



Sandwell Valley School

Restraint Reduction Policy

September 2025

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School Values

Sandwell Valley School recognises the importance of supporting learners in developing values that underpin their personal growth and social development. These values are Respect, Kindness, Compassion, Tolerance, Resilience, and Aspiration. All interactions at Sandwell Valley School are informed by the PACE approach — fostering relationships built on Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy to create a safe and trusting environment for learners.

“SVS recognise the values the school support students in developing these values are Respect, Kindness, Compassion, Tolerance, Resilience and Aspiration”

Definition

The term restrictive intervention refers to:

- Planned or reactive acts that restrict an individual’s movement, liberty, and/or freedom to act independently;
- The sub-categories of restrictive intervention, using force or restricting liberty of movement (or threatening to do so). (*Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention*, June 2019). The term learner refers to all children and young people under the age of 19.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) defines restraint as when someone “uses, or threatens to use, force to secure the doing of an act which the person resists, OR restricts a person’s liberty whether or not they are resisting.” Restraint for those who lack capacity is only permitted if in their best interests and necessary to prevent harm. Any restraint must be reasonable, proportionate, and time-limited.

Physical restraint is any direct physical contact where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of another person.

National Guidance

- DfE: Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (July 2013)
- DfE & DHSC: Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention (July 2019)
- DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)
- DfE: Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (November 2018)
- DfE: Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (September 2024)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 93

Aims

This policy should be read alongside Sandwell Valley School’s Behaviour and Relationships Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The aims of the policy are to:

- Ensure staff are aware of Positive Behaviour Support and implement learners’ **BSPs** to support consistent, personalised approaches.
- Implement systems that facilitate the smooth flow of up-to-date and relevant information to benefit learners, including the **CPOMS recording system**, overseen by the School Management Team.
- Provide training to ensure all staff, new and existing, are familiar with CPOMS and its effective use.

- Implement the **CPI philosophy** at Sandwell Valley School, ensuring the safety of learners, staff, and visitors.
- Enable staff to recognise different forms of restraint and understand how these may be used appropriately, in line with this policy and education legislation.
- Ensure any intervention provided is tailored to meet individual learner needs, taking into account the views of the learner wherever reasonably practicable.
- Enable staff teams to engage in dialogue and reflection to reduce the use of restraint by adopting proactive strategies and managing environments to reduce risk.
- Ensure consistency in the management of learners who present a risk to themselves or others.
- Ensure all documentation relating to the use of restraint is clear, organised, and easy to use.
- Provide regular CPI training for all staff, with trainers available for ongoing support and guidance.
- Support a culture of relational practice by integrating **PACE principles** in day-to-day interactions, de-escalation, and post-incident reflection.
- Promote communication and reporting through CPOMS to capture learner behaviour, incidents, and interventions comprehensively for monitoring, reflection, and continuous improvement.

Proactive Plans and Strategies

At Sandwell Valley School, each learner has a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and Risk Assessment. The Pastoral Team provides additional support where needed.

BSPs:

- Highlight proactive strategies to prevent incidents.
- Identify forms of restrictive intervention appropriate as a last resort.
- Are reviewed termly or after significant incidents.
- Are accessible digitally to staff; hard copies are confidential.
- Encourage staff to respond relationally using curiosity, empathy, and connection in line with PACE.

Principles and Guidance

- Staff at Sandwell Valley School should present the use of restraint in a **caring and relational environment** using CPI methods, within the framework of Positive Behaviour Support, clearly separating **risk from behaviour**.
- Restraint is only to be used when there is a **risk of harm** to the learner themselves, a risk to others, or a risk of serious property damage.
- Staff understand that restraint is a **last resort** once all other options have been exhausted, and must always be **necessary and proportionate**.
- Restraint should be applied for the **shortest possible duration** and only to manage risk, never behaviour.
- Behaviour management should operate within the agreed guidelines of **BSPs**, with the learner's best interests at the forefront of all decisions.
- BSPs ensure the **safe management of learners** in line with CPI and relational principles.
- CPI physical techniques seek to avoid injury; minor accidental bruising or scratching may occur and should not be interpreted as a failure of professional technique but as an infrequent consequence of safeguarding attempts.
- Staff may make **reasonable adjustments** to agreed guidelines and techniques to respond to unforeseen risks. All adjustments must be clearly recorded in **ARBOR reports** and discussed during post-incident debriefs.

