



Great Marlow School

Excellence • Compassion • Integrity

Restrictive Interventions – Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Recommended by the Leadership Team:

March 2026

Approved by the Board of Governors

April 2026

Planned to be Adopted by the Board of Governors:

April 2026

Review Due:

Summer Term 2027

Indicate as appropriate:

☒

There **has been** a change to the previous policy

or

☐

There **has not been** a change to the previous policy.

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1. Aims and Scope

At Great Marlow School (GMS), we strive to create a safe, secure and supportive environment for all students and staff.

Restrictive interventions including reasonable force, restraint and seclusion may be lawful and necessary in certain circumstances to maintain safety. However, we understand the potential emotional, physical and psychological impact on students, staff and parents/carers.

GMS therefore uses restrictive interventions only as a last resort, when all appropriate prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through effective early support and de-escalation.
 - Enable staff to feel confident using restrictive interventions safely, proportionately and lawfully.
 - Set out clear steps for recording, reporting and reviewing all significant incidents involving force, seclusion or restraint.
 - Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all students and staff.
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2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects and complies with:

- Department for Education (DfE) restrictive interventions and reasonable force guidance
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (Section 93A)
- Education Act 1996 (Sections 550ZA and 550ZB)
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
 - DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
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3. Definitions and Terminology

The following definitions are based on DfE terminology:

Restrictive Interventions

Actions used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. May be physical or non-physical.

GMS examples:

- Supervised seclusion in the learning support area, student support or a safe, supervised office.
- Staff blocking a student's path to prevent them running into danger.
- Standing between students who are attempting to fight.

Reasonable Force

Physical contact used to control or restrain a student, applying no more force than necessary and for the shortest possible time.

GMS examples:

- Guiding a distressed student by the arm to remove them from danger.
- Intervening to break up a fight.
- Holding a student to prevent assault or serious harm.

Restraint

A type of restrictive intervention that immobilises or limits movement.

GMS examples:

- Holding a student's arms to stop them hurting themselves or others.
- Removing items (eg crutches) used as weapons.

Seclusion

Confining a student in a supervised space where they are prevented from leaving for safety reasons.

GMS practice:

- Temporary use of a supervised learning support or student support safe space during acute dysregulation or when leaving would pose an immediate risk.

Seclusion is not a behaviour sanction.

Significant Incident

Any incident where force goes beyond appropriate everyday physical contact.

3.1 Appropriate Physical Contact

GMS does not operate a “no contact” policy. Staff may use appropriate physical contact in situations such as:

- First aid
- Guiding or escorting
- Emotional support
- PE or sports instruction
- Demonstrating musical/technical skills

Judgement must consider:

- Safeguarding requirements
 - Age/stage of development
 - SEND needs and vulnerabilities
 - Whether alternative non-contact strategies are available
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3.2 Seclusion at GMS

Used only as a safety measure, not as discipline.

During seclusion:

- Students are placed in learning support, student support or supervised office.
- Supervision is constant.
- Students leave as soon as the risk of harm reduces.

All seclusion incidents must be recorded and reported.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Board

- Approves and reviews this policy based on the Trust Framework.
- Ensures recording/reporting processes are in place.
- Reviews data for trends or disproportionality.
- Challenges and supports school leaders.

4.2 Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher

- Oversees implementation.
- Ensures training is appropriate.
- Ensures adequate staffing levels.
- Monitors restrictive intervention incidents.
- Ensures compliance with recording duties.
- Authorises searches.
- Follows complaints and safeguarding procedures.

4.3 All Staff

- Follow this policy and linked policies.
- Use de-escalation as first response.

- Record all significant incidents on CPOMS.
- Report incidents to the DSL.
- Record any injuries.
- Engage in post-incident debrief.

4.4 DSL or Deputy DSL (or Headteacher)

- Informs parents/carers unless the student would be placed at risk.
- Ensures records are securely stored.
- Liaises with external agencies where necessary.
- Leads on risk assessments and behaviour support plans.

4.5 SENCO

- Advises staff on SEND-related needs.
 - Reviews incidents involving SEND students.
 - Supports training.
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5. Acceptable Uses of Force

Staff may use reasonable force to prevent a student from:

- Injuring themselves
 - Injuring others
 - Causing serious property damage
 - Committing a criminal offence
 - Causing serious disorder
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6. Unacceptable Uses of Force

It is never acceptable to use:

- force used as punishment
- techniques that restrict breathing/circulation

- prone or supine restraint
 - floor restraints
 - any unsafe or excessive force
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7. Using Reasonable Force to Search Students

GMS follows DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

The Headteacher may authorise trained staff to conduct searches using minimal reasonable force.

