



Restrictive Intervention & Reasonable Force Policy

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Restrictive Intervention and Reasonable Force Policy

1. Statutory compliance

This policy sets out Aspire Multi-Academy Trust's approach to the use of restrictive physical intervention and reasonable force across all academies within the Trust. It ensures that practice is lawful, proportionate, necessary and rooted in safeguarding, inclusion and pupil wellbeing.

This policy is aligned with:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Department for Education statutory guidance: Use of Reasonable Force in Schools
- Department for Education guidance: Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force (effective from 1 April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998

This Trust policy provides a consistent framework across Aspire Multi-Academy Trust. Each academy will maintain a local addendum setting out academy-specific arrangements, including recording systems, communication processes, and operational detail.

2. Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors working within Aspire Multi-Academy Trust academies. It must be read alongside Behaviour, SEND, Safeguarding, Complaints and Health and Safety policies.

3. Definitions

Restrictive physical intervention is any direct physical contact where a member of staff intentionally uses force to restrict a pupil's movement against their will in order to prevent harm.

This does not include everyday physical contact such as PE, first aid, personal care or guiding movement where there is no resistance.

Relocation: Relocation is when a pupil is moved to a different space to help them calm, regulate, or reduce risk.

Key features:

- the pupil is supervised by an adult
- the door is not locked or blocked
- the pupil is not prevented from leaving
- it may be suggested or directed but is not enforced by confinement
- the purpose is regulation, safety, or reducing stimulation

Examples:

- working in another classroom with a member of staff
- spending time in a nurture or wellbeing room
- stepping into a quieter space with an adult present

Relocation is a supportive strategy. It is not seclusion and is not a restrictive practice when the pupil can leave and is supervised.

Seclusion: Seclusion is when a pupil is placed alone in a room or enclosed space and is prevented from leaving.

Key features:

- the pupil is alone
- the pupil cannot leave freely
- the door is locked, blocked, or physically prevented from opening
- it is used only to prevent immediate serious harm

Seclusion is a restrictive practice and must be recorded clearly, reviewed by senior leaders, and used only in rare, exceptional circumstances. Seclusion will never be used as a disciplinary response.

Why the distinction matters

- relocation is part of normal pastoral and behaviour support
- seclusion carries higher safeguarding and inspection risk
- mislabelling relocation as seclusion can cause unnecessary concern
- failing to identify seclusion correctly is a safeguarding issue

A simple test staff can use

Ask:

- Can the child leave the space if they choose?
 - If yes it is relocation
 - If no it is seclusion

4. Values and ethos

Aspire Multi-Academy Trust is committed to protecting pupil dignity, rights, and wellbeing. Restrictive intervention is never a behaviour management strategy, punishment, or means of securing compliance. It is used only as a last resort.

5. Prevention and positive behaviour support

Academies prioritise prevention, de-escalation, trauma-informed practice, reasonable adjustments for SEND, and early intervention to reduce the need for physical intervention.

6. Legal framework: Reasonable force

Staff may use reasonable force under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to prevent harm, serious damage to property, or serious disruption to good order.

7. When physical intervention may be used

Restrictive physical intervention may be used only where there is an immediate risk of harm and where less intrusive strategies have failed or are inappropriate. Intervention must stop as soon as the risk reduces.

8. What is not permitted

The following are not permitted:

- Use of force as punishment
- Techniques that restrict breathing or circulation
- Holding a pupil by the neck or head
- Prone restraint or deliberate placement on the ground
- Any intervention intended to cause pain or humiliation

9. Who may use physical intervention

In emergencies, reasonable force may be used by teachers and authorised staff with responsibility for pupils. Staff are not expected to place themselves at risk.

10. Individual planning and risk assessment

Where restrictive intervention may be anticipated, academies must have risk assessments and positive behaviour support plans in place, reviewed regularly with parents and professionals.

11. Training and support for staff

Staff receive training in de-escalation, behaviour understanding, and legal responsibilities. Training records are maintained at Trust and academy level. Staff and governors will monitor for disproportionate impact on pupils with SEND and other protected characteristics. Outcomes from monitoring will be used to inform staff training and risk reduction.

12. Recording and reporting

From 1 April 2026, the Trust and its academies have a legal duty to ensure that every significant incident involving the use of force, and every incident of seclusion or restraint, is recorded in writing and reported to parents or carers. All academies must follow the expectations set out in the DfE statutory guidance *Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools* and this Trust policy

12.1 What must be recorded

In line with the statutory minimum information as set out in the DfE guidance, for each relevant incident, staff must complete a written record as soon as practicable and ideally on the same day. As a minimum, this record will include:

- Names of the pupil(s) and staff directly involved, and any witnesses where known.
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- A brief account of what led up to the incident, including known or suspected triggers, and any preventative or de-escalation strategies used.
- The type of intervention used (for example reasonable force, restraint, seclusion), including what kind of force was applied, the degree of force and which parts of the body were involved.
- Why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance, including the immediate risk of harm or serious disruption.
- Any known relevant pupil needs, including SEND, disability, medical conditions or other vulnerabilities.
- Details of any apparent injuries to pupils or staff and any medical checks or first aid provided, including consideration of reporting under health and safety procedures where required.

