



The Birley Academy

Physical Restraint

Policy

Policy/Procedure management log

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The Birley Academy

Use of Physical Restraint (Restrictive Physical Intervention) Policy

1. Statement of Intent

At The Birley Academy, part of **LEAD Multi-Academy Trust**, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where all pupils can learn and thrive. We recognise that pupils' behaviour is a form of communication and that our role is to understand, support and respond appropriately.

We are committed to **minimising the use of restrictive practices**, including physical restraint. We use physical restraint **only when absolutely necessary**, as a **last resort**, to prevent serious harm, and always in a way that is **lawful, reasonable, proportionate and respectful of pupils' dignity and rights**.

This policy reflects:

- the **Department for Education statutory guidance on restrictive interventions (effective April 2026)**
- our duties under the **Human Rights Act 1998** and **Equality Act 2010**
- recognised best practice across schools, particularly those with high levels of SEND

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- all staff employed by The Birley Academy
- agency staff, volunteers, and visitors acting under the direction of the Academy
- all pupils, including those educated within our **Integrated Resource (IR)**

It should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

3. Legal Framework

We act in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance:



Primary Legislation

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 & 93A)** – provides the legal power for school staff to use reasonable force and sets expectations for recording and reporting
- **Human Rights Act 1998** – particularly:
 - Article 3: freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment
 - Article 8: right to respect for private and family life
- **Equality Act 2010** – including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the requirement to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils
- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** – duty to protect pupils and staff

Statutory Guidance

- **DfE: Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools** (April 2026)

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, we use the following definitions:

- **Restrictive intervention**: any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement
- **Physical restraint**: a restrictive intervention where a pupil's movement is physically limited to prevent harm
- **Reasonable force**: the minimum force necessary, used for the shortest possible time, to prevent a specific and immediate risk
- **Seclusion**: confining a pupil alone in a space that they are prevented from leaving, used only in exceptional emergency circumstances

We are clear that **physical restraint is not a punishment**, nor is it used to enforce compliance, manage low-level disruption, or compensate for poor behaviour planning.

5. Core Principles

All decisions relating to physical restraint at The Birley Academy are guided by the following principles:

5.1 Prevention First

We prioritise **positive behaviour support**, early intervention, de-escalation strategies and environmental adjustments to reduce the likelihood of crisis situations.

5.2 Last Resort

We use physical restraint **only when all other strategies have failed or are not appropriate**, and when there is an immediate risk of serious harm.



5.3 Proportionality

Any intervention used is proportionate to the risk presented and ceases as soon as that risk reduces.

5.4 Dignity and Respect

We uphold the dignity, privacy and rights of pupils at all times, including during and after an incident.

5.5 Equality and SEND Awareness

We recognise that pupils with SEND, particularly those in our Integrated Resource, may be disproportionately affected by restrictive practices. We actively work to reduce this risk through reasonable adjustments, personalised planning and staff training.

6. When Physical Restraint May Be Used

We may use physical restraint **only** to:

- prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others
- prevent serious damage to property that could pose a risk to safety
- prevent a criminal offence or serious disorder

Examples may include:

- stopping a pupil from physically assaulting another person
- preventing a pupil from running into a dangerous environment
- intervening to stop self-injurious behaviour presenting immediate danger

Each situation is assessed **case by case**, based on the specific circumstances at that moment.

7. When Physical Restraint Must Not Be Used

We do not use physical restraint:

- as a punishment or sanction
- to enforce compliance or instructions
- for non-dangerous behaviour
- because of staff shortages or inadequate planning

We never use techniques that:

- restrict breathing, airway or circulation
- deliberately cause pain
- place pressure on the neck, chest or head



8. SEND and Integrated Resource Context

We recognise that many of our pupils:

- experience sensory processing differences
- have communication difficulties
- may respond to stress with behaviours that challenge

For pupils with SEND, particularly those in the **Integrated Resource**, we ensure that:

- **individual risk assessments** are completed and reviewed regularly
- **Positive Behaviour Support Plans** identify triggers, early warning signs and preferred de-escalation strategies
- reasonable adjustments are made to environments, routines and expectations
- parents/carers and external professionals are involved wherever appropriate

Planned restrictive interventions are used only where absolutely necessary and are clearly documented, reviewed and time-limited.

9. Staff Training and Responsibilities

We ensure that:

- staff who may be required to use physical restraint receive **appropriate, up-to-date training**
- training emphasises prevention, de-escalation, lawful use, and post-incident support
- staff understand their individual responsibilities and the limits of their authority

All staff have a duty to:

- act in the best interests of pupils
- use restraint only when lawful and necessary
- report and record incidents accurately

10. Procedures During an Incident

When physical restraint is unavoidable, we ensure that:

- the least intrusive method is used
- the intervention lasts for the shortest possible time
- the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing is continually monitored
- additional help is summoned where appropriate

As soon as it is safe, the restraint is reduced or ended.



11. Recording, Reporting and Parental Communication

11.1 Recording (See Appendix A)

We record every significant use of physical restraint as soon as practicable, usually on the same day. Records include:

- names of pupils and staff involved
- date, time, location and duration
- events leading up to the incident
- de-escalation strategies attempted
- justification for the restraint
- any injuries or follow-up actions

11.2 Informing Parents/Carers

We inform parents/carers **as soon as reasonably possible**, usually on the same day, and offer an opportunity to discuss the incident.

11.3 Monitoring

Senior leaders and governors regularly review restraint data to:

- identify patterns or trends
- ensure equitable practice
- inform training and policy review

12. Post-Incident Support and Review

Following an incident, we provide:

- emotional support to the pupil
- support and debriefing for staff
- review of behaviour and risk plans
- reflection on lessons learned to reduce future risk

13. Complaints and Safeguarding

Concerns about the use of physical restraint are taken seriously and managed in line with:

- the Academy's Complaints Procedure
- safeguarding procedures
- LEAD Multi-Academy Trust policies

Where appropriate, external agencies may be involved.



14. Governance, Monitoring and Review

This policy is:

- approved by the Local Governing Body and LEAD MAT
- reviewed annually or sooner if guidance or legislation changes
- supported through training, supervision and governance oversight

15. Publication

This policy is available:

- on The Birley Academy website
- to staff via internal systems
- to parents/carers on request



Appendix A – Physical Restraint Log

Physical restraint form

Name of child		Date of Birth	
Class		Year Group	
SEND (If yes, state need)		Date of Incident	
Place where incident occurred		Time Incident commenced	
Time Incident concluded		Approximate time being handled	
Name/s of staff involved:			
Name/s of staff witnesses:			
Names of pupil witnesses:			

Reason for Intervention						
Immediate danger to personal injury to self		Immediate danger to injury to another person				
Disruption to others		Fighting	Assault	Verbal threats	Accidental	
To avoid damage to property		To prevent/interrupt absconding		Off site	Within grounds	
Description of Incident:						

Pupil Voice if appropriate:

**De-escalation Techniques Used**

Verbal Advice/Support		Humour		Directed Time out	
Reassurance		Time out offered			
Calm Talking		Distraction			
Neutral tone/body language		Step Away		Other (specify)	

Describe restraint methods used

(Large empty box for writing)

Describe any injuries received to pupil or restrainer and medical attention required

(Large empty box for writing)

What actions are being taken to support this child in future. Describe them here or refer to any SEN action plans that are being put in place.

(Large empty box for writing)

Form completed by		Signed		Date	
Witness (if required)		Signed		Date	
Headteacher		Signed		Date	
Time and date parents were informed		Parents handed a copy of the form Yes/No		Date form handed to parents	