



Policy on the Use of Restrictive Interventions including Use of Reasonable Force

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Together, pursuing life in all its fullness

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This Trust and Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all our children.

Our vision, based on John 10:10, is for every adult, every child and every academy in our trust to come together in order that we may pursue life in all its fullness. We have a vision of building a better future for all within our academies, who in turn will positively impact their communities.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide a set of unifying principles for the use of restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in our academies by all staff across the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust and any partner agencies who come into contact with children and young people. It aims to support academies to pro actively minimize the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de escalation.

This policy applies at any time that a pupil is in school or elsewhere under the charge of a paid member of staff, including after school activities and school visits.

See Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools DfE April 2026

2. Context

- It is our vision that every child and young person, including those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, should have the greatest possible opportunity to be the best they can be. That includes being safe from harm.
- The safety and well-being of children is paramount. Plans and interventions should be based on a clear assessment of the child's developmental progress and the difficulties the child may be experiencing.
- The purpose of all interventions should be to achieve the best possible outcomes for each child, recognising that each child is unique.
- Children must be listened to and every effort made to understand their wishes and feelings. Professionals and volunteers should do everything possible to develop co-operative working relationships with children and their parents or caregivers. The academy should use a variety of strategies for this to support SEND pupils e.g. opportunities to write/draw if non verbal.
- Action and services should be provided according to the identified needs of the child and the impact of service provision and interventions on the child's developmental progress should be reviewed.
- Practice with children must be based on sound professional judgement underpinned by a rigorous evidence base and the practitioner's knowledge and experience. New information should be taken into account.

- All staff and volunteers that work with children and young people have a Duty of Care to keep children, young people, colleagues and themselves safe.

3. Terminology

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This 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: 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. 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.

4. What is the purpose of this policy?

It is very rare where restrictive interventions including the use of reasonable force is used at any of our academies, but occasionally situations arise when it proves necessary for an adult in the academy to use reasonable force (restraint) on a pupil.

This policy describes the academy’s approach towards the use restrictive interventions including the use of reasonable force.

5. Specific aims of the Restrictive Intervention/ use reasonable force policy

- To protect every person in the academy community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to enable them to acquire skills to manage conflict effectively and deal with violent or potentially volatile situations.
- To encourage staff to support each other during and after an incident has taken place.

- To create an academy climate which is calm, orderly and supportive to minimise the risk and threat of violence.
- To maintain and celebrate positive relationships between both staff and pupils.
- To manage individual incidents well and recognise that situations can lead to challenging behaviour and these are often foreseeable.

6. Relevant Legislation

The principal legislation to which this guidance 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

7. Who can use reasonable force ?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. This power applies to any member of staff at the academy.

8. When is it appropriate to use reasonable force ?

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.

Head teachers and staff 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.⁸ 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.⁹ Staff should refer to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.

9.0 How do we avoid using restrictive interventions including reasonable force?

High expectations and rigorous behaviour procedures are evident and expected across the academy. As part of our behaviour expectations, we see it as the responsibility of every staff member to get to know and have positive relationships with the children. This means that when a child needs additional behavioural support, staff can use de-escalation techniques where necessary and attempt to make interventions suitable for each individual child before a situation escalates to needing positive handling or restraint.

There are some situations in which the need for physical restraint is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. is a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- Repetition of an instruction until the pupil complies
- Use of a distracter, such as shouting loudly or a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- Transfer of adult
- Success reminders and positive reassurance
- Appropriate behaviour reminder
- Other de-escalation techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as planned ignoring and the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high.
- Working closely with parents to understand individual circumstance which may affect a pupils behaviour and response in specific situations or due to specific circumstances.

10 Staff training

Annually, staff in all academies will be updated on the behaviour policy and this will form part of their whole school training. This policy will also be published on the academy website and shared with the Academy Governance Committee.

It is each academies decision as to which training staff will be provided. The headteacher of each academy is responsible for and will make decisions regarding the training required for each member of staff. They are also responsible for ensuring that staff understand the plans in place for specific pupils as part of this training.

11 Positive handling plans (PHP)

Positive Handling Plans are plans drawn up between the academy and the parent of a child for whom physical intervention may need to be used. Behaviour triggers, de-escalation techniques and an agreed method of physical restraint are identified and agreed. All staff will have access to the positive handling plan for each identified child.

12. Risk assessments

If the academy become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. This will be in the form of a Risk Assessment which will be shared with all staff and with parents. The risk assessment will be reviewed regularly and in light of any changes in behaviour or new strategies to be implemented.

13. Use of restrictive ntervention including reasonable force

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied.

However, as a general rule, it is defined as the least amount of force for the least amount of time. Staff will be guided by three questions:

- Is it necessary ?
- Is it proportionate ?
- Have we considered the pupils welfare and that of others ?

When Physical restraint becomes necessary staff will:

- Communicate to the pupil (where possible) that they may need to be positively handled if their behaviour becomes disruptive or unsafe when a situation arises
- Use non-threatening verbal and body language, ensuring the pupil can see a way out of a situation
- Talk to the pupil in a calm and controlled manner throughout the incident
- Use quiet areas which are not in view of bystanders and send other pupils away, so that everyone is safe and to maintain dignity for the pupil being positively handled
- If a pupil needs physical intervention explain to them what you are doing and why (e.g. to stop them harming themselves or damaging property) Try and talk to the pupil throughout the incident
- If necessary explain to the pupil why they are being positively handled e.g. to stop them self-harming, hurting others or to avoid property damage
- Use the minimum force necessary for the shortest amount of time to achieve the desired result
- Tell the pupil what they must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance
- Preserve the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Record e.g. relevant paperwork, CPOMs and report incidents to the Headteacher, DSL (if they have not been involved) as soon as possible and also inform parents of each incident
- Take into consideration the pupils own strength, body weight and gender
- Where ever possible only use force if another member of staff or responsible adult is present to support, observe and offer assistance
- Always ask for help and support if it is needed.

Consideration for pupils with SEND

- Identifying the underlying triggers and applying their positive Handling Plan protocol.
- Utilize staff who usually work closely with the child.
- Consider further adaptations including – removing stimuli that may be part of a trigger, change body language, facial expression and tone of voice, engaging pupil in an activity which will help them to manage their emotions.
- Distraction by introducing familiar objects etc..
- Review of the support plans in place.

14.0 Actions after Physical Intervention

Staff and pupil welfare is paramount. Both parties should be offered First Aid where needed. Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for a non-blaming and supportive debriefing process after the incident, both for the staff and pupil. This gives everyone involved the opportunity to explore thoughts and feelings during and after the incident. Arrangements for debriefing should be made as soon as the

situation has stabilised and this is also a good opportunity for any restorative work to take place.

An appropriate member of staff, usually a teacher, a member of the pastoral care team or a senior leader, should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved. Any victims of the incident should also be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an on-going pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Behaviour support plan which will include further strategies agreed by the SENCO, teacher or pastoral care staff. It is good practice for staff to discuss and reflect upon the incident afterwards, it is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided. This may also support revisiting and making adjustments to any risk assessments that are in place or may be the reason to instigate a risk assessment.

Pupil who may have witnessed any physical intervention should be supported as appropriate.

15. Statutory recording and reporting of incidents

Recording

All instance of physical restraint should be recorded immediately after the incident using the Physical Intervention form and added to the child's record on CPOMS.

All sections of this report should be completed and passed to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (if they have not been involved) so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. All records will be treated confidentially and dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Where staff or pupils have required First Aid following an incident, Health and Safety procedures should be followed.

Reporting

A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it. **Information provided to the parent should include:**

- **Time, date and location of the intervention.**
- **Why the intervention was necessary**
- **Brief account of what type of force was applied and degree of force.**
- **Details of any physical injuries sustained.**

Where headteachers feel it is necessary, a meeting with parents should be arranged to review individual plans for the pupil.

Academies should analyse incidents of Physical intervention to look for patters and trends, in pupil, pupil groups, times of day etc..

16. Seclusion

Seclusion is a non disciplinary measure which will only be used by staff as a safety measure to prevent others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. The place in which a pupil is held will be safe and the pupil will be supervised at all times. As soon as the immediate risk of harm is reduced the pupil will be allowed to leave.

Seclusion will be recorded, reported and analysed in the same way as physical intervention.

17 Complaints and allegations

Children, young people and parents have the right to complain about actions taken by staff. This might include the use of force. Any complaints will be dealt with in line with the Trust Complaints Policy.

Allegations of a safeguarding nature against any individual who works or volunteers with children will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within **one working day**, as required by the Department for Education document Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People

17.0 Links to other policies and relevant documentation

- Written Statement on Behaviour Principles
- Complaints policy
- Academy Behaviour Policy
- Academy SEN Policy and Information Report
- Academy Safeguarding Policy

DFE guidance - Searching, Screening and Confiscation:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfefa55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf

DFE guidance - Behaviour and discipline in Schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>

DFE guidance - Use of reasonable force in schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

DFE guidance - Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

18.0 Forms

- Positive Handling Plan(available from the Forms/Safeguarding section of the Info Hub)
- Physical Interventions/ Seclusion form.