



Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force



Trinity MAT

Policy	Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force
Date of review	March 2026
Date of next review	March 2028
Lead professional	Vice Principal
Status	Non-Statutory

1. Introduction

Trinity Multi-Academy Trust always ensures students are safe and enjoy their education. It is of paramount importance that each academy protects its students and staff if an incident occurs where restrictive actions or reasonable force is necessary, where there is a developing risk of injury, significant damage to property or where a student is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline at an academy. This policy also references situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and students, e.g. in the care of students with learning disabilities, in games/PE to comfort students.

The policy has been written in line with DfE guidance: "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools" April 2026.

2. Definitions

2.1 Restrictive Intervention

An action (physical or non-physical) that prevents, restricts, or subdues a pupil's movement to prevent harm or serious disruption. This includes "reasonable force," seclusion, or restraint.

2.2 Reasonable Force

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, required in the circumstances to prevent:

- injury to the pupil or others
- criminal behaviour
- serious damage to property
- serious disorder

Reasonable force must not affect breathing or circulation, and must not involve pressure on the neck, nose, mouth, abdomen, or forcefully holding a pupil on the ground.

2.3 Seclusion

A non-disciplinary intervention in which a pupil experiencing severe dysregulation is supervised in a safe space 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. It must only be used until the risk has reduced and must never be used as punishment.

3. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

3.1 Restrictive interventions may be used only when:

- there is an immediate risk of harm to the pupil or others
- to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence
- to prevent serious damage to property
- to prevent a pupil causing disorder whether during a teaching session or otherwise

They must not be used to enforce compliance, manage low-level behaviour, or as a behavioural consequence.

3.2 Examples of situations where restrictive interventions may be used:

- A student attacks a member of staff or another student
- Students are fighting
- A student is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A student is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way that he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others.
- A student persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
- A student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson
- A student absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a student could be at risk if not kept in a classroom or at school)

4. Acceptable measures of physical intervention

The use of any degree of force can only be deemed reasonable if:

- It is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- No more force than is necessary is used and for the least amount of time
- The age, understanding, gender and SEND needs of the student are taken into account
- It is likely to achieve the desired result of avoiding harm to persons or serious damage.

Where possible assistance should be sought from another member of staff before intervening.

5. Physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a student from harming themselves, others or property

This form of physical intervention may involve staff:

- Physically interposing themselves between students
- Blocking a student's path
- Escorting a student
- Shepherding a student away

In extreme circumstances, trained staff may need to use more restrictive holds. Wherever reasonable force is used, staff must keep communicating with the student.

6. Recording and Reporting Requirements

6.1 Recording

- Every significant incident must be recorded as soon as practicable, ideally the same day.
- Records must include:
 - names of the pupil and staff directly involved
 - time, date, location and duration of intervention
 - description of events leading to the intervention including preventative or de-escalation strategies and what type of reasonable force was applied
 - any injuries sustained or impact on the child
 - post incident support put in place
 - rationale for the intervention and any use of force necessary
 - staff and pupil views

- follow-up actions

The school may also wish to record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents, to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

6.2 Reporting the use of force (statutory guidance)

Parents must be notified as soon as practicable, ideally the same day, unless to do so would place the child at risk of significant harm, or in the absence of this, to the local authority

- a report to parents should include: time, date, location and duration of the intervention, brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary, brief account of what type and degree of force was applied, and details of any injury sustained if applicable
- notification must occur even when the intervention forms part of an agreed behaviour plan.
- reports to parents should be made in writing (email or online messaging system)
- schools should not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

Best practice would include inviting parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate to identify strategies focussed on reducing any future need for such interventions.

6.3 Reporting of seclusion and non-force related restraint

The use of seclusion or restraint incident must be recorded and reported as part of the school's duty under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event and follow the same points listed at 7.2

In circumstances where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, schools only need to follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force incidents under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as outlined in 6.2 above. There is no requirement to record the same incident twice.

7. Post Incident Support

- Pupils must be offered emotional and, if necessary, medical support following any restrictive intervention.
- Staff involved must receive debriefing and supervision where appropriate.
- Incidents should be reviewed to reduce future risk.

8. Governance and Oversight

Governing bodies must ensure:

- policies and procedures reflect statutory duties
- staff are trained and practice is monitored
- data on incidents is reviewed for patterns, safeguarding risks, and equality implications

9. Use of reasonable force to search pupils

The Principal 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.

A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules only.

Prohibited items include:

knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers
fireworks and pornographic images

and:

any article that a member of staff reasonable suspects has been, or is likely to be used to commit an offence, or cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil)

Under common law, school staff have the power to search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees.

10. Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Any concerns about the use of force or seclusion will be managed under the school's safeguarding, complaints and allegations procedures. Serious breaches may be reported to external agencies including the local authority or Ofsted.

CC11 Form

Record of the use of Physical Control and Physical Restraint (CC11)

Name of child/young person:	
Date of birth:	
Place:	
Date and time of incident:	
Reporting staff:	
Staff witnesses:	
Child/young person witnesses:	

1. Record of Incident

Reason why reasonable force was through necessary:

Was the learner concerned liable to injury?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Were other learners liable to injury?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Were staff liable to injury?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Was property about to be damaged?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Was good order prejudiced?	Yes ☐	No ☐

Other reasons:

Concise details of how the incident began, nature of behaviour, the use of techniques other than physical control to defuse the situation, and measure taken to avoid harm to the child/young person.

Description of physical intervention/control/restraint used, including the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long.

Record of any injuries to child/young person/staff (a body map should be attached).

Record of any damage to property.

Measures taken to ensure that the learner was calmed after the incident.

Signature:

Date:

Time:

Report passed to:

Designation: