



THAMESFIELD  
COLLEGE

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# Restrictive Intervention Policy

Relationships. Routines. Repair.  
For implementation from September 2026

## Policy statement

This policy sets out how Thamesfield College prevents restrictive intervention wherever possible and ensures any use of reasonable force is rare, lawful, proportionate and used only to keep pupils and staff safe.



Changing Lives | Creating Futures  
Thamesfield College | Pupil Referral Unit  
Restrictive Intervention Policy



CHANGING LIVES | CREATING FUTURES

## Restrictive Intervention Policy

*Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Intervention*

### Policy statement

This policy sets out how Thamesfield College prevents restrictive intervention wherever possible and ensures any use of reasonable force is rare, lawful, proportionate and used only to keep pupils and staff safe.

### Document control information

| Policy name    | Restrictive Intervention Policy                                |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| School         | Thamesfield College                                            |
| School type    | Pupil Referral Unit                                            |
| Policy owner   | Headteacher                                                    |
| Approved by    | Management Committee                                           |
| Status         | Draft for review                                               |
| Version        | 1.0                                                            |
| Effective from | September 2026                                                 |
| Review period  | Annually                                                       |
| Next review    | September 2027, or earlier following Team Teach implementation |

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## 1. Purpose and scope

At Thamesfield College, restrictive intervention is understood as a safety response, not a behaviour management strategy. It is not used to make pupils comply, complete work, accept a sanction, stay in a room or follow an instruction.

Our first response is always relationships, routines, co-regulation and skilled de-escalation. Restrictive intervention may only be considered where there is an immediate risk of harm and no safer alternative available.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, visitors and school activities, including off-site visits, outdoor learning, DofE, community activities and transport arrangements linked to the school.

### **This policy aims to:**

- reduce the need for restrictive intervention through relationships, routines, PACE-informed practice and skilled de-escalation;
- ensure staff understand that physical intervention is a last resort and not a response to non-compliance;
- protect the dignity, safety and rights of pupils and staff;
- make clear how incidents are recorded, reported, reflected on and repaired;
- ensure the policy is applied fairly for pupils with SEND, pupils with protected characteristics and pupils with additional vulnerabilities.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- Department for Education guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools;
- Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including the power to use reasonable force;
- Education Act 1996 provisions relating to searches;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice.

Where guidance or legislation changes, the Headteacher will update practice and bring the policy back to the Management Committee where required.

### 3. Definitions

| Term                            | What this means at Thamesfield                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Restrictive intervention</b> | An intervention that prevents, restricts or subdues movement of the body or part of the body. It is used only as a last resort to reduce immediate risk.           |
| <b>Reasonable force</b>         | Physical contact or action using no more force than is necessary, for the shortest possible time, to prevent immediate harm.                                       |
| <b>Restraint</b>                | A restrictive intervention that immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not involve direct physical contact.                                 |
| <b>Seclusion</b>                | A pupil being away from others and not free to leave for safety reasons. It must never be used as a punishment, threat or convenience.                             |
| <b>Significant incident</b>     | Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil, or where seclusion or restraint has been used. |

### 4. Our Thamesfield position

| The core principle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. Thamesfield's operational expectation is tighter: staff should not put hands on pupils unless there is an immediate risk of harm to the pupil or another person and there is no safer alternative available. |

#### Staff must not:

- use force as punishment, threat, deterrent or convenience;
- put hands on a pupil to gain compliance;
- block doors, stand in front of exits or use their body as a barrier;
- crowd a pupil, stand in their personal space or physically force a response;
- chase pupils down the road or follow in a way that creates risk to pupils, staff or the public;
- restrain a pupil on the ground;
- use any hold or action that affects breathing, circulation, airway or dignity;
- use seclusion as a sanction or because a pupil is being difficult.

*The thread running through this policy is simple: we de-escalate, give space, reduce risk, record properly and repair afterwards.*

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

| Role                        | Responsibility                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Management Committee</b> | Approves the policy, receives information about restrictive intervention and challenges leaders to identify patterns, disproportionality and improvement actions.                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>          | Owns implementation, ensures staff are trained and supported, monitors incidents and ensures the policy aligns with safeguarding, behaviour, SEND and health and safety arrangements. |
| <b>SLT and DSL team</b>     | Support staff during incidents, make dynamic risk decisions, coordinate communication with parents/carers and ensure safeguarding recording and follow-up are completed.              |
| <b>All staff</b>            | Read and follow the policy, use de-escalation strategies, seek support early, record incidents promptly and take part in debrief, repair and review.                                  |

## 6. Prevention and de-escalation

Restrictive intervention is always a last resort. Our primary focus is prevention, early help, relational safety and skilled de-escalation.

