



Restrictive Interventions Policy

Including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion.

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Audience:

All Academies



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1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out our Trust's and school's approach to restrictive interventions (RI), including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. We recognise that restrictive interventions can have a significant physical and psychological impact on pupils and staff. They should therefore only ever be used, when necessary, proportionate and lawful, and where less restrictive measures have been attempted or assessed as inappropriate in the circumstances.

We are committed to:

- safeguarding the welfare, dignity and human rights of pupils
- preventing and minimising the need for restrictive interventions
- supporting staff to manage behaviour safely and confidently
- meeting statutory recording and reporting duties
- using data to continuously improve practice

This policy should be read alongside the [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#) published by DfE in effect from 1st April 2026, as well as other relevant DfE guidance documents, including the current version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and section 93A of the 'Education and Inspections Act 2006'. In addition, alongside school policies as follows:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Pupil Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy.

2. Definitions

- **Restrictive intervention:** Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement, including physical and non-physical interventions.
- **Reasonable force:** Physical force used by staff to prevent injury, damage, criminal behaviour or serious disorder. It must be the minimum necessary for the shortest time.
- **Restraint:** A non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises or limits a pupil's movement, with or without physical contact.
- **Seclusion:** A non-disciplinary safety measure involving keeping a pupil in a place away from others and preventing them from leaving.
- **Significant incident:** Any incident where force goes beyond everyday physical contact and requires formal recording and reporting.





Section 1: Using restrictive intervention

3. Prevention and de-escalation

We prioritise proactive strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions, including:

- positive behaviour support approaches
- consistent routines and expectations
- trauma-informed practice
- environmental adaptations
- early identification of triggers
- effective communication strategies
- strong relationships between staff and pupils

Individual support may include behaviour support plans, reasonable adjustments, sensory strategies and joint working with parents and external professionals.

3.1 Staff Training

We recognise that staff training is a critical component of preventing the need for restrictive interventions and ensuring that, where they are used, they are applied safely, lawfully and proportionately.

Staff who are likely to work in situations where restrictive interventions may be required will receive appropriate training in behaviour support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and the safe and lawful use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions.

We will ensure that training needs are informed by our pupil cohort, patterns and trends in incidents, and risk assessments. As an employer, we will take reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff.

4. When restrictive interventions may be used

Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion, may only be used in **exceptional circumstances** where they are **lawful, necessary and proportionate**, and where other less restrictive measures have been attempted or assessed as inappropriate in the circumstances.

Restrictive interventions may only be used to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence





- causing serious damage to property
- causing significant disorder

The decision to use a restrictive intervention is a matter of **professional judgement** and must always be based on the specific circumstances at the time. Before using, or continuing to use, a restrictive intervention, staff must, wherever practicable, consider the following factors, which are drawn directly from the guidance:

Necessity - Staff should consider whether an RI is required to reduce an immediate risk of harm or whether other less restrictive strategies are likely to be effective.

Proportionality - Any RI must be the **least restrictive option available**, using the **minimum amount of force** for the **shortest amount of time** necessary to reduce the risk.

Pupil welfare and dignity - Staff must consider the impact of any RI on the pupil's physical and psychological wellbeing.

Vulnerabilities and SEND - Staff must have regard to the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil.

Equality implications - Staff must consider relevant duties under the Equality Act 2010, and ensure that responses do not disproportionately impact pupils who share protected characteristics.

Following any restrictive intervention, staff must ensure that appropriate post-incident actions are taken in line with this policy, including recording and reporting, medical checks where appropriate, reflection and review.

4.1 Statutory power to use reasonable force

Under section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, all members of school staff have a statutory power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances to prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder. This power applies while staff are lawfully in charge of pupils and extends to situations both on and off school site, including educational visits.

In addition, there is a statutory duty on governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that arrangements are in place for recording and reporting significant incidents involving the use of force.

4.2 Unacceptable use of restrictive intervention

Restrictive interventions must never be used as a punishment, a disciplinary sanction, or for the purpose of compliance, convenience or to manage behaviour where there is no immediate risk





of harm. They must only be used as a last resort safety measure and must cease as soon as the immediate risk has reduced. Staff must not use any techniques or approaches that may restrict or interfere with a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation. Such practices are strictly prohibited.