- Staff should use **PACE principles** throughout any intervention, maintaining calm, curiosity, empathy, and reassurance, ensuring the learner feels understood and safe.
- Staff are encouraged to reflect after incidents to consider environmental, relational, or systemic adjustments that may reduce future restrictive interventions.
- This policy will be regularly updated in line with Sandwell Valley School's Behaviour & Relationships Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Restraint

At Sandwell Valley School, it is recognised that there are different forms of restraint which may be used to ensure learners remain safe and to support their care and educational needs. Restraint is only used within a framework of Positive Behaviour Support (BSPs) and PACE-informed relational practice.

1. Day-to-Day

- **Constant Supervision:** Some learners require close monitoring due to health or learning needs. Staff provide supervision with respect for the learner's dignity and right to privacy.
- **Deprivation of Liberty:** Deprivation of liberty is unlawful unless sanctioned by law (Mental Health Act 1983, Mental Capacity Act 2005 – Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) or court order. At Sandwell Valley School, learners are supported to comply with school rules and expectations around participation. Restrictions may occur regarding access to activities or timetables; staff support learners to understand these restrictions through discussion, options for alternatives, and future opportunities. All restrictions are implemented under risk assessment, in line with school policy, and in communication with the learner's support team and parents/carers wherever possible.

2. Restraint to Reduce Risk from Learner Behaviour

These interventions require **ARBOR recording** and, where applicable, supporting documentation.

A. CPI Holds:

- Physical interventions, such as holds, may be necessary to reduce the likelihood of injury to learners, staff, visitors, or property.
- CPI holds are only used as a last resort, proportionate to the situation, and in accordance with the learner's BSP.
- If used in an emergency outside of a BSP, the lead staff member must be notified and the plan reviewed. This does not automatically add the strategy to the BSP.
- Guiding a learner physically is considered a hold.
- A debrief for both learner and staff is required and recorded in ARBOR.

B. CPI Disengagement:

- Staff may need to employ disengagement strategies to respond to uninvited holds, hair pulls, or bear hugs from learners.
- All incidents are recorded in ARBOR with a debrief for learner and staff.

C. Restricted Liberty of Movement:

- Learners may be temporarily restricted from leaving an area to prevent harm, including using a door as a barrier.

- Decisions to restrict movement must be risk-assessed, for the **shortest time possible**, and may occur for reasons such as:
 - Harmful objects being thrown
 - Learner possessing a weapon or posing immediate risk
 - Awaiting additional support to safely intervene
 - Learner showing intention to harm themselves or others
 - Risk associated with entering certain areas
- These incidents require ARBOR recording and debriefs for learner and staff.

Environment Considerations:

- Certain doors in the school have maglocks for safety; they do not prevent learners from leaving classrooms freely.
- Restrictions on movement, particularly offsite or during community activities, are based on risk assessments, with parental/carers communication and learner engagement to explain reasons and provide alternatives.

All interventions are conducted in a **relational, trauma-informed manner**, ensuring dignity, safety, and understanding, consistent with Sandwell Valley School's PACE principles and CPI guidance.

Recording and Reporting

At Sandwell Valley School, all uses of restraint are recorded, reviewed, and monitored to ensure transparency, learning, and continuous improvement. All reporting is conducted within a **PACE-informed, relational framework**, and recorded on the **ARBOR system**.

