



RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION, INCLUDING USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

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Policy Title: Restrictive Intervention, Including Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Date: Spring 2026 (V1)

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Change Log

Date	Changes to Policy
February 2026	<p>Policy Name change from Physical Intervention and Safe Touch Policy Updated in line with DfE guidance "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools" (April 2026).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added statutory procedures for recording and reporting each significant use of force to parents (same day where practicable). - Added procedures for recording and reporting seclusion and non-contact restraint under the 2025 Regulations. - Clarified who can use reasonable force; unacceptable uses of force; and the position on "no contact" policies. - Added guidance on seclusion as a safety measure (non-disciplinary). - Strengthened duties around SEND, equality and risk assessments. - Introduced governance oversight and data monitoring. - Added Annex A: Incident recording & reporting template, and Annex B: Definitions.
July 2025	<p>Accessibility and Language Support added. Section 4: Clarification of when to record in the Bound Book added. Annex 1: LAP Positive Handling Based on Team Teach Training added.</p>
Summer 2024	<p>Updated PSED to 'intervention; to reflect broader range. Updated Behaviour Support plans to Positive Behaviour Support Plans. Updated Part 3 to set out that any physical intervention must be reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary, therefore doing so to maintain 'good order' would be very rare. Updated part 3 to reflect that there may be rare occasions where staff who have not been trained in Team Teach need to physically intervene. Updated Part 4 to set out Trust monitoring of Physical Interventions.</p>
Autumn 2023	<p>Updated Thrive to 'range of strategies and Trauma Informed Schools approach throughout. Updated reference to specific 'PSED Team' to broader members of school staff to reflect differing structures across schools. Section 3: added 'de-escalation specifically & changed 'must have another member of staff present to 'where possible'. Section 4: added reference to CPOMS recording and that separate entries must be recorded by each staff present. Update to information sharing with parents, by a senior member of staff where possible.</p>
Autumn 2022	<p>Reference to Positive Behaviour Policy for whole school information. Updated reference to most up to date DfE policy on behaviour.</p>
Autumn 2021	<p>Added 'Behaviour Support Plans' to the list of documents that may inform interventions. Removed 'tickling' from reparative touch. Added 'attunement and validation' to steps to take before positive handling. Added: Incidents that require use of positive handling interventions may be upsetting to all concerned and may occasionally result in injuries to the pupil or staff. After each incident, it is important to ensure that staff and pupils are given emotional support alongside any basic first aid treatment. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. Following incidents of positive handling, there will be a formal debriefing meeting with all members of staff involved, with the purpose of carrying out a root cause analysis</p>
Spring 2020	<p>Changed the word restraint to safe hold in all parts of the document. Dates at top of policy. 'Thrive Trained' changed to positive handling trained. Changed title of to Physical Intervention and Safe Touch Policy Term 'Pastoral' has changed to 'PSED'. Updated reference to government policy to most recent (July 2013)</p>

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Accessibility and Language Support

If you require this policy in an alternative format or language, please contact the Academy Office. We are committed to ensuring that all colleagues have access to our policies and can fully understand and engage with them and will work with you to provide the necessary support and resources

1. Aims

At the Learning Academy Partnership (Southwest) Trust we are committed to safeguarding pupils, staff and the wider community, minimising the need for restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation, and ensuring that when interventions are necessary they are used lawfully, safely, proportionately and for the shortest time required.

This policy should be read alongside the

- Trust Positive Behaviour Policy
- Behaviour Support Plans (as appropriate)
- KCSIE, and other linked procedures.

2. Scope and Legal Framework

This policy applies to all Trust staff and covers: reasonable force, other restrictive interventions (physical and non-physical), seclusion, and other appropriate physical contact with pupils. It aligns with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (ss.93 & 93A), the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and DfE guidance (April 2026).

Related DfE guidance includes: Behaviour in Schools; Searching, Screening and Confiscation; Keeping Children Safe in Education; and health and safety responsibilities for schools.

3. Definitions

- **Restrictive intervention:** any action that prevents, restricts or subdues movement of the body or part of the body (may be physical or non-physical).
- **Reasonable force:** a legal term that includes physical restrictive interventions; no more force than is necessary for the least time required, judged on the circumstances.
- **Significant incident:** any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate 'everyday contact' as defined in this policy.
- **Seclusion:** a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil in a place away from others and preventing them from leaving (by blocking/obstruction or perceived threat of punishment).
- **Restraint:** a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilizes 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. Principles, Prevention and De-escalation

We prioritise measures that reduce the need for restrictive interventions: supportive classroom environments, consistent routines, relationship building, and evidence-based de-escalation strategies (e.g., attunement, validation, distraction, redirection, time and space to regulate).

Individual support is co-produced with pupils (where appropriate), parents and professionals, and set out in Behaviour Support Plans with reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND. Risk assessments are completed where there is an identified risk of needing restrictive interventions, and staff training needs are reviewed accordingly.

5. Steps Before and After Positive Handling

Before: apply de-escalation—conversation, attunement, validation, distraction, gentle persuasion/redirection, provide time/space, remove hazards, move others to safety, seek assistance.

During: use calm communication and the safest, gentlest means; restrict movement only as necessary; aim to reduce anxiety; ensure, where possible, another staff member is present.

After: provide first aid/medical assessment as needed (Staff must complete the Trust online reporting if they or the child is injured or have a near miss.) Provide emotional support; conduct a structured debrief with staff and pupils, consider use of Reflection menu; review plans and environment to reduce recurrence.

6. Who Can Use Reasonable Force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances to prevent or stop a pupil from: (1) causing injury to themselves or others; (2) committing a criminal offence; (3) damaging property; or (4) causing disorder among pupils.

Staff likely to need to use restrictive interventions should be appropriately trained with Team Teach. Employers will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, staff health, safety and welfare through risk assessments and safe systems of work.

7. Use of Reasonable Force to Search Pupils

Headteachers and authorised staff have statutory power to search for prohibited items and may use reasonable force for such searches where necessary. Force can only be used to search for items classed as 'banned', as per DFE guidance, and not any additional cited as banned under school rules. Refer to the Trust Positive Behaviour Policy for further detail

8. Unacceptable Uses of Force

- It is illegal to use force as a punishment.
- Holds or positions that affect breathing or circulation are prohibited (e.g., pressure to neck or abdomen, covering mouth or nose).
- Avoid ground holds; if a pupil is unintentionally taken to the ground, release/reposition to a safer alternative as quickly as possible.
- Consider medical assessment for any injuries as soon as possible.

9. Other Appropriate Physical Contact

(e.g., first aid, guiding/escorting, comforting distress, congratulating, demonstrations in PE/music). Staff must exercise professional judgement with regard to safeguarding policies, the context, the pupil's age and needs, and whether alternatives are available.

In line with the DFE expectations, the Trust does not operate a "no contact" policy

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

The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils.

Sensible, appropriate physical contact is permitted

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 will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self regulate.
- 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 school's child protection (or any other relevant) policy
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
- any other material factors, including but not limited to whether:
 - the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities
 - any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used
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10. Seclusion (Non-disciplinary Safety Measure)

Seclusion may be used only as an immediate safety measure to protect others when a pupil is experiencing high levels of dysregulation and is not acting with intent. It must never be used or threatened as a punishment. The space must be safe and supervised at all times, and the pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

11. Determining When Restrictive Interventions Are Appropriate

Staff must assess necessity, proportionality and the pupil's welfare:

- **Necessity:** consider less restrictive strategies; whether the intervention will actually reduce risk; awareness of wider environmental risks.
- **Proportionality:** least force/least restriction for the least time; reconsider if escalation occurs; consider age, size, medical needs, SEND and equality implications.
- **Welfare and dignity:** location/privacy where possible; communicate clearly what is happening and why; use accessible communication; monitor distress and stop/reduce as appropriate.

12. Considerations for Pupils with SEND

Understand triggers (e.g., pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar environments, fear/anxiety). Work with parents and professionals to plan prevention and de-escalation. Behaviour Support Plans should outline agreed strategies, any circumstances for increased physical contact, and associated risk assessments and adjustments. Plans are reviewed regularly and after incidents.

13 Recording and Reporting Duties (Statutory)

13.1 Significant use of force (restrictive intervention)

- **Record:** Each significant incident where a member of staff uses force on a pupil must be recorded in writing by those involved as soon as practicable (endeavor same day).
 - This will be recorded via Trust Annex 1 (via Microsoft Form), which includes the minimum details set out in DFE Policy. This will automatically, be sent to the School Headteacher and Trust H&S Lead. The person completing the form should ensure the record of this is then uploaded to Cpoms.
 - Parents must be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and schools should endeavor to do this no later than the same day. Communication will be in writing (e.g., email/portal) and may be followed by a meeting.
- Exceptions apply where reporting would likely result in serious harm to the pupil; in such cases report to any other parent for whom harm would not result, or if none, to the local authority.

13.2 Seclusion and non-contact restraint

As above, using Annex 1 template.

- Where an incident of restraint also constitutes a significant use of force, the section 13.1 reporting process applies (to avoid duplication).

14. Data, Monitoring and Governance

Governing bodies/proprietors will ensure procedures are implemented and complied with. Leaders will collate and analyse data on restrictive interventions to identify improvements to practice; target staff development; understand patterns and triggers; review Behaviour Support Plans; and identify any disproportionate impact on protected groups and pupils with SEND. Analysis will be proportionate and mindful of small cohorts. Further information on this is set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy

15. Training, Competence and Wellbeing

The Trust will provide appropriate training (Team Teach) and refresher opportunities, and ensure induction covers this policy. Following any incident, Headteachers will review the Annex 1 information and record any additional follow up on Cpoms.

To support wellbeing, following any incidents, staff and pupils will be offered follow-up conversations and wellbeing support. Any injuries or near misses will be recorded and reported by staff members primarily using the Annex 1 (for the person completing this) or if further colleagues are injured, they must complete the 'Incidents Tab' on iAM. This which will be reported on, in line with HSE requirements where applicable.

16. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints will be managed under the Trust Complaints Policy. Allegations against staff will be handled in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Trust safeguarding procedures.

17. Linked Policies and Guidance

- Trust Positive Behaviour Policy
- Trust Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Trust SEND & Inclusion Policy
- Trust Health & Safety Policy
- Trust Complaints Policy