

Reviewed on:	January 2026
Reviewed by:	Brett Runchman
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Restraint Reduction Policy

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Our Position

Exceptional Ideas Ltd's schools and outreach service are designed to promote independence, choice and inclusion and have established environments that offer young people the maximum opportunity for personal growth and emotional well-being.

We wholly endorse the idea that all young people have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to be given the right support, despite conditions or disabilities that can at times call for restrictive practices to be implemented to minimise the impact of behaviours posing a threat to themselves and other people (HM Government, *Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention*, June 2019).

The same publication cites evidence of families and young people finding restraint and restrictive intervention traumatising, and as such, Exceptional Ideas Ltd operates a restraint reduction policy, aiming to reduce the requirements for, and lasting effects of, restraint and physical intervention, instead choosing to implement therapeutic behaviour support and alternative de-escalation techniques before restrictive ones, wherever possible.

Exceptional Ideas Ltd recognises the need to ensure that any physical restraint is 'necessary, proportionate and reasonable' as stated in the government guidance.

Aims of this policy

This policy sets out to:

- Outline Exceptional Ideas Ltd.'s approach to restraint reduction.
- Outline training expectations for Exceptional Ideas Ltd staff, ensuring that they work within the legal guidance available.
- Outline record-keeping requirements in relation to restraint and ensure that they are rigorous and accurate.
- Outline staff responsibilities in relation to restraint and restrictive interventions.

Assessing the impact of risk factors regarding the appropriateness of student placement

- Exceptional Ideas Ltd does not admit students requiring a high level of physical intervention. Examples of a high-level intervention requirement would be where a student requires regular restraint dictated by an existing care plan, or where restraint has been historically used regularly as a last resort.

Or:

- If a student exhibits dangerous behaviours on occasion that may require restraint, the director will assess the appropriateness of placement within our provision based on prior evidence.

Assessment of risk factors once placement is agreed.

- Once placement is deemed appropriate, a full risk assessment is carried out at the beginning of the 4 week induction period with parents/carers, which should allow for a full assessment of the risk of restrictive practices being required, and actions will be put in place to attempt to minimise any such risk.
- Any such risk assessment will detail the types of restraint likely to be required (definitions of which are explained later in this policy), as well as detail in what circumstances they will be implemented. Such written detail comes under the category of 'planned intervention' (HM Gov, June 2019, s4.43) and fully accounts for the specific needs of the child and their best interests. Parents/carers receive a copy of dynamic risk assessments at the end of induction and on a 10 weekly review cycle.
- Any unplanned restraint occurring during placement will be appropriately recorded as detailed later in this policy and will form an amendment to the risk assessment, possibly as an introduction of a planned restraint.

Restraint reduction strategies

Exceptional Ideas Ltd commit to using the techniques listed below before restraint wherever possible, to prevent the need for physical restraint.

- Diversion
- De-escalation
- Distraction
- Appropriate use of communication style and language
- Appropriate use of touch using side hugs

When planned restraint is required

When a restraint is required that is detailed on the risk assessment and is, as such, a planned restraint, staff are permitted to carry this out with no recourse to senior management.

Wherever a planned restraint is used that involves any form of deprivation of liberty, e.g. a physical restraint or restricting movement from one area to another, an incident form will be completed by staff involved, ticking the 'restraint' box on the incident form, and the restraint log will be updated by admin.

When an unplanned restraint is required

When a restraint is required that is not detailed on the risk assessment and is, as such, an unplanned restraint, where possible, communication with senior management or other team members should be sought during the escalation prior to the event.

When an event reaches the point where unplanned restraint is required, it is unlikely that there will be time for such communication; however, using the 1,2,3 WhatsApp system in place for incident communication, there would normally be other staff members standing by to assist with restraint.

Wherever an unplanned restraint is used that involves any form of deprivation of liberty, e.g. a physical restraint or restricting movement from one area to another, an incident form will be completed by staff involved, ticking the 'restraint' box on the incident form, and the restraint log will be updated by admin. The risk assessment may also be reviewed and added to, and parent communication will be undertaken.

When restraint is not required

- When it is not in the best interests of the person, e.g. as a punishment or as an act of retaliation.
- When the situation is not made safer by restrictive interventions.
- When there is an insufficient number of trained staff available to safely complete the restraint (a minimum of 2 trained staff members are required).

Communicating and recording a restraint

Following a restraint, it is vital that recording is undertaken meticulously and accurately and that communication with all interested parties is carried out as soon as possible and recorded appropriately.

- Unplanned and planned restraint recording involves completing incident forms and updating risk assessments and the restraint log.
- Communication with parent/carer and any other interested agencies, e.g., Social Care, should be a priority with clear, accurate, evidence based and concise discussion of the incident as it occurred.
- Communication with the Operational Senior and Director should occur directly after the incident, either by those involved or a fully informed third party.
- Restraint log, incident form, risk assessment, therapeutic plan and communication record should all be updated within 24 hours of the restraint taking place.

Reflecting on restraint

Following a restraint, it is important that there are follow-up procedures in place to allow for updated information regarding risk, strategies, and reflection. This is vital to ensure that students and families can resolve any trauma following the event.

- Staff will take time to consider necessary changes to the environment, alternatives for future events, reassessment of triggers, adaptation of the risk assessment and/or the therapeutic plan.
- For the students, options include reflection, possible visits home, resetting of boundaries, discussion of strategies to avoid recurrence, sanctions depending on severity or a warning for next time.
- It is vital that families are involved in the discussion of strategies at home, triggers and working together to avoid recurrence.
- Management will reflect on any update to a risk assessment and incident reports and provide strategies and advice to staff on any changes to be made to practice. The need for further training will also be considered.

Types of restraint used by Exceptional Ideas Ltd.

- Breakaways – low-level disengagement: these are designed for breaking free from difficult and uncomfortable situations, including but not limited to: escapes from hair pulls, scratching, pinching, grabbing, strangling, clothing grabs, kicking, and punching.
- Deflection – redirecting the intended movement of a person elsewhere using low-level redirection strategies.
- Restrictive – supporting the person to move from one place to another and/or using restrictive holds to minimise freedom of gross movement.
- Environmental restraint – this is a low-level restraint where a person may be restricted from moving from one environment into another; it is rare that the person would be physically blocked from leaving an environment.
- Technical surveillance – some Exceptional Ideas Ltd. schools have CCTV outside the premises. This is not intended for restraint purposes; however, may be consulted should the need arise to review a restraint or similar.

Who can restrain/regularity of training?

- Brett Runchman, Director, holds a Pearson SRF BTEC Level 3 Award in Physical Restraint Reduction, completed with NFPS Ltd. The aforementioned is the sole deliverer of training regarding physical restraint to Exceptional Ideas Ltd staff, and their training is updated annually.
- All staff undertake refresher training annually with Exceptional Ideas Ltd, with any new staff undertaking training, ideally, within 6 months of becoming employed. The training focuses on restraint reduction practices and physical restraint.

- To keep staff and students safe, it is stated here that Exceptional Ideas Ltd do not allow physical restrictive interventions where there are fewer than 2 staff members involved.

References

HM Government 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention,' 27 June 2019. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812435/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention.pdf

Review

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.
Next review due January 2027.