

Guidance on using Safespaces appropriately and effectively

Adopted by Governors: Full Governing Body
20th June 2024

Reviewed: Summer 2026

Next review: Summer 2028

Kings Mill School & Residence



1. How Safespaces SHOULD be used:

The Safespace is a safe room, designed to provide a safe, calming atmosphere. Its purpose is to assist with positive behaviour support and reduce the need for restrictive intervention by helping the child to regulate their own behaviour.

A Safespace can however be used as part of behaviour interventions but in such instances it should always be used as a planned intervention and its use should be supported by a Positive Behaviour Support Plan.

A Safespace can be used proactively as a sensory space and can be combined with e.g. lighting and other sensory equipment. This may include a system of positive reinforcement, e.g. a child builds up credits during times of appropriate behaviour, to be rewarded with a period of time in the Safespace in its capacity as a sensory space.

A Safespace can provide a low stimulation environment for those with a short attention span, or who are vulnerable to distraction, in which 1:1 work can take place.

A Safespace can also be used reactively, e.g. a child accesses the Safespace when they feel anxious or agitated by background noise, distraction or others in the classroom, thereby strengthening positive behaviour through the removal of an aversive stimulus. The child would be reintroduced to the main body of the class group at the earliest, safe opportunity.

A Safespace **may** also be used as an alternative to restrictive interventions, when it is the least restrictive practice available. Physical restraints are a last resort used to manage the risks associated with behaviours; they are not aimed at changing behaviour. Reducing hands-on physical restraint through use of the Safespace can also reduce the risk of injury/upset to staff and to an already distressed child and can help to keep relationships intact.

A Safespace, when in use, **must** be supervised by a member of staff at all times.

2. Safespaces should NOT be used for the following:

- As a punishment or in order to gain compliance
- As an unplanned or informal restrictive practice
- As any intervention which is not regularly monitored
- As a substitute for inadequate staffing
- As any intervention which is not legal

3. Key points to using a Safespace appropriately:

- The child (& possibly a supporting adult) must be observed/monitored via the Safespace window
- The child may opt to use the Safespace independently but should not be allowed to do so excessively

- The child may need to be alone in the Safespace in order to regulate their own behaviour
- The child may require an adult to be with them in the Safespace in order to help with de-escalation
- The child may need to be escorted to & placed in the Safespace – as in all situations involving Team Teach. If physical intervention is necessary it is important that it happens quickly, smoothly, confidently & successfully and is recorded correctly
- The child (because of the behaviour they are presenting) may require the door of the Safespace to be closed temporarily

4. A reminder of some important definitions:

In compiling this guidance consideration has been given to the following:

- **Restrictive intervention:**

The Department for Education's Use of Reasonable Force states that, "school staff have a statutory power to use restrictive intervention to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others; to prevent pupils from damaging property; and to prevent pupils from causing disorder or committing a criminal offence."

- **Deprivation of Liberty:**

Article 37 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says that "children and young people shouldn't lose their freedom for no reason, or in a way that is illegal."

- **Seclusion:**

Team Teach describes Seclusion as 'forcing a person to spend time alone, against their will'

- **Time Out:**

The Department of Health/Department for Education describe this as, "temporarily restricting access to all positive reinforcements as part of a behavioural programme."

- **Withdrawal:**

Team Teach describes Withdrawal as 'moving somebody to a safer place where they can be monitored and supervised'

By following this guidance staff can be confident that they are **only ever** using restrictive intervention legally and as a last resort; **not** depriving a young person or child of their liberty; **and** using seclusion or time out or withdrawal in a planned & judicious manner

Record of review/amendment

Review Date:	May 2026	Page No (Other info):	
Original:			
Amendment:	Reviewed in line with new DfE guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools' (April 2026). Terminology 'Physical Intervention' replaced with 'Restrictive Intervention'		