- Post-incident actions, including support offered to the pupil and staff, communication with parents, and any agreed follow-up such as changes to plans or further referrals.

Each academy will identify and maintain a secure system for recording these incidents in its local addendum, ensuring records are retained and accessible for safeguarding, health and safety and regulatory purposes.

12.2 Reporting to parents and carers

Parents or carers must be informed of any recorded incident involving the use of force, seclusion or restraint as soon as practicable and usually no later than the same day. Communication may be by telephone in the first instance but must always be followed by a written summary of the incident and the support provided. The method and timing of contact must be logged in the incident record.

Information may be withheld from a parent where providing it would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil in accordance with regulations.

12.3 Review by senior leaders

All incident records will be reviewed by an appropriate senior leader as soon as reasonably possible to ensure the intervention was necessary and proportionate, and to identify any immediate safeguarding or health and safety concerns. Senior leaders will ensure that individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans are updated where necessary and that staff receive any additional guidance or support required.

13. Post-incident support and review

The Trust is committed to minimising the use of restrictive interventions and to protecting pupil dignity, rights and wellbeing when they are used. Following any incident involving the use of force, seclusion or restraint, academies must provide appropriate support and opportunities for reflection for pupils, staff and, where relevant, other pupils who witnessed the incident.

13.1 Support for pupils

As soon as it is safe and appropriate, a member of staff will check on the pupil's physical and emotional welfare, arrange any medical attention required and provide an opportunity for the pupil to talk about what happened in a way that is developmentally appropriate. The pupil's views will be recorded and considered in any subsequent review of their risk assessment or behaviour support plan. Where a pupil has SEND, communication difficulties, or has experienced trauma, staff will use strategies that are sensitive to these needs.

13.2 Support for staff

Staff involved in incidents will be offered debrief and support, including the opportunity to reflect on triggers, de-escalation strategies and learning for future practice. Where staff are injured or distressed, appropriate welfare, medical and health and safety processes will be followed.

13.3 Learning and improvement

Senior leaders will use incident reviews to identify patterns, training needs, environmental factors and any equality concerns, with the aim of reducing the need for restrictive interventions over time. Themes, trends and any disproportionate impact on particular groups, including pupils with SEND or other protected characteristics, will be reported through Trust monitoring and governance processes.

14. Monitoring and governance

The Trust and academies monitor incidents, equality impacts, and compliance to ensure consistent and lawful practice. Monitoring data includes the number and type of interventions, use of seclusion, pupil groups affected and any disproportionate patterns, reported at academy and Trust level

15. Concerns, allegations and complaints

Concerns are managed in line with safeguarding and complaints procedures, including LADO processes where appropriate.

16. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by Aspire Multi-Academy Trust or sooner if guidance changes.

Appendix 1: Restrictive Intervention Record Form

To be completed as soon as practical and ideally on the same day following any incident involving restrictive intervention, restraint, reasonable force, or seclusion)

This form must be used in conjunction with the Department for Education's statutory guidance: 'Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Intervention in Schools' (effective from 1 April 2026), alongside the Behaviour and Restrictive Interventions Policy and reviewed by a member of SLT

| Section | Details |
|---|---------|
| Pupil name & class | |
| Is the child in a vulnerable group, has an EHCP or any other needs? | |
| Date and time of incident: | |
| Location: | |
| Staff member(s) involved: | |
| Any witnesses? | |
| Summary of incident: Brief factual description – what led to the situation and why intervention was proportionate and necessary | |
| Please state any injury or distress to child or adult: | |
| Physical Intervention used. Please state duration of intervention | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive force application to prevent immediate harm or serious risk [] ○ Holding on the floor, held by two or more people, or firm holding by one person [] ○ Locking a door for containment [] ○ Unlocking a door to restrict containment e.g. in a toilet cubicle [] ○ Minimum contact for leading, guiding, ushering, or blocking. [] ○ Control without contact (e.g., standing in front of child). [] | |
| Restrictive practice without physical contact | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time away or relocation to another room with supervision and door unlocked [] ○ Directed time away from peers with staff present [] ○ Environmental restriction to reduce risk (e.g. removing peers or objects) [] ○ Control without physical contact (e.g. staff positioning to block access or exits) [] | |

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|---|---|
| <p>Seclusion (to be used only in exceptional circumstances) pupil placed alone in a room or enclosed space and prevented from leaving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Door locked or blocked Y/N ○ Continuous supervision Y/N ○ Duration of seclusion (minutes): [] ○ Immediate risk being prevented [] ○ Senior leader informed as soon as practicable Y/N | |
| <p>Reason intervention was required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to prevent harm to self/others [] ○ prevent damage to property [] ○ prevent disorder [] ○ Other [] | |
| <p>Support provided following the incident:</p> | <p><i>(medical attention, reassurance, follow-up conversation)</i></p> |
| <p>Headteacher / Senior Leader review:</p> | |
| <p>Log incident on CPOMS/Arbor</p> | |
| <p>Date of notification to parent/carer How were parents notified? (verbal, written, email) Follow-up meeting arranged: <i>Date / time if applicable</i></p> | |
| <p>Name and role of reporting staff member:</p> | |
| <p>Signature:</p> | |