



MELLING PRIMARY

Restrictive Interventions Policy

Provided by Teach+ Positive Intervention

This policy is based on recommendations provided by Teach+ for Melling Primary School, whose staff have been trained in the Teach+ Positive Intervention course. It should be reviewed by senior leadership and governors to confirm it reflects the school's own practice, then approved and dated below before adoption.

Policy Approved By (Governing Board):

Date Approved: 29 09 2026

Next Review Date: September 2028 (or sooner if legislation changes)

This policy should be reviewed annually, or sooner following a significant incident, a change in legislation or guidance, or a recommendation from governors following their review of incident data (see Section 11).

1. Policy Statement

At Melling Primary School, every child has the right to learn and thrive in an environment that is safe, calm, and free from unnecessary fear. Our starting point is always prevention: consistent routines, positive relationships, and an understanding of the causes of distressed behaviour, including Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, Neurodiversity (including ADHD & Autism).

Where a pupil's behaviour presents a risk to themselves or others that cannot be managed through de-escalation alone, staff may need to use a restrictive intervention. This policy sets out when and how staff at Melling Primary School may use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, and the legal duties we hold around recording, reporting, and reviewing every such incident.

This policy should be read alongside our Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Equality Policy, and Health and Safety Policy. It is not a stand-alone document, and staff should not rely on this policy in isolation.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is written primarily in line with the Department for Education's "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools" guidance (2026), which came into force on 1 April 2026 and replaced the previous 2013 "Use of Reasonable Force" guidance.

The legal duty behind this policy comes from the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which gives staff the power to use reasonable force and gives the Secretary of State the power to require schools to record when it is used, and from the DfE's 2026 guidance, which sets out how schools must meet that duty in practice, including recording and reporting every significant incident.

This policy also reflects:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current statutory guidance)

The recording and reporting requirements set out in Section 9 of this policy reflect statutory guidance issued by the DfE under Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. All other sections of this policy reflect non-statutory good practice guidance, which Melling Primary School has chosen to adopt in full.

3. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention

The umbrella term used throughout this policy and the DfE guidance. A restrictive intervention is any action taken by staff to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body, against their will. This includes physical restraint (the use of reasonable force), non-physical restraint (for example, blocking a doorway), and seclusion.

Reasonable Force

Physical contact that is no more than necessary, and applied for the shortest possible time in the circumstances. Force can be used to control a pupil (for example, guiding a pupil by the arm) or to restrain a pupil (for example, holding a pupil back to prevent them harming another pupil). Force must always be proportionate and necessary; both conditions must be true for its use to be reasonable.

Seclusion

A restrictive intervention used as a safety measure, where a pupil is contained away from others and prevented from leaving, only when the pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and this is necessary to protect others from harm. Seclusion is not the same as a planned, agreed period of time away from the class group (for example, in a nurture space) as part of a pupil's support plan, and it must never be used as a punishment.

Ordinary Physical Contact

Melling Primary School does not operate a 'no contact' policy. Ordinary, everyday physical contact (comforting a distressed pupil, guiding a pupil by the shoulder, administering first aid, or supporting a pupil with a physical disability) is a normal and appropriate part of school life, and is not a restrictive intervention.

4. Guiding Principles

All restrictive interventions at Melling Primary School will be:

- A genuine last resort: used only once other strategies have been tried or considered, or where the situation escalates so quickly that this is the last option genuinely available at that moment
- Necessary: used only to prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others, causing serious damage to property, or committing an offence
- Proportionate: no greater degree of force, and no longer duration, than is needed to manage the risk
- Never used as a punishment, and never threatened as one
- Applied in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of everyone involved
- Never applied in a way that affects a pupil's airway, breathing, or circulation (for example, pressure to the neck, chest, or abdomen, or covering the mouth or nose)
- Carried out, wherever possible, by two members of staff who have received accredited training
- Recorded, reported, and reviewed in line with Sections 9 and 10 of this policy

5. Prevention and De-escalation

Prevention is the primary consideration at Melling Primary School. Staff will take active steps to reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention ever being needed, including:

- Building consistent, trusting relationships with pupils, grounded in empathy and understanding
- Understanding the underlying causes of distressed behaviour, including trauma, Adverse

Childhood Experiences (ACEs), sensory processing differences, and communication needs, rather than responding to behaviour alone

- Using early warning signs to intervene before a pupil reaches crisis, through calm reassurance, offering choices, and reducing demand

- Applying a Low Arousal Approach for autistic pupils in distress: reducing language, eye contact, and physical proximity, rather than increasing them
- Maintaining individual Positive Handling Plans for any pupil with a known history of needing physical intervention, co-produced with parents/carers and reviewed regularly

All teaching and support staff at Melling Primary School receive training in these principles through the Teach+ Positive Intervention course, which covers de-escalation, the legal framework, safe physical intervention, and post-incident support. Staff should refer to their Teach+ Course Handbook and workbook for the full detail behind this policy.

6. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Staff at Melling Primary School may use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence (or, for a pupil below the age of criminal responsibility, behaving in a way that would be an offence if they were older)
- Causing injury to themselves or another person
- Causing serious damage to property
- Engaging in behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school, or among any pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

This power applies to all members of school staff, and extends to any member of staff authorised by the headteacher to have control or charge of pupils, including volunteers and staff from other settings working on the premises. Only staff who have completed Teach+ Positive Intervention training are authorised to use the specific physical intervention techniques (prompts, guides and holds) taught on that course; any member of staff may use reasonable force in an emergency, but should use the minimum approach necessary and seek support immediately.

7. Seclusion

The legal power to use reasonable force does not, by itself, provide a legal basis for seclusion. Seclusion will only be used at Melling Primary School as a safety measure to protect others from harm, when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation, and never as a punishment or as a routine response to disruptive behaviour.

Where seclusion is used, staff will:

- Remain immediately available to the pupil throughout, and monitor them continuously
- Use the least restrictive space and shortest duration necessary
- End the seclusion as soon as the risk to others has reduced
- Record and report the seclusion in the same way as any other restrictive intervention (see Section 9)

A planned, agreed period of time in a calm space, as part of a pupil's own Positive Handling Plan or support plan, and which the pupil is free to leave, is not seclusion.

8. Positive Handling Plans

Any pupil with a known history of needing physical intervention, or who is assessed as being at risk of needing it, will have an individual Positive Handling Plan. This will be:

- Co-produced with the pupil's parents/carers, and the pupil themselves wherever appropriate
- Written using the Teach+ Positive Handling Plan template
- Specific to that pupil: recording their known triggers, early warning signs, preferred prevention and de-escalation strategies, approved physical interventions (if any), known sensory sensitivities, and post-incident support preferences
- Reviewed at least termly, and immediately after any significant incident
- Shared with all staff working directly with that pupil

9. Recording and Reporting

Under Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, as set out in the DfE's 2026 guidance, Melling Primary School has a statutory duty to record and report every significant incident involving the use of reasonable force, restraint, non-physical restraint, or seclusion.

What Must Be Recorded

Every significant incident must be recorded on the same day, using the Teach+ Incident Reporting and Recording Form, and must include:

- The pupil's name and SEND status
- The date, time, and location of the incident
- What happened immediately before the incident (antecedents)
- The de-escalation techniques used, verbal and non-verbal, before any physical intervention
- A description of any physical intervention used, including the specific hold and the position in which it was applied
- Why the intervention was judged necessary at the time, and the risks it was intended to manage
- The names of all staff and witnesses involved
- Any injury sustained, by the pupil or by staff
- The outcome, including any post-incident support provided

Informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be informed of any significant incident on the same day, in writing wherever safe and practicable to do so, including an approximate account of what happened and how long the intervention lasted. This applies even where the intervention formed part of an agreed Positive Handling Plan.

Governance

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring every significant incident is recorded and reported in line with this section. The governing board holds statutory responsibility for ensuring a procedure is in place to achieve this, and will receive a summary of incident data at least termly (see Section 10).

10. Monitoring, Review, and Governance

Records of restrictive intervention will be used by Melling Primary School to identify patterns (by pupil, by time of day, by location, or by member of staff) and to inform improvements to training, environment, and individual

support plans. This is not a compliance exercise alone; the data should help us reduce the need for restrictive intervention over time.

- The headteacher will review all incident records at least half-termly
- The governing board will receive a summary report at least termly, including the number and nature of incidents, any trends identified, and actions taken as a result
- This policy, and the training staff receive to support it, will be reviewed annually, or sooner following a significant incident, a change in legislation, or a governor recommendation

11. Staff Training

All teaching and support staff at Melling Primary School received Trauma Informed Practice training from 'Be Kind' Jane Pepper and training and training through the Teach+ Positive Intervention course, covering:

- Understanding SEND, including SEMH and Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Supporting SEND through a trauma-informed and sensory-informed approach
- Developing positive intervention skills, including de-escalation, the Low Arousal Approach, and Teach+'s Repair and Reflect (R&R) restorative practice framework
- Understanding legal frameworks, including this policy's recording and reporting duties
- Applying physical intervention safely, including the specific holds and positions approved for use at Melling Primary School
- Staff and pupil well-being following an incident

Only staff who have completed this training, and been signed off as competent, are authorised to use the physical intervention techniques it covers. Refresher training is required annually as standard, or more frequently where a member of staff works with higher-risk pupils. See the Teach+ Refresher Training Cycle Policy for full detail.

12. Post-Incident Support

Every significant incident will be followed by post-incident support for the pupil, once they are regulated, and for any staff involved. This includes:

- A Repair and Reflect (R&R) conversation with the pupil, led wherever possible by a member of staff the pupil trusts, once they are calm; adapted for autistic pupils using processing time and visual or written communication where a verbal conversation is not appropriate
- A debrief for staff involved, led by a colleague who was not directly involved in the incident
- Ongoing well-being support for any pupil, member of staff, or witness who needs it
- A review of the pupil's Positive Handling Plan, to identify whether anything could reduce the likelihood of a similar incident recurring

13. Complaints

Any complaint relating to the use of restrictive intervention at Melling Primary School will be handled in line with our Complaints Policy. Parents/carers who have concerns about a specific incident should, in the first instance, contact the Headteacher.

14. Related Policies

- Relational Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct