PARK ASPIRE
AP Academy

Positive Handling (Restraint) Policy

2026-27

Approved by Governing Body on	Autumn 2025
Internal review due:	September 2026
Full review and ratification due:	September 2027
Signed on behalf of the Governing Body by the Headteacher	

1.0 Ethos and Values

At Park Aspire, we are underpinned by our values: Respectful, Resilient, Ready and apply these to all we do. We also firmly believe that relationships are our foundation of learning, behaviour and well-being. Many pupils arrive with fractured trust, unmet needs and trauma-related behaviours. This policy outlines how we prioritise creating a safe environment in a nurturing, courteous and mutually respectful manner.

2.0 Aims of the Policy and Relevant Legislation

The Department of Education guidance is intended to help schools proactively minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and when necessary, to help school staff feel more confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

This policy is aligned with the following statutory and non-statutory guidance:

- Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable, in schools (DfE, 2026)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (DfE, 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

These documents shape the expectations, rights and responsibilities of our school and its members; using restrictive interventions, including reasonable force powers appropriately is an important way to ensure pupil and staff welfare is protected and helps schools establish an environment where everyone is safe and feels safe.

3.0 Background and Context

Park Aspire educates pupils with complex SEMH needs who often arrive following exclusion or difficulty in mainstream settings. As a short-term, transitional provision, we provide personalised, Day 6 education grounded in strong relationships and consistent support. We work closely with families, previous schools and external agencies, regularly updating risk assessments and behaviour plans to ensure a safe, responsive and holistic approach to each child's development.

Three core pillars underpin our day-to-day practice:

- **Relationships** – strong, consistent and attuned adult–pupil connections.

- **Regulation** – supporting pupils to understand, manage and express their emotions.

- **Safety** – creating calm, structured and predictable environments where learning can flourish.

Ultimately, positive outcomes improve when we truly understand our pupils and what they need. That's why our pupils will always come first, because they deserve the very best.

At times, pupils need to be supported to maintain regulation and safety with physical intervention. It is always undertaken following a dynamic risk assessment where a pupil and staff welfare is paramount.

4.0 Terminology

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.

5.0 Reasonable Force and Seclusion

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

These are to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence
- damaging property
- causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All our staff are trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. The provider for our school training is Team Teach.

Seclusion will only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm. Any areas of seclusion are safe and non-intimidating. The pupil will be supervised at all times, and as soon as the immediate risk has subsided, the pupil will be allowed to leave.

Any incidents of seclusion will be recorded in the same way as a physical intervention via Behaviour Smart.

School will not grant any requests from parents not to use reasonable force and/or other physical interventions.

6.0 Safe and Proportionate Physical Intervention

Any restrictive intervention must always be the least restrictive option available, used for the shortest time necessary and in accordance with Team Teach principles and training.

Park Aspire prohibits any intervention that restricts a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation. Staff must never:

- Apply pressure to a pupil's neck, throat, chest or abdomen.
- Cover a pupil's mouth or nose.
- Use any technique intended to cause pain, discomfort or humiliation.
- Use force as a punishment.

Ground-based interventions should be avoided wherever possible. Where a pupil is unintentionally brought to the ground, staff must reposition or release the intervention as quickly as it is safe to do so.

Following any intervention where injury or distress may have occurred, appropriate medical assessment and support will be sought.

7.0 Decision Making Framework

Before using any restrictive intervention, staff will consider:

Is it necessary?

- Is there an immediate risk of harm?
- Have alternative strategies been attempted or considered?

Is it proportionate?

- Is this the least restrictive option available?
- Is the intervention likely to reduce risk rather than escalate it?

Does it protect welfare and dignity?

- Have the pupil's age, needs, communication style, SEND, trauma history and vulnerabilities been considered?

Staff should continually reassess these factors throughout any intervention and reduce or end the intervention as soon as it is safe to do so.

8.0 Post-Incident Support and Debrief

Following any restrictive intervention or seclusion incident, Park Aspire will undertake a structured post-incident review process.

This may include:

- Welfare and medical checks.
- Emotional support for pupils and staff.
- Restorative conversations.
- Reflection and learning opportunities.
- Review of behaviour support plans and risk assessments.

Where appropriate, pupils who witnessed the incident will also receive support and reassurance.

