



Diocese of Salisbury
Academy Trust

'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY (INCLUDING USE OF REASONABLE FORCE)

Policy Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2030

This policy applies to all schools

Introduction

Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can significantly affect the pupils, staff, members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be used where lawful, and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

The law states that any member of staff may use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence;
- Causing personal injury, injury to others or damage to property;
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline during a teaching session or otherwise.

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should receive appropriate training in its safe and lawful use, and in preventative strategies. Decisions on training required are based on the school's individual contexts and needs. All training reflects the principles of both statutory and non-statutory guidance. Schools will use risk assessments to identify staff and pupil needs and reduce foreseeable risks.

It is always unlawful to use restrictive intervention as a punishment.

Relevant Legislation

The principal legislation to which this policy relates are:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

Throughout this policy, the terms 'must' and 'should' are used. Where the term 'must' is used, this is a legal requirement. Where the term 'should' is used, the policy should be followed unless there is good reason not to.

Terminology

This policy uses the following terminology;

Restrictive intervention: a legal term that means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This policy guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: the legal term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive intervention. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force only in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time needed, 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. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

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.

Minimising the need to use restrictive intervention

Restrictive intervention is only used as a last resort and therefore our schools have a variety of effective strategies in place which minimise the need for this.

Preventative measures include strong relationships with pupils and families; effective PSHE, pastoral and behaviour support; inclusive curriculum and environment; well-deployed support staff; adult modelling of positive relationships; knowledge of pupils' individual needs; and proactive assessment of situations.

Deciding whether to use restrictive intervention – is it necessary?

- Knowledge of individual pupils is crucial, especially pupils with vulnerabilities, disabilities and SEND to ensure that pupils are treated reasonably.
- There is no precedent – all cases are independent of each other and depend on the circumstances of each child and each situation
- 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.
- Staff should consider the three bullet points at the top of this policy.

Types of incidents which might require restrictive intervention

- Incidents that may require restrictive intervention include fighting, assault, wilful damage to property, risk of injury to the pupil or others, absconding where this creates danger, serious disruption to lessons, school activities or events, and the use of reasonable force to search for legally prohibited items.

Using restrictive intervention safely – is it proportionate?

The restrictive intervention used should follow agreed guidelines of which all staff should be aware. Staff **must not** use any other type of physical intervention or restraint used outside the school or recommended by other establishments.

- 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.

Restrictive intervention describes a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits movement. It may be used for two reasons: physical guidance and restraint.

Physical guidance– can be passive physical contact; e.g. standing between two pupils or blocking their path, or active physical contact; e.g. leading a pupil by the hand or arm or ushering a pupil away.

Restraint – the physical prevention of a child from continuing to do what they are doing when they have been told to stop.

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.

Before using physical intervention, staff should seek adult help where needed, remain calm, de-escalate through clear communication, reduce distressing stimuli, use supportive body language and tone, help the pupil express or manage feelings, keep other adults informed, and minimise danger to others.

In the event of needing to use physical intervention, 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations. Training on the use of restrictive interventions will equip staff to judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed. It will also help staff understand how to assess whether their response is reasonable and proportionate under pressure.

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.

Staff will make every effort not to harm a pupil or restrain a pupil in a way which might be interpreted as sexually inappropriate. Gender consideration will be taken into account where possible, for example, a female member of staff restraining a female pupil. However, the over-riding consideration will always be the safety of all pupils and staff and the use of appropriate restraint.

An ill-advised or spontaneous restrictive intervention can escalate the problem.

Use of Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary restrictive intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving. It 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.

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.

An incident involving the use of seclusion **must** be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures used for other forms of restrictive intervention.

Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour and is not the same as removing a pupil from the classroom if required.

Risk Assessment and Proactive Planning

Risk assessments are in place for individual pupils where there is a high likelihood of necessary restrictive intervention. The need for this should be detailed in the plans including where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. Plans should include parent and pupil voice as well as guidance from other professionals where appropriate. These should be kept under regular review and always reviewed after an incident of restrictive intervention or a suspension.

Children who need a co-ordinated, coherent approach to their behaviour, beyond the school's universal offer, should have a behaviour support or learning plan. Children who have received a suspension, or are at risk of suspension or significant disengagement, should have a pastoral support plan (PSP). (See below for links).

[Behaviour templates & resources](#)

[1 PSP documents](#)

Recording and Reporting Incidents of Restrictive Intervention (including seclusion and non-force related)

Incidents **must** be recorded in writing on Arbor as soon as practicable after the event. They should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

Schools **must** record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of pupil 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

Schools should also record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

Schools **must** also report incidents to parents as soon as possible and no later than the same day. A report of the incident made to parents **must** 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 or pastoral support plan.

This information should be communicated to parents verbally where possible and additionally, **must** be communicated in writing. For example, via email or online messaging system.

Where possible, schools should invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident. This could 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

The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour or pastoral support plans, as needed.

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.

- Incidents of restrictive intervention, including number and type, **must** be reported to the Academy Standards and Ethos Committee through the termly Headteacher's report.

In determining whether incidents are significant, the school will consider:

- The pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time;
- The degree of physical intervention used and whether it was proportionate to the behaviour;
- The effect on the pupil or member of staff.

Post Incident Support

After an incident has occurred the following procedures **must** be instigated and captured on Arbor as part of the incident record:

- Appropriate First Aid as necessary to all parties including staff and the recording of injuries according to Academy procedure;

- Medical help if necessary;
- Any injuries should be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive;
- Emotional support to pupil(s) and adult(s) involved and, where appropriate, any witnesses;
- Communication with parents;
- Implementation of the Behaviour Policy and Exclusion Policy as necessary
- An evaluation of the incident as soon as practicable after the event to understand why restrictive intervention 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 behaviour or pastoral support plan.

Complaints and allegations

- Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure.
- If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education should be followed. This includes consulting and reporting to the LADO and the provisions regarding suspension of staff.
- If policy and procedure have been followed, all staff can expect support from the leadership and management of the school.

Monitoring and review

Restrictive interventions will be monitored by severity and frequency in order to identify improvements to policy and practice, staff development needs, pupil patterns: triggers, any disproportionate use involving pupils with protected characteristics, SEND or other vulnerabilities

Members of staff should not put themselves at risk. An individual would not be considered to be failing in their duty of care by not using restrictive intervention to prevent injury or damage, if doing so threatened their own safety.

Linked Documents

[Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools](#)
[Searching, screening and confiscation in schools](#)