



# Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy

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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Exceed Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding pupils, promoting their welfare and dignity, and ensuring safe, calm and supportive learning environments. The Trust aims to minimise reliance on restrictive interventions through positive relationships, early help, prevention and evidence-based de-escalation.

However, in rare and exceptional circumstances, staff may need to use reasonable force, restraint, or seclusion to prevent harm. This policy sets out the Trust's principles, legal duties, expectations and procedures.

1.2 This policy is aligned with:

- Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, April 2026)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 & 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

1.3 This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy, behaviour support plans, and school-level procedures for restrictive interventions.

1.4 Where there is any conflict between this Trust-wide policy and school-level documents, this policy takes precedence.

# 2. Definitions

2.1 For the purposes of this policy, definitions are aligned with DfE statutory guidance.

- **Restrictive intervention** – any action (physical or non-physical) that restricts a pupil's movement.
- **Reasonable force** – minimum force necessary for the shortest time to prevent harm, crime, property damage or serious disorder.
- **Restraint** – limiting or preventing movement (with or without physical contact).
- **Seclusion** – confining a pupil alone in a place and preventing them from leaving.
- **Significant incident** – any use of force beyond everyday, appropriate physical contact.

# 3. Principles

3.1 All Exceed Academies Trust schools adopt the following principles:

- **Safety first:** The primary purpose of restrictive interventions is the immediate prevention of harm.

- **Last resort:** Restrictive interventions must only be used when de-escalation and alternative strategies are insufficient.
- **Time-limited and proportionate:** Force must be the minimum necessary for the shortest possible duration.
- **Dignity & respect:** Interventions must never be used to punish, degrade or humiliate.
- **Trauma-informed practice:** Staff must consider SEND, trauma, medical or communication needs.
- **Staff support:** Staff involved in incidents must receive debrief, guidance and wellbeing support.
- **Transparency:** All significant incidents must be properly recorded, reported and subject to monitoring.

### 3.2 Physical Contact with Pupils

Not all physical contact with pupils constitutes a restrictive intervention. There are circumstances in which appropriate physical contact is both lawful and necessary and does not fall within the definition of restraint or restrictive intervention.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- giving first aid;
- guiding or escorting a pupil safely;
- comforting a distressed pupil;
- supporting access or mobility needs;
- demonstrating activities or techniques as part of teaching;
- screening/searching a pupil for prohibited items.

Such contact does not trigger the statutory recording and reporting requirements set out in this policy. Staff must continue to exercise professional judgement in accordance with safeguarding expectations and their school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 4. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

### 4.1 Decision-Making When Considering Restrictive Interventions

Before using a restrictive intervention, staff must consider whether:

- a) The intervention is necessary – whether there are other less restrictive, effective strategies available and whether the intervention is reasonably likely to reduce the risk of harm rather than escalate the situation;
- b) The intervention is proportionate – whether the least restrictive option is being used and only for the shortest possible duration required to address the immediate risk; and
- c) The pupil's welfare has been considered – including the pupil's age, physical and emotional state, communication needs, SEND, trauma history, and the need to preserve dignity wherever possible.

Where practicable, staff should clearly and calmly communicate with the pupil about what is happening and why, using appropriate verbal and non-verbal strategies.

4.2 Staff may use reasonable force if necessary to:

- prevent injury to the pupil or others;
- stop a criminal offence;
- prevent serious property damage;
- prevent serious disruption to the school environment.

4.3 All Trust staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, though schools must ensure training is proportionate to context and risk.

## 5. Unacceptable Practices

5.1 Restrictive interventions must not be used:

- as punishment;
- to secure compliance with rules where no risk is present;
- in any way that impairs breathing or risks positional asphyxia;
- in a manner that is degrading, threatening or intimidating;
- in ways inconsistent with safeguarding or equality duties.

## 6. Prevention and De-escalation

6.1 Schools must take proactive steps to reduce the need for restrictive interventions. This includes:

- high-quality behaviour culture and routines;
- staff training in de-escalation and co-regulation;
- predictable environments, particularly for pupils with SEND;
- early identification of triggers;
- working collaboratively with parents;
- individualised behaviour support planning.

## 7. Considerations for Pupils with SEND

7.1 In line with the Equality Act 2010 and DfE guidance, schools must:

- identify and plan for triggers, sensory needs and communication differences;
- produce behaviour support plans with parents and professionals;
- record adjustments and proactive strategies;
- update plans following any incident.

## 8. Seclusion

8.1 Seclusion must only be used:

- as a safety measure to protect others from immediate harm;
- when a pupil is dysregulated (not as a disciplinary measure);
- in a safe, supervised, non-threatening environment;
- for the shortest possible duration;
- with immediate recording and same-day parent notification.

## 9. Recording and Reporting

9.1 The Trust expects strict compliance with the statutory duties set out in DfE guidance: *Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools*.

### 9.2 Recording Significant Use of Force (Legal Duty)

Schools must:

- record each significant incident on the same day;
- ensure the staff member involved completes the record; and
- include statutory details such as names, SEND status, triggers, de-escalation, type of force, injuries, rationale, and post-incident support.

### 9.3 Reporting Significant Use of Force to Parents (Legal Duty)

Schools must notify parents as soon as practicable, aiming for same-day written notification.

### 9.4 Recording and Reporting Seclusion and Non-Force Restraint

Schools must record all incidents of seclusion and non-physical restraint and notify parents as required under the 2025 Regulations.

## 10. Follow-Up, Debrief and Support

10.1 Schools must:

- check for and treat any injuries;
- provide debrief for the pupil, staff and any witnesses;
- review causation and contributing factors;
- revise support plans where appropriate;
- provide ongoing emotional support as required.

## 11. Staff Training

11.1 Headteachers must ensure that:

- staff receive training proportionate to pupil needs and setting context;
- training includes de-escalation, risk assessment, safe holds, SEND vulnerabilities and trauma-informed practice;

- training providers reflect DfE principles (no banned techniques, safe-practice standards).

## 12. Governance and Monitoring

12.1 Local Advisory Boards and the Trust Board must:

- regularly review aggregated data on use of force, seclusion and restraint;
- identify patterns, disproportionality or emerging risks;
- ensure compliance with statutory duties;
- assure quality of record-keeping and staff training.

12.2 Restrictive intervention data will be used to identify patterns, potential disproportionality, areas for staff development, and opportunities to reduce reliance on restrictive interventions over time.

## 13. Complaints and Allegations

13.1 Complaints about restrictive interventions must follow the Trust Complaints Policy. Concerns relating to the use of restrictive interventions may also constitute safeguarding concerns and will be managed accordingly.

13.2 Allegations against staff must follow *Keeping Children Safe in Education* procedures.

## 14. School-Level Procedures

14.1 Trust schools must have local procedures, guidance or documents that sit alongside this policy and describe how restrictive interventions are prevented, managed and reviewed in their individual context.

14.2 Such school-level documents must:

- be consistent with this Trust-wide policy and statutory guidance;
- not amend, replace or weaken Trust requirements;
- be reviewed regularly by school leaders; and
- be reviewed alongside this policy following any significant incident or material change in pupil cohort or risk profile.

## 15. Review of Policy

### 15.1 Annual Operational Review

This Trust-wide policy will be kept under review by the Director of School Improvement utilising support from the Trust's Safeguarding/DSL Network. The Director of School Improvement is authorised to adopt operational updates that reflect changes in law, statutory or DfE guidance, or mandatory safeguarding best practice, where such updates do not alter the structure, intent, delegated responsibilities or governance framework of the policy.

### 15.2 Structural Review and Formal Approval

Structural or strategic changes (those affecting the governance of the policy, the policy's principles, delegated authority, responsibilities, or the overall framework) are submitted to the

Trust Board for formal approval. The Trust Board will conduct a full strategic review of this policy every three years, or sooner where required.

# Appendix A - Model Restrictive Interventions Recording and Reporting Forms

*(These model forms illustrate the statutory minimum information that must be recorded and reported following the use of a restrictive intervention. Trust schools may adapt these forms or embed the same fields within existing recording systems (e.g. CPOMS), provided all statutory requirements are met.)*

## **Appendix A1 – Restrictive Intervention Record**

### **Pupil details**

- Name of pupil:
- Date of birth:
- Year group / provision:
- Relevant needs or circumstances (including SEND):
- SEN status code (if applicable):

### **Staff details**

- Name(s) of staff directly involved:
- Role(s):

### **Intervention details**

- Date of intervention:
- Time:
- Location:
- Approximate duration of intervention:

### **Description of the incident**

Provide a concise factual account, including:

- what led up to the incident;
- identified or potential triggers (if known);
- de-escalation strategies attempted;
- the nature of the restrictive intervention used;
- whether force was used and, if so, the degree of force applied;
- why the intervention was considered necessary and proportionate at the time.

### **Pupil welfare considerations**

- How the pupil's age, SEND, medical needs, communication needs or vulnerabilities were considered:

### **Injuries**

- Were any injuries sustained by the pupil or staff?
  - Yes     No
- If yes, provide details and any medical treatment given:

### **Post-incident support**

- Support provided to the pupil following the incident:
- Support provided to staff members involved:

### **Follow-up actions**

- Behaviour support plan updated?
  - Yes     No
- Further review required?
  - Yes     No

### **Recorded by:**

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## **Appendix A2 – Notification to Parents / Carers**

### **Pupil details**

- Child/Young person's name:
- Date of incident:
- Time:
- Location:
- Approximate duration of the intervention:

### **Reason for the restrictive intervention**

Provide a brief explanation of:

- why the intervention was necessary; and
- the risk it was intended to address.

### **Description of the intervention**

- Type of restrictive intervention used;
- Whether force was applied and, if so, the degree of force used.

### **Injuries and medical attention**

- Details of any injuries sustained and treatment provided (if applicable).

### **Next steps and support**

- Brief outline of post-incident support and any planned follow-up.

### **Further contact**

Parents/carers may contact the school to discuss this incident or to request a follow-up meeting.

### **Reported by:**

Name:

Role:

Date: