Positive Handling Policy

2026/2027

Date of Review	**March 2026**
Date of next review	**March 2027**

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Purpose

This policy sets out how Orion Academy prevents, manages and records the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, in line with national legislation and the April 2026 DfE guidance

The policy applies to all staff.

Restrictive intervention is a safeguarding response. It is not a behaviour management strategy and must never be used as punishment, for compliance, or for convenience.

Legal Framework

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools" (April 2026)

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent:

- Injury to a pupil or others
- The commission of a criminal offence
- Serious damage to property
- Serious disorder

"Reasonable" means no more force than is necessary, for the shortest time required, and proportionate to the risk presented.

Force must never be used as punishment.

Definitions

A restrictive intervention is any action that prevents, restricts or subdues movement. It may be physical or non-physical.

Reasonable force is a lawful physical restrictive intervention used in limited circumstances.

Seclusion is defined as confining a pupil away from others and preventing them from leaving. It is not a disciplinary tool. If used as a safety response during acute dysregulation, it must be supervised, proportionate and end as soon as risk reduces. It must be recorded and reported in line with statutory requirements

Supportive physical contact, such as guiding, comforting or demonstrating skills, is not restrictive intervention. A “no contact” approach is not appropriate practice

Prevention and Risk Reduction

Orion Academy prioritises prevention.

We reduce risk through:

- Clear routines and expectations
- Strong adult–pupil relationships
- Early identification of escalation
- Regulation spaces and co-regulation
- Structured planning through Student Support Plans (SSPs)

Each pupil has a document that identifies triggers, early indicators and agreed support strategies. These documents are reviewed, following significant incidents or following significant changes in presentation.

We recognise that pupils with SEND may be disproportionately subject to restrictive intervention nationally

Our monitoring processes actively review patterns to ensure practice remains lawful and equitable.

Threshold for Use

Restrictive intervention may only be used where there is a real and immediate risk of harm and less restrictive options are unlikely to be effective.

Before intervening, staff must consider:

- Whether the intervention is necessary
- Whether it is proportionate
- Whether it is the least restrictive option available
- The pupil’s age, medical profile, communication needs and known vulnerabilities

Intervention must cease as soon as the risk reduces.

If an intervention escalates the situation, staff must reassess.

Prohibited Practice

The following are not permitted:

- Any intervention affecting airway, breathing or circulation
- Pressure to neck, chest or abdomen
- Pain compliance techniques
- Punitive or threat-based seclusion
- Mechanical restraint

If a pupil is unintentionally taken to the ground, staff must move to a safer position as quickly as possible.

Training and Safety

Staff who may be required to use restrictive intervention receive accredited training (currently Team Teach). This includes de-escalation, lawful holds and trauma-informed approaches.

Risk assessments are in place where foreseeable risk exists. The school meets its duty under health and safety legislation to protect staff and pupils through proactive planning.

Recording and Reporting

Accurate recording is a statutory requirement and a safeguarding protection.

All significant incidents involving reasonable force must be recorded on CPOMS under “RPI Notification” as soon as practicable and no later than the same day, in accordance with Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

The record must include:

- Names of pupil and staff involved
- SEN status where applicable
- Date, time, location and duration
- What led up to the incident
- Preventative strategies attempted
- Why the intervention was necessary
- Type and degree of force used
- Details of injuries
- Post-incident support

Parents must be informed in writing as soon as practicable and ideally on the same day. The report must include the time, date and location, why the intervention was necessary, the type and degree of force used, and any injury sustained

All seclusion or restraint incidents, including non-contact restraint, must also be recorded on CPOMS under “RPI Notification” and reported in line with the 2025 Regulations

Where an incident qualifies as both restraint and significant use of force, it is recorded once and reported under the higher statutory threshold.

Post-Incident Review

Following any restrictive intervention:

- Medical attention is offered where required.
- A restorative conversation takes place once regulation is achieved.
- Staff reflect on practice and decision-making.
- SSPs are reviewed where necessary.

Incidents are reviewed by SLT to identify patterns, preventative learning and any equality implications.

Monitoring and Governance

SLT reviews all RPI Notifications.

Governors receive anonymised termly reports analysing:

- Frequency and patterns
- Repeat triggers
- Disproportionate impact on vulnerable or protected groups Monitoring is proportionate and data-informed, in line with national guidance

Safeguarding and Allegations

Any allegation of inappropriate use of force will be managed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Trust safeguarding procedures.

Staff may raise concerns under the Whistleblowing Policy.

Statement of Intent

Orion Academy will always seek to prevent the need for restrictive intervention. Where it is required, it will be lawful, proportionate, recorded transparently, and followed by review.

The safety, dignity and welfare of pupils and staff remains paramount.