Ground restraint should be avoided wherever possible. Where a pupil is unintentionally brought to the ground, staff must take immediate steps to reduce risk by repositioning or releasing holds as soon as it is safe to do so and moving to a safer alternative or standing position.

Any restrictive intervention that presents, or begins to present, a medical risk must stop immediately, and staff must seek medical assessment and treatment as soon as practicable if needed.

Staff must also be mindful that restrictive interventions can cause significant psychological distress. Interventions that humiliate, degrade, intimidate, threaten or deliberately cause emotional harm are unacceptable. All responses must seek to preserve the pupil's dignity and wellbeing, even in high-risk situations.

Any incident involving unacceptable practice, or where there is concern that an intervention may have compromised a pupil's safety, must be reported immediately in line with our safeguarding requirements.

4.3 Appropriate physical contact

Appropriate physical contact is lawful and sometimes necessary. Staff must use professional judgement and consider safeguarding context, pupil age, vulnerability and alternative strategies.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of a child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around school (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)
- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching;
- To give first aid;
- Supporting personal care needs;
- Supporting certain medical procedures;
- To maintain postural care e.g. Positioning a child in a wheelchair or standing frame.

If possible, for these incidents, **it is good practice to seek consent** from a child before physical contact is initiated by the member of staff.

4.4 Reasonable force for searching pupils





Under statutory powers, the headteacher and staff authorised by the headteacher may search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. Prohibited items are those set out in legislation and include, for example, knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Where a lawful search is taking place for a prohibited item, staff may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to conduct that search. Any use of force in this context must be necessary, proportionate and for the shortest possible time, and must be consistent with the principles set out in this policy.

Reasonable force must not be used to search for items that are banned only under the school's own rules. Where force is used during a search, this will be treated as a restrictive intervention and must be managed in line with this policy, including consideration of the pupil's welfare, dignity, vulnerabilities and any SEND or medical needs.

All searches must be carried out in accordance with the school's procedures, and staff involved in searching pupils should receive appropriate guidance.

5. Seclusion

Seclusion is defined in statutory guidance as a non-disciplinary, short-term safety measure and may only be used where a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to the pupil or to others. Seclusion must never be used as a punishment, a sanction, a planned behaviour management strategy, or as a response to deliberate non-compliance where there is no immediate risk.

Seclusion must only ever be used to reduce an immediate risk of harm and must not be used to coerce, threaten or control a pupil. It should not be implemented through the threat of punishment or the suggestion that negative consequences will follow if a pupil attempts to leave.

Where seclusion is used, the place in which the pupil is confined must be safe, suitable and non-threatening, taking account of the pupil's age, needs, vulnerabilities and sensory sensitivities. The environment must not present a risk to the pupil's physical or psychological wellbeing and should allow the pupil to calm and regain regulation.

A pupil who is secluded must be continuously supervised at all times by a member of staff. Supervision must be active and purposeful, enabling staff to monitor the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing, communicate appropriately, and respond immediately if the pupil becomes distressed, unwell or at risk.





Seclusion must end as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced. It must not continue beyond the point at which it is necessary to manage risk, and pupils must be supported to rejoin others safely when deemed appropriate for this to happen.

Following any use of seclusion, appropriate post-incident actions must take place, including welfare checks, reflection, support and review of preventative strategies.

Section 2: Post Incident

6. Record Keeping

We recognise that incidents involving restrictive interventions are **significant safeguarding events**. Trust leaders must ensure that clear procedures are in place for the **recording and reporting** of all relevant incidents.

6.1 Recording of significant incidents involving the use of force

All **significant incidents** involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded.

These will be recorded on the schools safeguarding online system as soon as practicable after the event, and staff should endeavour to complete records **no later than the same day**.

Records must be completed by the staff member(s) involved and must provide a clear, factual account of the incident in line with our school's safeguarding recording systems. Entries of incidents should include:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- 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

The requirement to record applies even where the use of restrictive interventions has been discussed or anticipated within a behaviour support plan.

6.2 Reporting of significant incidents involving the use of force (category: 'Restrictive Physical Intervention')





Parents must be informed in writing of each significant incident involving the use of force **as soon as practicable after the incident**, and school should endeavour to do this **no later than the same day**, unless a statutory exception applies.

