupils are more likely to adopt Positive Behaviour for Learning habits if the teacher/staff is able to demonstrate respect for each pupil and their individual needs and preferences by investing time in building those relationships. Children and young people at Leicester Therapeutic School may find learning difficult; learning new behaviour is a task, just like learning to read or write. As adults, we must consider the learning styles and needs of children and young people; we must also have realistic expectations about the rate of progress a child will make when learning to adapt or develop new behaviours. Most of our children and young people learn in small, incremental steps over a very long period of time.

2. Positive Behaviour Support

How children behave gives us important information about how they are feeling. A Positive Behaviour Policy supporting children to effectively communicate is a very important part of supporting children and young people to behave appropriately. Children with severe and complex needs will need a personalised approach to behaviour management and consideration must be given to sensory needs, signs of pain or illness and levels of stimulation and engagement.

3. Restorative Practice

Restorative practice can support relationships when it is safe, voluntary and developmentally appropriate. It involves listening, understanding impact and finding practical ways to repair harm. Its effectiveness is reviewed for each pupil; it must not replace safeguarding action or pressure a child to reconcile.

4. Pupil Voice

Pupil Voice is a framework for more meaningful pupil engagement in schools. Pupil Voice provides pupils with systems and structures to enable them to contribute to school policy and practice and have a genuine role in designing their learning environment and curriculum on the premise that when pupils are more actively engaged in the system, they are more likely to actively engage with the system.

5. Token Economy

Rewards, including tokens or stickers, may be used where the pupil finds them motivating and they support individual learning goals. Do not use public rankings, collective punishment or loss of already-earned rewards. Food, water, communication aids, sensory regulation, relationships, therapy and curriculum entitlement must never depend on earning tokens.

Embedding EDR across the school

As part of their CPD, all staff will receive a training delivered by Gemma James (EDR lead). Teachers can also request training to be delivered for class groups if they wish to discuss individual children or scenarios. The EDR approach is part of the whole school culture and is embedded through the 5 parts of the framework.

Each pupil's ESP is co-produced with the pupil, family and relevant professionals and linked to EHCP outcomes, communication and healthcare needs. Record triggers, early signs, helpful adjustments, preventive strategies and responses to risk. Review at least termly and after significant incidents. Relevant staff must be able to access the current plan securely before supporting the pupil.

Serious Risk

Serious Risk Behaviour is behaviour that presents a risk of physical or emotional harm to pupils or staff, or that risks significant damage to property. If, despite all attempts to divert, distract and de-escalate, behaviour becomes serious, the teacher needs to take charge of the situation calmly and assertively to manage the risks appropriately. In such situations, the teacher may need to employ some or all of the following strategies:

- Offer a safe, supervised space identified in the ESP, with an adult supporting the pupil. An agreed regulation break is voluntary and the pupil can leave. If staff prevent leaving, it is a restrictive intervention and may be seclusion; apply the safeguards, recording and reporting requirements below.

- Remove the group – Sometimes it is safer to remove the other pupils and take them to a free room. Teachers can identify free rooms by calling reception. The
- safety of the pupil left behind is still the teacher’s responsibility and therefore appropriate supervision must be in place.
- Call for assistance – In some instances, it may be appropriate for the teacher to call for additional staffing to support. The teacher is the person who makes this decision and may direct a colleague to find someone in reception or use their walkie talkie.
- Use of force – section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 permits reasonable force for specified purposes, including preventing injury, an offence, property damage or disorder. This school prioritises prevention and uses force only where necessary and proportionate, never to punish or secure routine compliance. Use the least restrictive effective response for the shortest time and stop when no longer necessary.

Searching and Confiscation

Searching can play a critical role in ensuring that schools are safe environments for all pupils and staff. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and pupil welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour through which pupils can learn and thrive.

Searches must respect dignity, privacy, safeguarding and Equality Act duties, with adjustments for communication, sensory and developmental needs. The legal references at the start of this policy apply.

- [Behaviour in schools \(DfE, February 2024\)](#)
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Education Act 1996, sections 550ZA–550ZD (searching powers)
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective April 2026)
- [Supporting students with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice.](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)

Specifically, this section is based on:

- Education Act 2002, section 157, and Independent School Standards paragraphs 7 and 9
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, sections 91 and 93, as applicable to confiscation and reasonable force
- All sections of [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)

The Headteacher and authorised staff may search without consent where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a statutory prohibited item, or an item expressly identified in this policy as searchable under school rules. Other searches require the pupil’s informed agreement. Explain the process accessibly and seek cooperation in every case.