- Every restraint incident must be recorded by the staff involved on the **day of the incident**. Records must clearly state:
 - Why the restraint was necessary
 - What alternative options were attempted or considered
 - The duration of the restraint
 - Which staff members supported which areas of the learner's body
- The use of **Advanced Physical Restraint** or the necessity to use a door as a barrier must be **immediately reported to a member of SLT** and carried out only by trained staff.
- Following restraint, the learner's views and feelings must be sought sensitively, and recorded on the follow-up record in ARBOR. Staff should consider the learner's emotional response using PACE principles.
- Staff involved in the incident, and any learners who witnessed it, should also provide reflections to enable review, learning, and identification of strategies to reduce future restraints.
- Learners must be offered a **medical check** by a suitably qualified staff member. Records of this check or any refusal must be recorded on the CPI documentation.
- All restraint records are reviewed and evaluated by the appropriate manager and approved by a member of **SLT**. This review enables reflection and identification of proactive strategies to reduce future incidents.
- Ongoing or repeated episodes of advanced restraint within a 12-hour period must trigger consideration for **external agency involvement** and re-evaluation of the learner's support plan.
- Records of all restraint incidents are monitored regularly by the **Behaviour Support Practitioner** and the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** to assess trends and inform updates to the **Restraint Reduction Action Plan**.

- All recording, reporting, and review processes must be conducted in a relational, trauma-informed manner, ensuring learner dignity, emotional safety, and the principles of PACE are upheld throughout.

Training

At Sandwell Valley School, all staff directly supporting learners receive **CPI training**, integrated with **PACE principles** to ensure relational, trauma-informed practice alongside safety.

- **CPI Training Content:** Covers recognising behaviour patterns, de-escalation, break-away techniques, physical intervention, understanding restraint, and reflective practice post-incident.
- **Course Structure:** 13-hour introductory courses for new staff; 6.5-hour refresher courses for existing certified staff. Agency or temporary staff may also be trained by certified CPI trainers.
- Staff are **certified for 1 year** following a 13-hour course.
- Additional training sessions are provided when learner needs change or new guidance arises from new admissions.
- Staff risk assessments are conducted to ensure safety; records are stored securely by the trainers with copies available to staff and managers on request.
- All CPI training documentation is filed and securely maintained by Sandwell Valley School.

Staff Responsibilities

- Staff are responsible for working within agreed learner **BSP guidelines** and CPI/Pace-informed strategies outlined in this policy.
- Staff decisions should be professional, calm, and positive, guided by CPI and PACE approaches.
- Staff must remain aware of amendments to learner BSPs, including which restraints may be appropriate.
- Restraints should be used only as a **last resort**, for the **shortest time possible**, and to ensure the safety of the learner, others, and property.
- Staff must attempt to contact a senior member when:
 - Physical intervention exceeds five minutes
 - Restriction of liberty occurs
 - Intervention occurs offsite
- Offsite, staff must carry **Sandwell Valley ID badges** and, where possible, CPI certification cards for identification during incidents.
- During a restraint, an independent staff member should act as **learner advocate** and has the authority to stop the restraint if medical risk is apparent.
- If no senior staff are present during a restraint, staff must inform them as soon as reasonably practicable.

All training and responsibilities aim to ensure that interventions are safe, proportionate, legally compliant, and delivered in a **relational, trauma-informed manner**, consistent with Sandwell Valley School's values and PACE principles.

Debriefing

Learner Debriefing

- Following any use of restraint, learners should be offered support when they are ready to receive it. The support must be appropriate to their needs, and staff should explain that the restraint was used to keep them or others safe.

- Debriefs should be conducted at a level suitable for the learner, with guidance sought from the **Speech and Language** Therapy support if necessary to ensure meaningful communication.
- Learner views and feelings regarding the restraint must be sought and recorded within five days of the incident.
- Restraint must never be used as a form of punishment or behaviour management.
- Following restraint, learners should be given time to recover while ensuring ongoing safety and wellbeing.

Staff Debriefing

- Staff involved in restraint should be debriefed by their line manager or a senior member of staff to reflect on the incident and consider any necessary adjustments or additional support.
- Debriefing includes discussion of staff wellbeing, review of intervention effectiveness, and identification of learning opportunities to reduce future incidents.
- Any injuries sustained by staff must be documented, and a risk assessment completed to ensure fitness to work and determine if reasonable adjustments are required.
- Staff are encouraged to reflect in a **PACE-informed, relational way**, maintaining a focus on emotional safety and professional growth.

Appendices:

Appendix A-Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)

Appendix B-Incident Report Form