The purpose of post-incident support is not to allocate blame, but to promote learning, repair relationships and reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

9.0 Recording and Reporting

Park Aspire has a clear procedure in place for reporting incidents of physical intervention and seclusion as part of the school's duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

All incidents are recorded on the Physical Intervention form, via Behaviour Smart as soon as practicable after the event.

The form includes the following:

- Names of pupils and staff directly involved in the incident

- Time, date, location and duration of the incident.
- A brief account of the incident
    - before (including triggers, de-escalation and preventative strategies)
    - during (the reasoning and type of force and any marks or injuries sustained)
    - after (post incident learning and restorative work)

These forms are shared with our Behaviour Manager and a member of SLT.

Park Aspire will inform parents/carers of any significant incident involving reasonable force or restraint as soon as practicable and will do so on the same day.

Parents are also able to request a copy of the PI form from the Headteacher, or a member of SLT.

10.0 SEND and Behaviour Support Plans

Park Aspire recognises that pupils with SEND may be more vulnerable to experiencing distress and may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions.

Staff will seek to understand the underlying causes of behaviour and provide proactive support through:

- Individual Behaviour Support Plans.
- Big 5 to Help Me Thrive profiles.
- Response Guides.
- Risk Assessments.
- Reasonable adjustments.

Where appropriate, pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals will contribute to the development and review of these plans.

Following any significant restrictive intervention, the pupil's behaviour support plan and associated risk assessments will be reviewed to identify learning and reduce future risk.

11.0 Governance and Monitoring

The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body will regularly review data relating to restrictive interventions and seclusion.

This review will consider:

- Frequency of incidents.
- Patterns and trends.
- Repeat incidents involving individual pupils.
- Any disproportionality relating to SEND or vulnerable groups.
- Staff training needs.
- Effectiveness of preventative and de-escalation strategies.

Findings will inform school improvement planning, staff development and ongoing policy review.

12.0 Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints or allegations, connected to physical intervention, will be dealt with via the Trust's complaints policy, which can be found on our website - www.parkaspire.co.uk

Appendix 1:

Behaviour Response Cycle

STAGE 1 – REGULATE

Focus: safety, calm, connection

Adult response:

- Stay calm, use soft tone, reduced language
- Offer co-regulation strategies (breathing, sensory tools, movement break)
- Reduce environmental demands (lower noise, clear space, remove audience)
- Use relationship cues: attunement, reassurance, predictable scripts
- If needed, move the pupil to a quiet room or calmer space

Key question for staff:

"What does this pupil need to feel safe right now?"

The pupil is not expected to talk, engage or reason at this stage.

STAGE 2 – REFLECT

Focus: understanding what happened (after the pupil is calm)

Adult response:

- Ensure the pupil is fully regulated before starting
- Use the "Listen – Link – Learn" structure:
    - What happened?
    - How did that make you feel?
    - What led up to this?
- Label emotions, model repair language
- Support the pupil to recognise triggers or unmet needs
- Record key details on CPOMS

Key question for staff:

"What is the need beneath the behaviour?"

This stage is quiet, non-judgemental and supportive.

STAGE 3 – RESTORE

Focus: rebuilding relationships and repairing harm

Adult response:

- Engage in a short restorative conversation:
    - Who was affected?
    - How can we make it right?
    - What needs to happen next?
- Facilitate reconnection with staff or peers
- Agree specific next steps (e.g., apology, repairing work, practical amends)
- Reinforce dignity, belonging and the pupil's value in the community

Key question for staff:

"How do we repair trust so everyone can move forward positively?"

Restorative work may continue in a pastoral room if appropriate.

STAGE 4 – REINTEGRATE

Focus: returning successfully to learning

Adult response:

- Support the pupil's transition back into class
- Agree what they might need to re-engage (e.g., check-ins, movement break, modified task, staff support, quiet workspace)
- Remind them of success strategies tailored to their plan
- Provide a genuine "fresh start"

Key question for staff:

"What support will help this pupil succeed for the rest of the day?"

A reintegration note or short, positive script may be shared with class staff.

