



Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force

This policy is applicable to The ONE MAT Academies Trust

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Introduction

The ONE MAT Academies Trust and its academies fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This policy is a Trust policy and applies to all pupils including those in the sixth form and early years. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following the guidance in this policy.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the academies in our Trust including Central team, LAB Governors and Trustees.

This policy has been written using advice taken from **Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools (DfE, April 2026)**, which replaces previous 2013 guidance and includes updated statutory requirements for recording and reporting.

The Trust acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND) in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEN and Disability Code of Practice (0–25 years, 2015).

The Trust is committed to:

- minimising the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early support and de-escalation strategies
- ensuring that any use of force is lawful, necessary, proportionate and safe
- protecting the dignity, wellbeing and rights of all pupils

For the Purposes of this Policy Document

- **Restrictive intervention** is defined as any action that prevents, restricts or subdues movement of the body or part of the body.
- **Reasonable force** is defined as using no more force than is necessary, proportionate, and appropriate to the circumstances, taking account of the age, understanding, and individual needs of the pupil.
- **Physical restraint** is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect or prevent a pupil from:
 - o causing injury to themselves or others, or
 - o causing serious damage to property.

Physical restraint is used only in more serious or extreme situations, for example to stop a physical fight or where there is an immediate risk of harm and no less restrictive alternative is effective.

- **Seclusion** is defined as keeping a pupil away from others and preventing them from leaving for safety reasons. It is a non-disciplinary intervention and must never be used as punishment.

- **Injury** refers to significant injury, including:
 - o actual or grievous bodily harm
 - o physical or sexual abuse
 - o behaviour that risks life or serious injury to themselves or others
 - o self-harm or self-poisoning

Who Can Use Reasonable Force?

- All members of academy staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff working at the academies or central team, regardless of role.
- It may also apply to individuals temporarily placed in charge of pupils by the Principal.
- The decision to physically intervene rests with the professional judgement of the staff member, exercised in line with this policy, safeguarding expectations, and the individual circumstances of the pupil, including any identified SEND.

When Can Reasonable Force Be Used?

Reasonable force may be used to:

- prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, damaging property, committing an offence, or causing serious disorder
- control or restrain a pupil where there is an immediate risk of harm and other strategies have been unsuccessful
- remove a disruptive pupil where there is a risk to safety
- prevent serious disruption to an academy or Trust event
- prevent a pupil from leaving where this would place them at risk
- prevent a physical altercation
- restrain a pupil at immediate risk of harming themselves

All use of force must be:

- necessary
- proportionate
- the least restrictive option for the shortest possible time

Where a pupil has identified SEND, staff must consider:

- the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan or risk assessment
- known triggers, communication needs and sensory sensitivities
- reasonable adjustments and alternative strategies

When can Reasonable Force NOT be used?

Reasonable force must never be used as a form of punishment, sanction, threat or deterrent.

Use of Seclusion

Seclusion will only be used as a safety measure where there is an immediate risk of harm to the pupil or others. It must never be used as a form of punishment or as a response to deliberate misbehaviour.

Where seclusion is used:

- the pupil must be supervised at all times
- the environment must be safe and not intimidating
- the pupil must be released as soon as the risk has reduced
- staff must maintain calm and clear communication

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported in line with statutory requirements, regardless of whether force is used.

Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint

Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed.

- Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this policy.
- Staff should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues.
- In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation.
- Help should be summoned from colleagues; pupils should never be involved in restraint.

What to do in circumstances when the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed

- Approach the pupil calmly but firmly.
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout.

Method of Physical Restraint and Restrictive Intervention

Any use must:

- be a last resort
- use minimum force
- be for the shortest duration
- prioritise safety and dignity

Prevention and De-escalation

The Trust prioritises minimising restrictive intervention through:

- positive relationships and strong staff-pupil interactions
- clear routines and consistent expectations
- early identification of need
- staff training in de-escalation
- use of calm communication and emotional regulation strategies
- providing time, space and support for pupils

Staff must use de-escalation strategies wherever possible before considering physical intervention.

Physical restraint must not:

- involve deliberate pain
- restrict breathing or airway
- apply pressure to neck, chest or abdomen
- use face-down restraint
- involve inappropriate contact

During restraint, staff must:

- provide reassurance
- monitor breathing and wellbeing
- stop immediately if distress is observed

Recording Incidents (Statutory Requirement)

- All significant incidents involving force, restraint and seclusion must be recorded
- Recording must take place as soon as practicable (same day expected)

Records must include:

- names of pupil and staff
- time, date, location and duration
- what happened, including triggers and de-escalation
- type and degree of force
- why it was necessary
- any injuries
- post-incident support

All incidents of seclusion and restraint must be recorded and reported, even where no physical force is used.

Telling parents when force has been used

- Parents must be informed as soon as practicable (same day where possible)
- This is a statutory requirement
- Written confirmation must be provided

Leadership and Governance Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring implementation of this policy
- ensuring staff are appropriately trained
- monitoring incidents and identifying patterns
- ensuring statutory compliance

The Trust Board / Governing Body is responsible for:

- approving and reviewing this policy
- monitoring use of restrictive interventions
- ensuring compliance with statutory duties
- holding leaders to account

What Happens if a Pupil Complains

- All complaints will be investigated fairly and proportionately
- Staff acting in line with this policy are supported by law
- Allegations will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures and KCSIE

All complaints or concerns regarding the use of reasonable force or physical restraint will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly, promptly, and proportionately, in line with the Trust complaints, safeguarding, and disciplinary procedures.

Where a member of staff has acted lawfully and in accordance with this policy, using reasonable force to prevent injury, serious damage to property, or disorder, this may provide a defence to any criminal, civil, or public law action.

Investigations will be conducted in a manner that is fair and objective. While allegations must be appropriately evidenced, the Trust recognises that staff are not required to prove innocence; rather, decisions will be based on the balance of evidence available.

Where a pupil has identified SEND, investigations will take account of: the pupil's age, understanding, and communication needs, any Behaviour Support Plan, risk assessment, or reasonable adjustments in place, and the context of the incident, including any known triggers or vulnerabilities.

If an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct is made against a member of staff, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the academy is:

- Mrs Bassi – DSL (The Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton)
- Mr O Yates – DSL (ATAM Academy)

The DSL is responsible for:

- ensuring incidents are recorded and reviewed
- ensuring parents are informed
- maintaining safeguarding records
- liaising with external agencies
- providing safeguarding oversight following incidents

Statutory and National Guidance

Staff should refer to:

- Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force (DfE, April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest edition)
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed to ensure it remains up-to-date, relevant, and aligned with the Trust's strategic objectives, regulatory requirements, and best practices. The review process will be conducted as follows:

The Policy Owner will conduct an initial review to assess any necessary update, amendments and alignment to the Scheme of Delegation.

Executive Team Policy Committee

The revised policy will be presented to the Executive Team Policy Committee for further evaluation and recommendations.

Trust Board Approval

Following review and necessary revisions, the policy will be submitted for formal approval by the Trust Board in accordance with the scheduled review cycle.

For details on the specific review schedule, please refer to the review table on the front page.