Statutory prohibited items include:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs

- stolen items
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil).
- an article specified in regulations:
 1. tobacco and cigarette papers
 2. fireworks
 3. pornographic images.
 4. School-rule items also banned and searchable: vapes/e-cigarettes and related liquids, lighters and matches. Their status alone does not permit force to search; assess any separate immediate safety risk under the law.

Before the Search

Only the headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the headteacher, can carry out a search. The headteacher can authorise individual members of staff to search for specific items, or all items set out in the school's behaviour policy.

Assess reasonable grounds, urgency and the likely effect on this pupil. Inability to understand or consent is not agreement. Consult the Headteacher or DSL when uncertain and use an interpreter or communication support where needed.

The authorised member of staff should make an assessment of how urgent the need for a search is and should consider the risk to other pupils and staff.

Before any search takes place, the member of staff conducting the search should explain to the pupil why they are being searched, how and where the search is going to take place and give them the opportunity to ask any questions.

The authorised member of staff should always seek the co-operation of the pupil before conducting a search. If the pupil is not willing to co-operate with the search, the member of staff should consider why this is. Reasons might include that they:

- are in possession of a prohibited item
- do not understand the instruction
- are unaware of what a search may involve
- have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.

For a non-urgent refusal, seek advice from the Headteacher or DSL, maintain safe supervision and use de-escalation. Do not automatically sanction a pupil whose needs prevent cooperation.

During a Search

An appropriate location for the search should be found. Where possible, this should be away from other pupils. The search must only take place on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip.

The member of staff conducting the search must be of the same sex as the pupil being searched. There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search.

There is a limited exception to this rule. This is that a member of staff can search a pupil of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present only:

- if the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; and
- in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is same sex as the pupil or it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.

Where the emergency exception is used, report immediately to the Headteacher or DSL and record the serious-harm risk and why the usual safeguards were impracticable.

Searches are limited to outer clothing, pockets and possessions. Staff must never conduct a strip search or require removal of clothing beyond outer clothing. Search possessions with the pupil and another staff member present unless the statutory urgent serious-harm exception applies. Police involvement does not remove the school's safeguarding duties; the DSL must oversee welfare, appropriate-adult arrangements and aftercare in line with KCSIE and DfE search guidance.

Force must not be used to search for items banned only by school rules. Any permitted force for statutory prohibited items must be necessary and proportionate. Do not use force solely because a pupil will not cooperate; seek senior support and consider safer alternatives.

Recording and Reporting

Any search by a member of staff for a prohibited item and all searches conducted by police officers should be recorded in the school's safeguarding reporting system, including whether or not an item is found. This will allow the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to identify possible risks and initiate a safeguarding response if required. All searches for items banned by the school rules should also be recorded. Staff members should follow the school's safeguarding and behaviour policy in these cases.

The information included in the record will include:

- the date, time and location of the search
- which pupil was searched
- who conducted the search and any other adults or pupils present
- what was being searched for
- the reason for searching
- what items, if any, were found
- what follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search.
- Inform parents of a search for a prohibited item as soon as practicable, explaining the reason, findings and follow-up, unless safeguarding advice requires a different approach. Offer the pupil support after any search and notify the DSL of concerns. School policy is to record and communicate all searches, including school-rule items.

Confiscation

An authorised staff member carrying out a search can confiscate any item that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting:

- poses a risk to staff or pupils
- is prohibited, or identified in the school rules for which a search can be made

- is evidence in relation to an offence.

Notify the Headteacher and DSL, secure items safely and record the chain of handling and decision to return, retain or pass them to police. Weapons and suspected illegal drugs must be handled through the DfE guidance and police advice; never return an unsafe item to a child. Do not view, copy, forward or delete suspected sexual images of children: secure the device and contact the DSL immediately.

Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force

The DfE guidance Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools has applied since 1 April 2026. The following school procedures must be read together with the Recording and Reporting section and Appendix A.

1. Restrictive interventions limit movement, liberty or freedom to act. They include restraint and seclusion, and may occur without direct physical contact. A significant force incident means force beyond ordinary appropriate supportive contact; injury is not required. Record and report it even if brief.
2. Ordinary supportive touch is not restraint where it is accepted, appropriate and the pupil remains free to move away. Holding or guiding becomes restrictive if it overcomes resistance or prevents free movement.
3. Any force must be necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances, using the least force for the shortest time.
4. Blocking a path or preventing exit can be restrictive even without a hold. Staff must assess the actual effect on the child, rather than the name given to a technique or space.
5. Restraint restricts a pupil's movement or liberty, with or without physical contact. Seclusion means confining a pupil away from others and preventing them leaving.
6. Check breathing, circulation, distress and medical risks throughout any physical intervention. Release or adapt the intervention immediately if it creates danger; summon first aid or emergency services where needed. Arrange and record a welfare and injury check afterwards.