STAGE 5 – REVIEW (when needed)

Focus: learning from patterns and improving support

Adult response:

- Review the incident with the behaviour pastoral team
    - Whether the Behaviour Support Plan remains appropriate.
    - Whether reasonable adjustments remain effective.
    - Whether additional staff training or support is required.
    - Whether environmental adaptations could reduce future risk.
    - Whether further support from parents, external agencies or professionals is required.
- Communicate updates to relevant staff
- Plan proactive strategies to reduce future triggers
- Involve parents/carers where helpful

Key question for staff:

"What do we change in the environment or support to prevent recurrence?

Appendix 2

Six Stages of Crisis

These stages help staff identify where a pupil is in their crisis journey and choose the safest, most effective response.

Stage One – Anxiety / Trigger

What it looks like:

The pupil starts to show early signs of distress: withdrawal, fidgeting, irritability, avoidance, becoming unusually quiet or suddenly oppositional. The trigger may be work-based, sensory, social or emotional.

What's happening internally:

Their stress levels rise. They feel unsafe, overwhelmed, or unsure how to cope.

Strategies – Need for support and reassurance:

- Validate feelings ("I can see this is tough—let's do it together").
- Reduce demands temporarily.
- Offer choices to restore control.
- Adjust the environment (movement break, quieter space, seating change).

- Use calm tone and predictable routines to bring them back to baseline.

Stage Two – Defensive / Escalation

What it looks like:

The pupil becomes visibly unsettled or reactive: arguing, refusing, raising their voice, pacing, challenging boundaries, denying responsibility, or "testing" adults.

What's happening internally:

Their thinking brain is shutting down. Fight/flight responses increase.

Strategies – Need for diversion, clear limits and boundaries:

- Keep your voice low, slow and minimal.
- Use simple, clear instructions ("Come with me," "Let's step outside").
- Avoid debates, warnings or long explanations.
- Present structured choices ("You can sit here or in the quiet space").
- Give physical space and reduce audience to prevent further escalation.

Stage Three – Crisis

What it looks like:

Loss of emotional control: shouting, crying, running, throwing objects, aggression, self-injury behaviours, or complete shutdown. The pupil is not able to reason or process instructions.

What's happening internally:

They are in full survival mode. Their nervous system is overwhelmed; logic is offline.

Strategies – Need for safety, containment and minimal language:

- Prioritise safety for everyone nearby.
- Use low-arousal, supportive statements ("I'm here. You're safe.").
- Remove triggers and reduce sensory input.
- Follow behaviour plan / Team Teach protocols.
- Physical intervention only if absolutely necessary and in line with policy.

Stage Four – Recovery

What it looks like:

Behaviour reduces. The pupil may be quiet, tearful, embarrassed, exhausted or trying to distract from what happened. They are calm enough to function but still emotionally fragile.

What's happening internally:

- Stress hormones are falling, but their system is still sensitive.
- Strategies – Need for continued letting go, support and gentle guidance:
- Allow time and space without pressure to talk.
- Offer water, a sensory item or a quiet seat.
- Keep tone neutral and non-judgemental.
- Avoid discussing the incident too soon—wait until they can think clearly.
- Help them ease back into expectations gradually.

Stage Five – Depression

What it looks like:

A "dip" after the crisis: low mood, guilt, shame, withdrawal, negative self-talk ("I'm stupid," "Everyone hates me"), or reluctance to rejoin activities or class.

What's happening internally:

They are processing the aftermath emotionally. They may feel vulnerable or worried about consequences.

- Strategies – Need for observation, support, monitoring and repair:
- Offer reassurance and unconditional positive regard.
- Use personalised check-ins ("Are you ready to come back into class?").
- Break tasks into manageable steps.
- Engage them in something they can succeed in quickly.
- Start preparing them for the restorative conversation.

Stage Six – Developmental Debrief (Listen – Link – Learn)

What it looks like:

The pupil is now able to think, talk and understand the incident. They engage in reflection, though they may still be sensitive or defensive at first.

What's happening internally:

Their nervous system is regulated enough for problem-solving, empathy and repair.

Strategies – Restorative work and future planning:

- ***Listen***: Let them share their perspective without interruption.
- ***Link***: Help them identify the feelings or triggers connected to the behaviour.
- ***Learn***: Explore better choices, coping strategies and adjustments for next time.
- Agree next steps and reintegration plan.
- Update behaviour plan or risk assessment if patterns emerge.