



# *St. Denys Primary School*



## **Physical Intervention Policy 2026**

### **Understanding Physical Intervention and Restraint**

Physical Intervention is defined as any method of physically intervening to resolve a difficult or dangerous situation. Physical restraint occurs when a staff member uses force with the intention of restricting a young person's movement against their will. Physical intervention is not necessarily physical restraint.

### **Underpinning Values and Objectives**

Everyone at St Denys Primary School has a right to recognition of their unique identity, to be treated with respect and dignity, and to learn and work in a safe environment free from harm, violence, assault, and verbal abuse. Pupils and parents have the right to individual consideration of pupil needs and to expect staff to act according to school policies. They also have the right to be informed about school rules, relevant policies, expected conduct, and the school's complaints procedure. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are expected to be designed to achieve outcomes reflecting the best interests of the child and others affected.

The objectives of the policy are to ensure that St Denys Primary School provides a safe and secure environment where all pupils can achieve their full potential, and that staff remain safe and feel confident to effectively support the needs of every pupil academically and behaviourally. The school recognises that everyone is responsible for their own actions.

### **Legal Basis and Circumstances for Use**

The policy at St Denys Primary School has been developed in response to The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93, which reinforces and replaces previous guidance, and takes into account guidance from the DfE and Department of Health. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides all school staff, including non-teaching staff, with the power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. The school ensures that the guidance held within the DfE's "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools 2026" Guidance Document is followed when the use of physical intervention is used.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the DfE's Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance 2026 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence

3. damaging property

4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

The government guidance defines reasonable force as "Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements". It states that reasonable force means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, with the application depending on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is considered a restrictive intervention.

Restrictive interventions are defined in the government consultation guidance as "Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently". These may include the use of equipment, medication, or seclusion. A restrictive intervention may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

Physical restraint should only be considered if calming and de-fusing strategies have failed, the response is in the paramount interests of the young person, and not intervening is likely to result in more dangerous consequences than intervening.

### **Principles Guiding Physical Intervention**

St Denys Primary School adopts the use of Securicare principles, promoting a multi-discipline approach. The majority of staff have received additional training in de-escalation skills and positive handling techniques through this approach.

The key principles are:

- Physical Intervention and Restraint should be used as a last resort to support children and young people in times of crisis. Restraint should be avoided wherever possible.
- Staff will continuously seek opportunities to communicate, assess the situation, look and listen, and divert/de-escalate.
- Any physical intervention will be **REASONABLE, PROPORTIONATE AND NECESSARY** and in the pupil's best interest.
- Where there is an element of foreseeable risk, this will be assessed and recorded where possible.
- Physical restraint must never be entered into lightly.
- It must involve the minimum force necessary.
- It should be used to de-escalate a potentially dangerous situation.
- It must be applied only until the immediate threat is past.
- It should support the child/young person to maintain self-control.
- It must not be used offensively as a threat or a punishment.
- It must not be used to inflict pain.
- It should be administered calmly and rationally, not in response to anger or frustration.
- It should be the result of a professional judgement about the young person's safety, considering their age and abilities.
- It must be in the child/young person's best interests and not for staff convenience.
- It should not be a substitute for a positive intervention/behaviour management programme.

- It should be planned, with an emergency response only justified on the first occasion.
- It must always be the last resort (meaning other methods were attempted and were insufficient).

Staff who are not physically involved in the intervention are expected to act as advocates for the pupil and staff members. Securicare techniques aim to avoid injury, but bruising or scratching can occur accidentally. A verbal check for injury is always done, and any injury is treated and recorded.

### **Minimising the Need for Force**

St Denys Primary School constantly strives to create a calm environment to minimise the risk of incidents requiring force. They use a holistic approach to meet pupil needs and allow them to access the curriculum. For pupils with persistent challenging behaviour, the Headteacher, the SENCO and class teacher work together to support IEPs and behaviour targets. Pupils with sensory difficulties or other conditions leading to increased anxiety may have individualised support or programmes. The PSHE curriculum teaches pupils about feelings and managing conflict. The school ethos promotes independence, choice, and inclusion, offering opportunities for personal growth and emotional well-being. All staff are trained in skills to defuse and de-escalate situations.

Efforts to minimise the need to use force include:

- Deployment of appropriate staffing numbers.
- Deployment of appropriately trained and competent staff.
- Avoiding situations and triggers known to provoke challenging behaviour.
- Creating opportunities for choice and achievement.
- Developing staff expertise through continuous professional development.
- Exploring pupils' preferences regarding how they are managed.
- Staff employing techniques to avert escalation.