School prohibitions: no face-down/prone restraint, seated double embrace, double basket-hold, nose distraction or deliberate pain-compliance techniques. Never obstruct breathing, apply pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen, or use restraint as punishment. No mechanical or chemical restraint is authorised by this policy.

The statutory power belongs to school staff and people expressly authorised by the Headteacher to have lawful control or charge of pupils; volunteers do not automatically have this authority. Assess the risk of intervening against not intervening, including trauma, disability and health needs. Prior parental consent is not required for lawful emergency force, and consent cannot make an unsafe or unlawful intervention acceptable.

Training or a written plan does not make every intervention lawful. Staff must justify the necessity and proportionality of what they did in the actual circumstances. Report any concern about unsafe or inappropriate adult conduct immediately through safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures.

Physical Intervention/Restraint

Restraint is a restrictive intervention with potential physical and emotional risks. Prevention, environmental adjustments and de-escalation are the first response wherever practicable.

- Use only when necessary; do not delay action required to avert immediate harm merely to complete a sequence of de-escalation steps.
- Where foreseeable, identify risk and preventive measures in the ESP and a written risk assessment. The plan is not blanket permission to restrain.
- Children with profound and complex needs will need a personalized approach to behaviour management and consideration must be given to sensory needs, signs of pain or illness and levels of stimulation and engagement.
- Assess necessity in the actual situation; not intervening physically is not automatically neglect. Calling assistance, moving others to safety and maintaining observation may be the safer response.
- If used, it must be recorded in the school's incident recording system- CPOMS
- Where restrictive intervention is foreseeable, a written risk assessment is required. Review it after each significant incident and after any unplanned restraint.
- Review with the pupil, family and relevant professionals how to prevent recurrence. Any planned physical method needs an individual assessment, health considerations and competent staff.
- Staff should update the child or young person's ESP after a significant incident, outlining any interventions or specific approaches. As before this should occur after a reflection meeting led by the Behaviour Specialist
- Staff must understand the risks and limits of any physical method used; EDR communication strategies alone do not establish practical competence.
- Follow the written parent-notification requirements and safeguarding exception in Recording and Reporting. Make contact before home arrival where practicable, without delaying necessary care.

What Is 'Physical Intervention'?

There is a difference between Physical Intervention and Restrictive Physical Intervention. In this school these are defined as follows:

Type Definition Example

Non-restrictive physical interventions- Where physical touch is used to support the young person and they have the choice to move away from the touch or where a cause of distress can be removed without the need to touch the young person.

In this school this may include:

- Accepted guidance from A to B, only while the pupil is free to withdraw
- Removal of a cause of distress, such as adjusting temperature, light or background noise.

Restrictive physical interventions limit movement through physical contact or force. Non-contact restrictions must also be recognised and recorded. Examples include:

- Using physical interventions
- Preventing a pupil leaving a room; moving other pupils away alone is not restraint of the pupil who remains
- Blocking a person's path

Duty of Care

Staff should be aware that their employment imposes upon them a duty of care to maintain an acceptable level of safety. It is acknowledged that the behaviour of children and young people can become dangerous and physical intervention may be required. This is inevitably a high-risk action. Guidelines cannot anticipate every situation and, therefore, the sound judgement of staff always is crucial. This may mean not getting physically involved if this would put you at direct risk but could include summoning relevant assistance. It is not acceptable to do nothing.

The two types of physical interventions likely to be required in the school are: -

Emergency/unplanned interventions- Use of force which occurs in response to unforeseen events. This should always be a trigger for a Risk Assessment and planning once it has occurred.

Foreseeable risks require individual prevention and response planning, informed by the pupil's needs and relevant health advice. Record the proposed response and limits in the ESP and risk assessment. Generic assessments alone are insufficient for a pupil with identified individual risk. Reassess necessity during every incident.

Staff training

All staff will receive initial and regular training in the **Engage, Disengage, Re-engage** approach to behaviour support, ensuring a consistent, relational, and trauma-informed response across the school. This training will equip staff to proactively engage pupils through positive relationships and clear expectations, to recognise when a pupil is becoming dysregulated and to safely disengage to de-escalate situations, and to effectively re-engage pupils in learning through supportive and restorative practices. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the needs of pupils with SEND, including communication differences, sensory needs, and emotional regulation. Ongoing professional development, coaching, and reflective practice opportunities will ensure that staff maintain confidence and consistency in applying this approach.

Glossary of terms used in policy

Active Listening

Techniques to show full attention and understanding during communication, including empathy, non-verbal cues, and validation.

CPOMS

The platform used for documenting and reporting incidents involving restrictive physical intervention (RPI) and other significant events.

Boundaries

Clear, healthy limits set in relationships to provide consistency and promote trust within the school community.

Challenging Conversations

Difficult but necessary discussions to help pupils develop emotional regulation and clarity about their emotions and actions.

Child on Child Abuse

Behaviours between children that cause harm, including bullying or other forms of abusive interaction.

Clear Communication

Concise, consistent communication strategies that promote understanding and confidence in young people.

Collaborative Partnerships

Joint efforts between staff, pupils, and families to build trust and support positive outcomes for young people.

Collaborative Problem-Solving

A method of working with pupils to resolve issues and improve their ability to self-regulate and make positive choices.

Communication without Demand

Strategies to foster relationships with pupils through non-demanding, positive interactions, such as greetings or casual conversations.

Corporal Punishment

The use of physical force as a disciplinary measure, which is strictly prohibited under this policy.

Debrief

A reflective process after challenging interactions to understand decisions, rebuild relationships, and offer support to all involved.

De-escalation Techniques

Non-physical strategies used to calm and manage situations before they escalate into dangerous or harmful behaviours.

Deprivation of Liberty

A legal concept distinct from an ordinary brief restriction. It depends on the child's circumstances and the nature, intensity and duration of restrictions. An ESP or parental agreement does not itself provide legal authority for a deprivation of liberty; seek specialist advice promptly if arrangements may amount to one.

Empathy

The ability to understand and share the feelings of others, fostering connection and respect.

Engagement Support Plan (ESP)

Individualised plans tailored to each pupil's needs, guiding staff in managing and supporting challenging behaviours.

Equality of Access / Learner Passport

Documents outlining accommodations to ensure an inclusive learning environment for all pupils.

Mirroring

Adults modelling calm, respectful communication; not imitating or amplifying the pupil's distress.

Modelling

Demonstrating positive behaviours and attitudes to guide pupils in social and emotional interactions.

Positive Culture

A school environment that views mistakes as opportunities for growth and encourages restorative practices.

Processing and Response Time

The additional time pupils may need to understand and respond to information, requiring patience from staff.

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

Physical actions taken as a last resort to prevent harm, which must be documented and communicated per policy.

Restorative Dialogue

Conversations aimed at repairing harm and restoring trust after conflicts or incidents.

Risk Assessment

A process within the ESP to evaluate potential risks and outline tailored support strategies for managing behavioural challenges.

Routine and Structure

Consistent practices and schedules that help pupils feel secure and supported in their learning environment.

Sensory Considerations

Adjustments made to the environment or interactions to address individual sensory needs of pupils.

Social Communication

Interactions that foster understanding, respect, and connection, supported by modeling and tailored strategies.

Zones of Regulation

A framework to help pupils recognise and manage their emotions by categorising them into color-coded zones.

Appendix A

1. Legal Frameworks

This policy adheres to the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 1996 and 2011
- Education and inspections Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, effective April 2026)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025; Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 93A

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Code of Practice 2015](#)

2. Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) refers to the use of physical contact to manage situations where a pupil's behaviour poses a significant risk of harm to themselves, others, or property.

RPI is only employed:

- To prevent imminent harm to the pupil or others.
- To prevent significant damage to property.
- To ensure safety in situations of dangerous behaviour that cannot be managed by other means.

Principles for Using RPI

- RPI must be reasonable, proportionate, and absolutely necessary to manage the risk.
- Use prevention and de-escalation wherever practicable; act promptly where necessary to avert immediate harm.
- Interventions must prioritise the safety, dignity, and well-being of all individuals involved.
- RPI must not involve the deliberate infliction of pain or techniques likely to cause injury.

Training and Review

- Staff expected to use planned physical techniques must have appropriate practical training, assessed competence and refreshers. The Headteacher checks records. In an unforeseen emergency, staff may still need to act lawfully to prevent harm; lack of training is not an instruction to leave a child unprotected.
- Leaders review incidents, pupil and staff wellbeing, training needs and whether safer alternatives could prevent recurrence.
- Record findings and actions, check completion and share learning without disclosing unnecessary personal information.

3. Restriction of Liberty

Seclusion is confinement away from others where a pupil is prevented from leaving. A voluntary, supervised regulation break is different. Restriction can arise through an obstructed exit or making a pupil believe they will be punished for leaving, as well as a locked door. A deprivation of liberty is a separate legal question and cannot be authorised by this policy.

