



POLICY ON THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS, INCLUDING USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

Policy Custodian: Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Approving Body: MTS Senior Leadership Team
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*This policy has been written in accordance with [Restrictive Interventions, including Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools](#) (DfE, April 2026); *The Education and Inspections Act (2006)*; *The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations (2025)*; *The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)*; *The Human Rights Act (1998)*; *The Equality Act (2010)* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*. It should be read in conjunction with the *School Safeguarding Policy*.*

Definitions:

Restrictive intervention: a physical or non-physical action to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this document.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

Introduction

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

- To prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others;
- To prevent a pupil committing a criminal offence;
- To prevent a pupil damaging property;
- To prevent a pupil causing disorder among pupils at the school.

The School cannot grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

The School policy is that the use of restrictive intervention and force should be minimised; prevention and de-escalation are almost always the more effective approaches. For any form of restrictive intervention there is a risk of physical and psychological harm. The impact on pupil welfare should always be balanced against any actions taken.

Incidents in which a member of staff uses force, seclusion or restraint on a pupil must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event, on CPOMS (see detailed guidance below) and a written report must be sent to parents by a member of the Safeguarding Team. They should endeavour to do this no later than the same day

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be dealt with following the Parents Complaints Procedure. Allegations regarding inappropriate use of force and/or restrictive interventions made against a member of staff should be investigated following the school Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025).

Unacceptable Use of Force

Force must never be used for the purpose of punishment, and it is illegal to do so. The School rejects the use, or threat of use, of corporal 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.

Determining when the use of restrictive intervention is appropriate

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation:

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.

- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond. Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped

Other Physical Contact with 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 depends on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- To give first aid
- 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 Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct; the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present; the individual pupil's age and any other material factors including, but not limited to, whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities. Staff should remember that different pupils will be comfortable with different levels of physical contact and some may be touch averse.

Seclusion

Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

A pupil experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation, where there is a threat of harm to the pupil themselves or to others, should first be offered the opportunity to voluntarily take themselves to the Learning Support Department (where they can access the Wellbeing Room) or the School Reception. Where a pupil is unable to voluntarily remove themselves, other pupils in the area should be sent out of the space and a member of staff should supervise the pupil until a member of the Safeguarding Team is able to attend.

The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil.

The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

The use of seclusion must be recorded and reported via CPOMS, using the 'seclusion' category.

Using Reasonable Force to Search Pupils

The Head Master and authorised staff 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.

Recording of incidents involving restrictive intervention, force and/or seclusion

Incidents must be recorded on CPOMS as soon as practicable after the event, using the 'Restrictive Intervention' or 'Seclusion' categories. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

Staff should record the following details as a minimum:

- 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 intervention 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 incident must be reported to parents as soon as practicable after the incident, usually by a member of the Safeguarding Team, and staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day, unless 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 be made in writing and 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

This email should be followed up with a meeting between staff and parents, to examine what might be done differently in the future and to amend or put together a Pastoral Support Plan.

The Governing Body will regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive intervention, force and/or seclusion to ensure the School identifies and implements improvements to policies and practices; identifies areas of learning for school staff; understands any repeat patterns and triggers for specific pupils and establishes or adapts Pastoral Support Plans and identifies any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions, force or seclusion in relation to vulnerable pupils, including those who have SEN or share other protected characteristics.

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. Staff should seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support and create an inclusive environment. For example, staff should 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. This will primarily be achieved by staff familiarising themselves with Learning Support Factsheets, Pastoral Support Plans, Risk Assessments and the Pupil Information email

Strategies which may reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used 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 in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Any Factsheets, Risk Assessments or Pastoral Support Plans should be reviewed with the pupil and their 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. Where a pupil has a disability, the school has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage so that the pupil can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

School Culture and Practice

The School policy is that restrictive interventions are only to be used as a final resort, when other measures, such as prevention and de-escalation, have not worked. The School aims to minimize the need for restrictive interventions using the following measures:

- A strong relational culture between staff and pupils is encouraged through the House Tutor system, and a focus on mutual respect;
- There is timetabled supervision by teaching staff of communal areas, such as playgrounds and the Dining Hall.
- There is a programme of regular training of staff on whole-class behaviour management strategies and effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation.
- Staff record, communicate and analyse pastoral data regularly, to identify concerns early on and plan interventions.
- Pastoral staff work closely with parents to support individual pupils
- Strategies are used to support individual pupils based on their identified needs, including Factsheets, Pastoral Support Plans and Risk Assessments
- A Wellbeing space is available to give pupils time, space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates.