



Abbey Multi Academy Trust **Policies & Procedures**

Restrictive Interventions Including the use of reasonable force

Approved on	1 April 2026
Approved by	Abbey MAT Board of Trustees
Next review due	31 March 2027

1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out how the Trust ensures that restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force and seclusion, are used safely, lawfully, proportionately, and only when necessary to keep pupils, staff, and others safe. It aligns fully with the DfE's statutory guidance effective from 1 April 2026.

The Trust prioritises prevention, early intervention, emotional regulation, and de-escalation to minimise the need for restrictive practices.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All school staff, including supply, visiting professionals, volunteers, and support staff
- All pupils

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, 2026)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025 (statutory duties)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s93)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s93A) – statutory duties for recording and reporting use of force
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding duties under *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations

4. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention

Any action - physical or nonphysical - that limits a pupil's movement, liberty, or independence.

Reasonable Force

Using no more force than necessary, for the minimum amount of time, based on circumstances and risk.

Restraint

A form of restrictive intervention where physical force restricts a pupil's movement.

Non-force related restraint

For restraint incidents that occur without direct physical contact, for example, the removal of a walking aid or physically blocking an exit.

Seclusion

Supervised isolation in a room or area from which the pupil is prevented from leaving, used only to protect others from imminent harm, not as punishment. Seclusion must not be intimidating, unsafe, or used as a threat.

5. Principles of Practice

Prevention First

In line with DfE guidance, staff will prioritise proactive, preventative strategies to minimise the need for restrictive interventions by reducing distress and preventing escalation, including:

- Positive behaviour support
- Emotional regulation
- Early help and personalised strategies
- Deescalation approaches

Restrictive Intervention

Restrictive intervention should normally be carried out by trained staff; however, if trained staff are not immediately available and the situation requires urgent action to ensure safety, any staff member may use reasonable force as a last resort.

Restrictive intervention may only be used where necessary to:

- Prevent injury to themselves or others
- Prevent a criminal offence being committed
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or at other times

Restrictive interventions must **never** be used:

- As punishment
- To enforce compliance
- As routine behaviour management

Safety and Welfare

Pupils will 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

6. Pupils with SEND

It is recognised that some pupils with SEND are at disproportionate risk of displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. To support pupils at risk of restrictive intervention. Staff must:

- Plan individualised strategies
- Conduct risk assessments
- Make reasonable adjustments

Interventions must be tailored to the pupil's communication, sensory, and emotional profile.

7. Appropriate Physical Contact

The school recognises that a *no-contact* approach is neither safe nor appropriate and does not support the needs of pupils or staff. Staff are encouraged and supported to use appropriate, safe physical contact when circumstances justify it, in line with safeguarding responsibilities and professional judgement. Such contact may be necessary for a range of everyday situations—for example, administering first aid; guiding, escorting, or *shepherding* pupils safely around the school or to a space chosen for self-regulation; offering comfort or reassurance; congratulating a pupil with a handshake or pat on the back; or demonstrating techniques in subjects such as music or PE. These forms of non-restrictive physical contact do not constitute the use of reasonable force. When deciding whether physical contact is appropriate, staff should consider the school's child protection policies, the specific context, the presence of other adults, the pupil's age, and any individual needs or vulnerabilities, and should use alternative non-contact strategies wherever suitable.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees and Local Governing Bodies

Must ensure:

- Policies comply with statutory requirements
- Regular review of data on use of force/seclusion
- Training is adequate and current

Headteachers

Responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Ensuring staff are trained
- Ensuring robust recording/reporting systems

Staff

All staff have a **legal power** to use reasonable force when necessary. Staff must:

- Prioritise de-escalation
- Use only proportionate interventions
- Record and report incidents promptly

9. Recording and Reporting

When Recording Is Required

Recording is mandatory for all incidents involving the use of significant force, non-force related restraint or seclusion. Staff should log incidents on CPOMS and use the body map feature as appropriate.

Records must include:

- Names of pupil and staff directly involved
- Location of incident
- Witness statements where appropriate
- Reasons for intervention
- Type and level of force used
- Duration
- Injuries to pupil or staff
- Any SEND factors
- Post incident support
- Details of communication with parents

Reporting to Parents

Parents must be informed in writing, however schools may choose to phone the parent in the first instance and where appropriate have a follow meeting. The incident should be reported:

- **As soon as practicable**, ideally the **same day**, unless doing so places the pupil at risk if harm

And should include:

- 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

Schools should not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

We will not report an incident to parents where doing so would place the child at risk of significant harm, compromise an ongoing safeguarding investigation, or conflict with instructions from statutory agencies. In such circumstances, we will instead report the incident to the local authority without delay, ensuring that appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed and that the child's welfare remains the primary concern. Where a child has an allocated social worker, we will also ensure they are informed promptly.

10. Data Review

Incident logs must be:

- Reviewed regularly
- Analysed for patterns or disproportionate use
- Used to improve practice

11. Seclusion Procedures

Seclusion can only be used as a final resort and when:

- The pupil poses an imminent risk to others
- Other measures are insufficient to maintain safety

Conditions:

- Area must be safe, supervised, non-intimidating
- Duration must be minimal
- Details recorded on CPOMS

12. Staff Training

School must ensure an adequate number of staff are trained, and the training must:

1. Include de-escalation, positive behaviour support, and safe intervention methods
2. Be refreshed annually.

12. Supervision

As good practice, incident involving restrictive interventions will be discussed as part of the safeguarding supervision process.

13. 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 the provisions regarding suspension of staff.

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Incident trends suggest a need
- Regulatory guidance updates

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Health and safety policy
- SEND policy
- Complaints policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Notices

Terminology

The following terminology is taken from the DfE 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' guidance and is provided for clarity.

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. 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.