Guidance on Use

- Seclusion may be used only exceptionally as a necessary, proportionate safety response to protect others from harm during severe dysregulation, never as punishment or a threat. It must end as soon as the immediate risk reduces.
- Any space used must be safe, non-threatening, suitable for the child and continuously supervised. Seek senior assistance promptly; do not use a room merely because it is available.

- Pupils must have their basic needs met (e.g., access to water and the toilet).
- Maintain continuous direct supervision and communication, and reassess necessity throughout. Do not leave the pupil alone or set an automatic minimum duration.
- Locking doors to enforce isolation is prohibited by this school. Do not block an exit except where an exceptional safety intervention meets the safeguards above. Record what actually happened.

Accountability

- Record and report every seclusion or restraint, including non-contact restraint, and every other significant use of force under the main Recording and Reporting section; SLT reviews each incident.
- Provide written information to parents as soon as practicable, aiming for the same day. Follow the serious-harm exception and alternative reporting route in the main section.

4. Suspension and Exclusions

Suspension is a formal temporary exclusion from attendance; permanent exclusion ends the placement through the school's applicable procedure. Informal send-homes and punishment-based reduced timetables are not permitted.

Only the Headteacher or formally authorised acting Headteacher may decide a suspension or permanent exclusion. Apply the separate policy, Equality Act duties, EHCP arrangements and placement terms, with written reasons and review/complaint routes.

5. Prohibited Sanctions

Staff should be aware that the following sanctions are prohibited, and should never be used:

- Corporal punishment
- Deprivation of food or drink
- Requiring pupils to wear distinctive or inappropriate clothing
- Withholding communication, AAC, sensory regulation, medical care, toilet access or necessary support
- Withholding education as punishment, humiliating treatment, collective punishment, forced apologies or informal exclusion. A supervised change of learning space must remain appropriate, time-limited and supported.

Appendix B | Engagement Support Plan Format (ESP)

Engagement Support Plan (Co-produced with pupil, parent/carers and relevant professionals)	
Name:	Class:
Trusted adult; communication/AAC; relevant EHCP outcomes and healthcare needs:	

<u>Six things I need to help me regulate; early signs and triggers</u>	
Positive Strategies that help keep me engaged related to my 'Six Things'	
Minor dysregulation What does this look like?	How to help me, including Positive Physical Interaction
-	Accepted support only: preferred reassurance or sensory strategy; never assume consent to a hug or deep pressure.
Moderate dysregulation What does this look like?	How to help me, including Physical Support
-	Offer a supervised quiet space and accessible choices. If movement is prevented, apply restrictive-intervention safeguards.
Serious risk / restrictive intervention	Specify assessed risks, prevention, trained responses and limits. Record all restraint/seclusion and significant force on CPOMS; give parents written information under the policy.
How to support my debrief: e.g. 'the way I like to calm', 'the words I like to use'	

<u>Historical Behaviours in the past 12 months (even if they are no longer present)</u>
<u>Relevant previous distressing incidents and what helps me feel safe (record only necessary information)</u>
<u>Relevant home context shared appropriately; detailed safeguarding history is held separately with restricted access</u>
<u>Risk assessment reference; health advice; staff training required; review date and agreed actions</u>

These people know about my plan and understand the work that is being done to help me	
Parents:	Date:
Class teacher:	Date:
Class:	Date:
Inclusion Practitioner	Date:
Inclusion Practitioner	Date:
Inclusion Practitioner	Date:
Review at least termly and after significant incidents. Share relevant content securely with parents and staff supporting the pupil. Pupil and parent involvement is not blanket consent to restrictive intervention.	

After a significant incident, support the pupil and staff, gather their views separately as appropriate, and review prevention, adult actions and next steps. Record on CPOMS. Where possible, a staff member not involved should facilitate review.

Appendix C

Descriptor	Description
High Level Challenge	Any serious safety incident. Record all restraint or seclusion and significant force, including where there was no injury or direct physical contact.

Persistent Dysregulation	Repeated incidents of dysregulation across the week eg. spitting at peers throughout the day across the week. This should then be added to a young person's ESP.
Bullying (inc. Cyber Bullying)	Repeated harmful behaviour involving an imbalance of power, including online or discriminatory bullying. Assess intent developmentally, but protect pupils even where intent is unclear. A single serious incident can still be abuse and must be reported.
Significant Behaviour of Note	Incident where significant change in 'usual' behaviours are demonstrated. Examples include sexualised behaviours, acts of discrimination and bullying, cyberbullying.