### Staff should use strategies including:

- calm tone, controlled body language and appropriate physical distance;
- reducing demands or pausing an interaction where this lowers risk;
- giving clear, limited choices;
- removing an audience;
- using trusted adults and pastoral staff;
- allowing processing and recovery time;
- using PACE-informed language: playfulness where appropriate, acceptance, curiosity and empathy;
- using the pupil's SSP, risk assessment and known regulation strategies.

**Staff should seek support early. Asking for another adult is not a failure; it is good risk management.**

## 7. Pupils leaving rooms or site

Staff must not block doors or physically prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom, office or regulation space. If a pupil chooses to leave, staff should allow them to leave, maintain calm supervision where safe to do so, alert SLT or pastoral staff and follow the pupil's risk assessment and safeguarding procedures.

The only exception is where allowing the pupil to leave would create an immediate and serious risk of harm, for example moving directly into traffic, towards a known conflict, towards a weapon or towards another person

with clear intent to harm. Even in these circumstances, staff should use the least restrictive option for the shortest possible time.

#### **If a pupil leaves site**

Pupils are told during induction that leaving site without permission is unsafe and is at their own risk. If a pupil leaves site, staff must not chase them down the road or follow in a way that increases risk. SLT/DSL must be alerted immediately. Parents/carers will be contacted. Where the pupil's safety cannot be confirmed, the school will contact the police and report the pupil missing. This will be recorded on Arbor and CPOMS as appropriate.

## **8. Acceptable and unacceptable use of force**

All staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. At Thamesfield, this power should only be used where it is necessary, proportionate and the safest available option to prevent immediate harm.

#### **Reasonable force may be considered to prevent a pupil from:**

- seriously hurting themselves or another person;
- committing a criminal offence that creates immediate risk;
- causing serious damage where this creates immediate risk of harm;
- creating a serious and immediate safety risk in or beyond the school.

#### **The following are never acceptable:**

- using force for punishment, threat or deterrent;
- using force because a pupil refuses work, refuses to move or is verbally abusive;
- using any action that affects airway, breathing or circulation;
- using force on the ground except where a pupil has unintentionally gone to the ground and staff are moving away as quickly as possible;
- using restrictive intervention for staff convenience or because other reasonable options have not been tried.

## **9. Seclusion, regulation and reflection spaces**

Reflection time, supervised regulation time or waiting with staff is not seclusion where the pupil is not prevented from leaving. Seclusion only occurs where a pupil is prevented from leaving a space for safety reasons.

Seclusion must never be used as a sanction, threat, convenience or consequence. It may only be used where there is a clear and immediate risk of harm, and only for the shortest time necessary.

#### **During any period of seclusion:**

- the environment must be calm, safe and as non-threatening as possible;
- the pupil must be continuously supervised by a known adult wherever possible;
- staff must prioritise co-regulation, reassurance and emotional safety;
- the pupil must be supported to return as soon as they are able to do so safely;

- the incident must be recorded, reported and followed by reflection and relational repair.

## 10. Searches and physical intervention

Searches are managed in line with the Behaviour, Relationships and Culture Policy and current guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

Reasonable force may only be used to search for prohibited items where there are reasonable grounds and where the law allows it. It must not be used to search for items that are banned only by school rules, such as mobile phones.

At Thamesfield, searches should be planned, calm, proportionate and led by authorised staff. The DSL or a member of SLT should be involved wherever possible.

## 11. SEND, SSPs and individual risk assessment

We recognise that pupils with SEND, communication needs, sensory needs, trauma histories or other vulnerabilities may be more likely to experience distress and more vulnerable to the impact of restrictive intervention.

Staff should use SSPs, risk assessments and knowledge from staff who know the pupil well to identify triggers, preferred regulation strategies, reasonable adjustments and safer alternatives.

Where a pupil has an increased likelihood of needing restrictive intervention, the school will consider whether an individual risk assessment or regulation plan is required. This will be reviewed after significant incidents and with parents/carers where appropriate.

