



Medina College

Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

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Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Effective from 1 April 2026

Based on DfE guidance: *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (England, April 2026) ([Link to guidance](#))

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out our school's approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, to ensure compliance with updated statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). ([Link to guidance](#))

1.2 The aim of this policy is to:

- Promote safe, respectful, and lawful practice in managing behaviour that poses a risk of harm, ensuring the least intrusive option is always chosen.
- Ensure all staff understand when and how restrictive interventions may be used lawfully and appropriately - it is not a behaviour management tool and is never used as punishment or to secure compliance.
- Emphasise prevention, de-escalation and behaviour support planning.
- Meet statutory recording and reporting duties for significant incidents.

2. Scope of Policy

2.1 This policy applies to:

- All staff (teaching and support) authorised by the Executive Headteacher/Co-Heads of School.
- All students on school premises and during off-site school activities.
- IEB/Academy Committee, volunteers, and contractors acting on behalf of the school.

The policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

3. Key Definitions

Restrictive Intervention – Any action that restricts a student's movement, liberty, or freedom to act independently (physical, mechanical, environmental).

Reasonable Force – Physical force used to prevent harm or serious disruption; it must be no more than necessary for the least time and proportionate to the risk.

Restraint – A restrictive intervention (may include holding or blocking movement). It may involve physical contact.

Seclusion – A non-disciplinary intervention keeping a student separated from others and prevented from leaving. Used only in specific safety circumstances.

Significant Incident – An incident where force goes beyond appropriate physical contact and triggers mandatory recording and reporting duties.

4. Principles

4.1 All students have the right to be safe and treated with dignity and respect.

4.2 Restrictive interventions represent a last resort and must only be used when absolutely necessary to prevent harm.

4.3 The school will prioritise prevention, early support, and de-escalation to reduce the need for restrictive interventions.

4.4 All interventions must be proportionate to the circumstances and consider students' individual needs, including SEND.

Considerations for students with SEND include:

- Understanding triggers and adapting environments to reduce the need for restrictive interventions.
- Co-producing behaviour support plans with families and professionals.
- Making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 IEB/Academy Committee

- Ensure the school has a clear policy that reflects legal duties and statutory guidance.
- Ensure robust procedures for recording and reporting incidents are in place.
- Regularly review data to identify patterns, trends, and areas requiring improvement.

5.2 Executive Headteacher/Co-Heads of School

- Ensure staff are aware of policy and guidance.
- Ensure staff are supported to use preventative and de-escalation strategies, and are trained as appropriate.
- Oversee implementation, monitoring, and review.

5.3 All Staff

- Act in accordance with this policy and DfE guidance.
- Use de-escalation first and resort to restrictive interventions only when necessary.
- Complete recording and reporting requirements as soon as is practicable.

6. Prevention and De-escalation

6.1 The school will emphasise proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of incidents, including:

- A positive, inclusive school culture
- Trauma-informed and SEND-aware practice
- Clear routines, expectations, and consistency
- Early identification of triggers and warning signs
- Individual support or behaviour plans where needed
- Use of de-escalation strategies, calm spaces, and time-out options

Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies may include:

- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- Changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- Supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- Engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- Distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Staff are trained to recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and to respond proactively.

7. Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions

7.1 Only use restrictive interventions when:

- A student's behaviour is causing harm to themselves or others;
- A criminal offence is being committed;
- Property is at significant risk of damage;
- Serious disorder is occurring.

7.2 Staff may search and physically intervene when necessary to remove prohibited items, following separate *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* guidance - Refer to Behaviour Policy.

7.3 Unacceptable practices include force used for punishment and holds that restrict breathing or airway.

8. Seclusion

8.1 Seclusion must only be used to prevent serious harm and never as punishment.

8.2 students in seclusion must be continuously supervised in a safe, non-intimidating environment.

9. Individual Risk Assessment and Planning

For students identified as being at higher risk:

- Individual behaviour or support plans will be developed
- Plans include triggers, early warning signs, and agreed strategies
- Where appropriate, students and parents/carers are involved
- Plans are reviewed regularly

10. Inclusive Practice and Individual Needs

10.1 Considerations for students with SEND include:

- Understanding triggers and adapting environments to reduce the need for restrictive interventions.
- Co-producing behaviour support plans with families and professionals.
- Making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

11. Record Keeping and Reporting

11.1 Recording – Every significant incident must be recorded as soon as practicable, including seclusion and include:

- Names of involved student and staff;
- Details of demographics and educational need;
- Date, time, location, and duration;
- Circumstances leading to intervention;
- Type and level of force used;
- Injuries or outcomes;
- Preventative strategies attempted.

The [Goggle Form](#) should be completed.

11.2 Reporting to Parents/Carers – Parents must be informed as soon as practicable, ideally on the same day, with key details of the incident.

12. Post-Incident Review and Support

12.1 The school will assess all incidents to learn and prevent recurrence, involving relevant staff and families.

12.2 students and staff involved should be offered appropriate support and debriefing.

13. Complaints and Allegations

13.1 Any concerns about inappropriate use of restrictive interventions must follow the school's complaints procedure.

13.2 Allegations against staff will be handled in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and the school Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

14. Training and Monitoring

14.1 Staff likely to use restrictive interventions must receive training that reflects this policy's principles, including de-escalation and legal context.

14.2 The Executive Headteacher/Co-Head of School will monitor incidents and outcomes to promote best practice and continuous improvement.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and whenever relevant statutory guidance is updated.