

ASTON TOWER MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE BY STAFF POLICY

DATE	APPROVING BODY	REVIEW DATE
6 th July 2026	FTB	Summer 2028

Restrictive interventions and the use of reasonable force by staff

This part of our policy is based on the [Department for Education's Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools](#) statutory guidance.

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

To prevent or stop a pupil from:

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

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions receive adequate training in the safe and lawful use of such interventions and in preventative strategies. We will carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils, where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required, can do so effectively.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

The Executive Headteacher and staff who they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a [prohibited item](#). A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only. Staff should refer to the [Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools](#) guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

Other physical contact with pupils

We are required by the Government not to have a 'no contact' policy. We will not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self regulate
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake

- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:

- the school's child protection (or any other relevant) policy
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
- any other material factors, including but not limited to whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities, any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used

Working to avoid and reduce the need for physical interventions and reasonable force

In most cases, the effective behaviour management strategies listed in this policy will reduce and avoid the need for restrictive interventions and reasonable force. Staff should work to prevent the need for their use and de-escalate. When necessary, we will work with pupils and parents to create support plans to avoid the use of restrictive interventions and reasonable force but also list any we may need to use from our Team Teach training. These plans will be reviewed with the pupil and parent periodically, and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions. We will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of our policies on pupils with SEND. For example, we will consider how the school culture and environment may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND and seek to support pupils to cope with situations that they may find distressing. We will seek to identify and manage risk, such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used.

We will work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies. Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies may include:

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil with something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention.

Recording and reporting duties when restrictive interventions and reasonable force are used

Incidents will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. The procedure must require that a record of any such incident is made in writing as soon as practicable after the incident. The requirement to record applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's support plan.

Following statutory guidance, we will record the following as a minimum:

- names of pupils 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.

We will record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

Reporting the use of force

We will report each significant use of force to the parents of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

Exceptions to the requirement to report are where

- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

The requirement to report applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan. We will communicate this information to parents in writing.

We will also invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This would involve a discussion about:

- any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- what might be done differently in the future

Such information may be used to amend any existing support plans.

Pupil and staff support

We will evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example, by amending or introducing a support plan. If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Any injuries should be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive. We will also hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation should be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue. Schools should continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example, through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

Trust Board responsibilities

Trustees are required to have in place a policy on this matter that meets statutory guidance.

Trustees will regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to ensure school leaders:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.
- Trustees should consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis should be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of people.