Reasonable force will only be used when the risks of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not using force.

### **Procedures and Guidelines for Staff**

Staff work 'in loco parentis' and have a 'Duty of Care', meaning they could be liable for negligence if they fail to follow the policy guidance. They are responsible for dynamically assessing risks, making informed judgements about when force is necessary and the degree of force needed, and justifying their decisions in writing through recording and reporting procedures. Staff must provide evidence that their actions were reasonable, proportionate, necessary, and in the child's best interest.

Holding techniques must take account of the following:

- Airway – no obstruction.
- Breathing – no restriction of the chest area.
- Circulation – no pressure on arterial pressure points.
- Good body alignment.
- Avoiding pressure on joints.

The child must always be monitored during physical restraint, and holds should stop immediately if difficulties in breathing, a sudden change in skin colour, or vomiting are noted.

### **Time Out and Seclusion**

On occasion, pupils at St Denys may be supported to calm down and take time out in a 'safe place'. A pupil is never left alone without a staff member in the immediate vicinity.

The government consultation guidance clarifies that seclusion is a type of restrictive intervention involving the supervised confinement and isolation of a pupil away from others in an area they are prevented from leaving voluntarily. The decision to use seclusion or other restrictive interventions depends on individual circumstances, but they are never used as punishment. Seclusion is distinct from removal, which is when a pupil is required to spend limited time out of the classroom for serious disciplinary reasons in a setting where they can continue their education.

### **Recording and Reporting**

St Denys requires all staff involved in a physical intervention to complete the PI/Restraint form on the same day as the incident and submit it to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head.

Parents/carers will be contacted by the school when their child has been involved in physical intervention, either by telephone, direct contact, or letter on the same day.

The school keeps records of incidents and physical interventions within a specific file and on the behaviour database, CPOMs. This data is analysed regularly, shared with staff and Governors.

*The DfE 2026 guidance explains the new legal requirement, commencing in April 2026, to record and report each significant incident where a staff member uses force on a pupil. A significant incident is defined as any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in the guidance's section on 'Other physical contact with pupils'. Schools must record the use of reasonable force and report it to parents of the pupils involved.*

As a minimum the school recording of any incident involving Physical Intervention will include:

- name of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance

- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

In the vast majority of cases parents/carers will be informed of the use of Physical Intervention. Parents may not be informed it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. If this was the case the incident would likely be reported to the Local Authority.

Where pupils require any regular physical intervention, an individual Positive Handling Plan will be developed by the class team. This plan will identify agreed strategies (non-verbal, verbal, and physical support) to help the pupil learn and develop emotionally and socially. The Positive Handling Plan is shared with parents/carers, and they are made aware of any changes during the year.

Any injury occurring during physical intervention is treated and recorded on a skin map on the appropriate incident form (HS1 and/or HS2), which are sent to the LA.

### **Pupil and Staff Support**

This includes ensuring pupils and staff receive medical treatment if needed and that their well-being is monitored for additional support requirements. The debriefing process after a significant incident is emphasised to understand what happened, why, and facilitate reflection and learning.

It is the duty of all staff at St Denys to offer appropriate support during or after a physical intervention or serious incident.

### **Relationship with Other Policies**

The St Denys physical intervention policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidance relating to interaction between adults and pupils, such as the SEND Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and Behaviour Policy.

The St Denys Way curriculum, while primarily focused on behaviour expectations, learning powers, and routines, underpins the school's approach to behaviour. Behaviour expectations are underpinned by Learning Powers like Respect, Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reciprocity, and Reflectiveness. The curriculum is taught explicitly to build character by defining expected behaviours and habits. The expectation is that pupils will know this content and act upon it. The school aims to ensure children develop excellent behaviour for learning and grow into adults who live out the Learning Powers. The behaviour curriculum is taught explicitly and reinforced throughout the year. Adults model these behaviours and provide practice opportunities. By setting and maintaining high standards, staff support a culture where pupils feel safe and are able to learn in an optimised environment.

Bullying is defined and considered unacceptable at St Denys Primary School. Preventing bullying and unsafe behaviour is part of the curriculum content. Telling an adult is encouraged if a pupil thinks they are being bullied or someone else is. This aligns with the overall goal of creating a safe environment which minimises situations requiring physical intervention.

## **Policy Review**

The St Denys Physical Intervention policy was last reviewed in January 2026 and is scheduled for its next review in February 2027. The school will review this Policy annually and will be mindful of related documents and information shared by the DFE and Securicare