## 12. Training, Team Teach and risk assessment

The school will ensure staff are supported to use preventative strategies, de-escalation, relational practice and safe decision-making.

### Team Teach - January 2027

All staff will receive Team Teach training in January 2027. This training will support staff to use de-escalation, risk reduction, communication and safe practice consistently. Team Teach training does not change the school's expectation that physical intervention is a last resort and should only be used where there is an immediate risk of harm and no safer alternative.

Risk assessments will be used where staff regularly work alongside pupils where restrictive intervention may be more likely. This is part of the school's duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff.

### 13. Recording and reporting

The school records and reports significant incidents involving force, seclusion incidents and restraint incidents.

| Arbor                                                                                                           | CPOMS                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Behaviour incident, restrictive intervention record, parent/carers contact, follow-up actions and review notes. | Safeguarding concerns, protected characteristics, child-on-child abuse, allegations, vulnerability, contextual risk or wider welfare concerns. |
| Records should be completed as soon as possible and ideally on the same day.                                    | Where CPOMS is used, this does not replace the Arbor incident record where one is required.                                                    |

Records should include who was involved, what happened, what led to the incident, what de-escalation was attempted, why the intervention was necessary, the type and duration of intervention, any injuries, witnesses, parent/carers communication and follow-up support.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible and wherever possible on the same day, unless doing so is assessed to create a safeguarding risk. Where it is unsafe to inform parents/carers, the school will follow safeguarding procedures and contact the relevant local authority where required.

### 14. Follow-up, repair and staff support

After any incident, the school will prioritise emotional recovery, regulation, relational repair and learning from what happened.

#### Follow-up may include:

- checking for injury or distress;
- supporting the pupil to share their perspective safely;
- restorative conversation or repair work;
- staff debrief and welfare check;
- review of triggers, unmet needs and alternative strategies;
- updates to the pupil's SSP, risk assessment or regulation plan;
- communication with parents/carers and external professionals where appropriate.

Restrictive intervention can affect staff as well as pupils. Staff involved in or witnessing incidents will be given the opportunity to debrief, reflect and access support from SLT or the DSL team.

### 15. Complaints, allegations, monitoring and review

Complaints about the use of restrictive intervention will be handled through the school's complaints policy. Allegations of inappropriate use of force or restrictive intervention will be managed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's safeguarding procedures.

SLT will monitor restrictive intervention data, including frequency, pupils involved, staff involved, location, time, triggers, protected characteristics, SEND status, injuries, outcomes and follow-up. This information will be reviewed to identify patterns, disproportionality, training needs and improvements to practice.

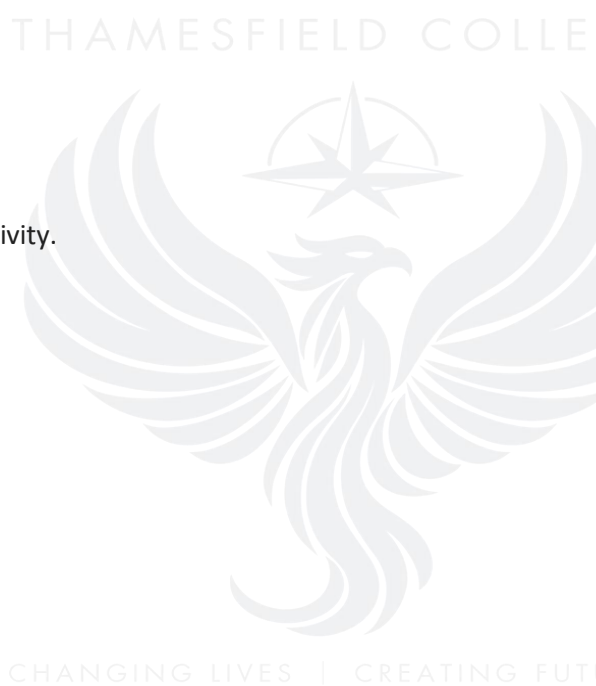
## Restrictive Intervention Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and approved by the Management Committee. It will also be reviewed earlier if guidance changes, a serious incident occurs or Team Teach implementation identifies changes needed to practice.

### 16. Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour, Relationships and Culture Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Online Safety Policy, where behaviour or risk is connected to online activity.



## Restrictive Intervention Decision Flowchart

Staff quick guide - use calm, relational practice first.

