

Labyrinth Education LTD

Positive Handling and Restrictive Practice Policy

Supporting SEND Learners Through Choice, Dignity and Restorative Practice

1. Policy Statement

We are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which all learners—particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)—are supported to develop independence, resilience and emotional understanding.

This policy promotes:

- Positive behaviour support rooted in choice and autonomy
- Recognition and celebration of positive behaviours
- Development of emotional literacy and resilience
- De-escalation and preventative strategies
- Restrictive practice only as a **last resort**
- Restorative approaches following incidents to rebuild trust and relationships

We recognise that behaviour is communication. Our approach seeks to understand unmet needs, sensory processing differences, trauma history, communication barriers and neurodiversity before considering any restrictive response.

2. Principles

Our practice is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Dignity and Respect:** Every learner is treated with compassion and without shame.
- **Choice and Independence:** Learners are supported to make informed choices wherever possible.
- **Prevention First:** Proactive strategies reduce the likelihood of escalation.
- **Least Restrictive Option:** Any intervention must be proportionate, reasonable and necessary.
- **Restorative Practice:** Relationships are repaired following incidents.
- **Safeguarding:** The safety of learners and staff is paramount.

3. Promoting Positive Choices and Independence

We actively cultivate a culture where positive behaviour is taught, modelled and celebrated.

3.1 Curriculum Integration

Our curriculum supports:

- Emotional literacy and regulation skills
- Understanding of feelings and triggers

- Problem-solving and resilience
- Self-advocacy and communication
- Growth mindset and perseverance

Learners are taught to:

- Identify emotions and the impact they may have on their bodies
- Recognise early signs of dysregulation
- Use regulation tools and strategies
- Seek help appropriately

3.2 Positive Behaviour Recognition

We celebrate:

- Effort and resilience
- Acts of kindness
- Self-regulation attempts
- Responsible decision-making
- Improvements in behaviour

Recognition may include verbal praise, restorative recognition conversations, reward systems, leadership opportunities, and communication home.

4. Preventative and De-escalation Strategies

Staff are trained to use a range of supportive strategies including:

- Clear routines and predictable structures
- Visual supports and communication aids
- Sensory adjustments and movement breaks
- Co-regulation techniques
- Calm, non-confrontational language
- Offering structured choices
- Redirection and distraction
- Safe spaces for regulation

Individual Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) or Risk Assessments are developed where appropriate and shared with relevant staff.

5. Definition of Restrictive Practice

Restrictive practice refers to interventions that limit a learner's movement, liberty or access to manage risk.

This may include:

- Physical intervention (positive handling)
- Removal from a space (where necessary for safety)
- Restricting access to items due to immediate risk

Restrictive practice does **not** include:

- Supportive touch
- Guiding for safety in everyday situations
- Sensory supports agreed within a plan

6. Use of Restrictive Practice

Restrictive practice will only be used when:

- There is an immediate risk of harm to the learner or others (including staff)
- De-escalation strategies have been attempted or are not viable due to urgency
- The response is reasonable, proportionate and necessary

6.1 Key Requirements

- Used as a **last resort**
- Minimum force for the shortest time necessary
- Only by trained staff
- Recorded promptly and accurately, including duration and start times
- Reported to senior leadership immediately
- Parents/carers informed at the earliest opportunity

We do not use restrictive practice as punishment, compliance enforcement, or for staff convenience.

7. Safeguarding and Wellbeing During Intervention

During any restrictive intervention:

- The learner's breathing, communication and emotional state are monitored
- Dignity is preserved at all times
- Intervention ceases immediately once risk reduces
- Medical vulnerabilities are considered

8. Post-Incident Restorative Practice

Following any escalation or restrictive intervention, restorative practice is essential.

8.1 Immediate Support

- Time and space for emotional regulation
- Access to a trusted adult
- Reassurance and safety restoration is the main focus

8.2 Restorative Conversation

When appropriate and once regulated, a restorative conversation will:

- Explore what happened
- Identify feelings and triggers
- Consider impact on others
- Repair relationships
- Identify alternative strategies for next time

The focus is on understanding—not blame. For learners who are unable to communicate, appropriate resources will be available to support the learner's communication needs.

8.3 Staff Reflection

Staff will:

- Review triggers and early warning signs
- Reflect on effectiveness of de-escalation
- Amend risk assessments if required
- Identify additional support needs

9. Partnership with Families and Professionals

We value collaborative working. Where appropriate:

- Parents/carers are consulted in support planning
- External professionals contribute to risk assessments
- Multi-agency support is sought when needed

Communication remains transparent, supportive and solution-focused. The need of the learner will always remain the schools priority.

10. Training and Staff Development

All relevant staff receive training in:

- Positive behaviour support

- De-escalation strategies
- Trauma-informed practice
- Safe and appropriate positive handling
- Restorative approaches

Refresher training is provided in line with best practice guidance.

11. Monitoring and Review

All incidents involving restrictive practice are:

- Logged and analysed
- Reviewed for patterns or trends
- Used to inform preventative strategies
- Reported to governance where appropriate

Our goal is continuous reduction in restrictive interventions through improved preventative practice.

12. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

We are committed to:

- Reducing the need for restrictive practices
- Strengthening emotional literacy education
- Building trusting relationships
- Empowering learners to regulate independently
- Promoting resilience and self-understanding

By prioritising choice, dignity and restorative practice, we aim to create an environment where SEND learners feel safe, valued and understood.