Reports to parents will include, as a minimum:

- the date, time, location and approximate duration of the incident
- a brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- a brief description of what type of force was used and the degree of force applied
- details of any physical injuries or welfare concerns, where applicable

This should be communicated to parents. School will initially attempt to inform parents via a phone call but will ensure that written communication is completed by the end of the same day, and school will have a procedure for doing so. We will normally discuss the incident with parents, including any relevant triggers, the effectiveness of preventative strategies, and whether any behaviour support plans or risk assessments require review.

Exceptions to the duty to report apply only where:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over, or
- it appears that informing a particular parent would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In such cases, the incident will be reported to any parent to whom it can safely be reported, or, where this is not possible, to the relevant local authority.

6.3 Recording and reporting of seclusion and non-force restraint (categories: 'Seclusion' and 'Non-Force Related Constraint')

All incidents involving **seclusion** or **restraint without physical force** must be recorded and reported. This includes incidents where restrictive interventions are used in line with an agreed behaviour support plan. Records must be completed as soon as practicable and no later than the same day wherever possible.

7. Post-incident support and review

Following any restrictive intervention, we will ensure that appropriate and timely actions are taken to safeguard the physical and emotional wellbeing of all those involved, to understand what happened and why, and to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

7.1 Immediate welfare and medical checks

As soon as practicable after the incident, staff will check the pupil and any staff involved for signs of injury, distress or illness. Where appropriate, first aid will be administered and medical



assessment or treatment sought. Any injuries or health concerns will be recorded and reported in line with school's health and safety procedures.

7.2 Emotional wellbeing and safeguarding support

School recognises that restrictive interventions can be distressing. Consideration will therefore be given to the emotional wellbeing needs of the pupil, any staff involved, and any pupils who may have witnessed the incident.

7.3 Reflective debrief and learning

We will hold reflective debrief conversations following incidents involving restrictive interventions. These discussions are intended to support wellbeing, enable learning and improvement, and reduce future risk.

7.4 Review of support and risk management

Following any restrictive intervention, school will review relevant behaviour support plans, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments. Changes will be made where necessary to better support the pupil, address underlying needs, and strengthen preventative measures.

7.5 Repairing relationships and reintegration

Our school is committed to repairing and rebuilding relationships following incidents involving restrictive interventions. Where appropriate, restorative approaches will be used to support the pupil's reintegration, rebuild trust between pupils and staff, and promote a sense of safety, dignity and belonging.

7.6 Monitoring and escalation

Leaders will monitor incidents and post-incident actions to identify patterns, emerging risks or training needs. Where restrictive interventions occur repeatedly or where concerns arise, this will trigger further review, multi-agency engagement where appropriate, and escalation through safeguarding or SEND processes.





Section 3: Leadership and Management of Restrictive Intervention

8. Governance

Our Trust leaders and Trustees, recognise that the use of restrictive interventions is a significant safeguarding matter and will provide appropriate oversight to ensure that practice across the Trust's schools is lawful, proportionate and focused on prevention.

In line with statutory duties and the April 2026 Department for Education guidance, governance leaders will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to support the effective implementation of this policy and the associated recording and reporting requirements.

In fulfilling this responsibility, Trustees will:

- ensure that this policy is implemented and reviewed regularly
- assure itself that statutory recording and reporting duties are being met
- receive and consider information about the use of restrictive interventions, including emerging patterns or trends
- be mindful of any disproportionate impact on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities or other identified vulnerabilities
- use information from incidents to inform discussion about prevention, training and support
- ensure that staff are appropriately supported and trained
- ensure that learning from incidents contributes to the ongoing development of practice

Oversight of restrictive interventions will form part of the governing body's wider safeguarding and pupil wellbeing responsibilities.

9. Complaints

Any complaints raised in relation to the use of restrictive interventions will be managed in accordance with the Trust's complaints procedure. We will ensure that allegations are considered objectively, based on the available evidence, and that appropriate support is provided to all parties involved.

Learning arising from complaints and allegations will be used to inform training, policy review and preventative practice.

“This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe is in line with the Equality Act 2010. It does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality.”



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