8. Prevention and De-escalation Strategies

GMS uses:

- restorative and relational practice
 - early identification of triggers
 - learning support and student support spaces
 - zones of Regulation
 - movement pass
 - safe adult support
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9. Deciding when Restrictive Interventions are Appropriate

Staff must consider:

- immediacy/severity of risk
 - whether alternatives have been attempted
 - proportionality
 - SEND and safeguarding factors
 - impact on others
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10. Considerations for Students with SEND

- Identify triggers early.
 - Make reasonable adjustments.
 - Use personalised plans.
 - Update risk assessments.
 - Liaise with external professionals.
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11. Training and Risk Assessments

GMS provides:

- appropriate guidance and training
- SEND training
- annual refreshers

Risk assessments will be completed only for students where there is a clearly identified and evidenced heightened risk of significant dysregulation that could foreseeably necessitate the use of seclusion or restraint.

12. Recording and Reporting Arrangements

All incidents must be logged on relevant recording templates highlighted in section 16 within 24 hours.

Records include:

- description of incident
- rationale for intervention
- type, duration and staff involved
- injuries
- student voice
- staff debrief

Parents/carers are informed promptly unless this places the student at risk.

13. Complaints and/or Allegations

Handled under Marlow Education Trust Complaints Policy and KCSIE allegations procedures, whichever is most appropriate.

14. Monitoring and Review

SLT and Governors (LGB) receive regular data.

Annual review or sooner if required.

Quality of Education Committee (MET) oversight of data provided to local governing body (LGB)

15. Links with Other Policies

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - SEND Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy
 - Managing Allegations Policy
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16. Recording Templates

The following templates support staff in fulfilling the statutory recording and reporting duties for restrictive interventions at Great Marlow School.

All templates must be completed on CPOMS within 24 hours, though paper copies may be used immediately after an incident.

Template A:

Significant Incident Record (Use of Force / Restraint / Seclusion)

Student name:

Year group:

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Location:

Staff involved: (lead + supporting)

Type of intervention used:

- ☐ Reasonable force
- ☐ Physical restraint
- ☐ Seclusion
- ☐ Passive intervention (eg blocking)
- ☐ Removal of dangerous object
- ☐ Other (specify):

Reason for intervention (legal justification):

- ☐ Preventing injury to student
- ☐ Preventing injury to others
- ☐ Preventing serious damage to property
- ☐ Preventing criminal offence
- ☐ Preventing serious disorder

Description of incident (factual only):

(What happened? What was observed? What led up to the incident?)

De-escalation strategies attempted prior to intervention:

- ☐ Verbal advice and support
- ☐ Use of calm space / movement card
- ☐ Change of adult
- ☐ Distraction / redirection
- ☐ Offering choices
- ☐ Sensory/regulation strategies
- ☐ Additional support staff called
- ☐ Other (specify):

Details of intervention used:

(What was done? Which holds/techniques? Duration?)

Duration of restrictive intervention:

Start time:

End time:

Injuries sustained:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Staff

If yes, give details and actions taken:

Immediate actions taken after incident:

(Eg first aid, supervision, area cleared, parent / carer contacted.)

DSL notified:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Parent/carers informed:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (state reason if DSL decision not to inform)

Name of person informing parent/carers:

Time called:

Follow-up required:

- ☐ SENCO review
- ☐ Behaviour plan update
- ☐ Risk assessment update
- ☐ Staff debrief
- ☐ Student debrief
- ☐ SLT review
- ☐ External agency involvement

Staff signature:

Date:

Template B:

Student Voice following an Incident

(To be completed as soon as the student is calm and able to communicate safely.)

Student name:

Date:

1. Tell us what happened today (in your own words):
2. How are you feeling now?
3. What helped you feel calmer?
4. What could adults have done differently to help you earlier?
5. What could *you* try to do next time you start feeling overwhelmed?
6. Do you want anything to be shared with home or a trusted adult?

Student signature (if appropriate):

Template C:

Staff Debrief Record

(To support reflective practice and reduce future risk.)

Staff involved:

Date of debrief:

Facilitator:

1. What happened? (Summary)
2. What went well?
3. What could have been done differently?
4. Do any strategies, plans or risk assessments need updating?
5. Are there training or support needs identified?
6. Are follow-up actions required?

Debrief facilitator signature:

Template D:

GMS's Individual Student Risk Assessment

A student risk assessment may be completed