



Bright Futures

EDUCATIONAL TRUST

The best *for* everyone, the best *from* everyone

Restrictive Intervention (including use of reasonable force) Policy

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This is a Trust-Wide Policy
which applies to all the schools within the Trust

Restrictive Interventions (including use of reasonable force) Policy

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Restrictive Interventions (including use of reasonable force) Policy

Bright Futures Educational Trust's (The Trust) vision is 'The best *for* everyone, the best *from* everyone'. Having a robust, well implemented and maintained policy and procedures regarding the use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force is an integral aspect to achieving this vision and ensuring the safety of our pupils, staff and visitors.

What is the Policy for?

The health, safety and well-being of all pupils/students in every academy is of paramount importance to all who work within them. The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

This policy has been compiled in response to the following legislation:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including Section 93 and Section 93A (statutory duties on recording).
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025) — legally binding requirements for recording and reporting.
- DfE: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective April 2026).
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- DfE Behaviour schools Feb 2024
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2025
- DfE Searching, screening and confiscation July 2023

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection Policy / Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour (and Relationships) Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff policy
- Working Safely in Bright Future's Schools policy

Who is the Policy for?

The policy applies to all staff employed by Bright Futures Educational Trust and any workers/consultants providing a service.

Terminology

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 as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this document. 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.

Policy Standards

1. Principles

1.1 Staff must try to minimise the use of restrictive interventions, including seclusion, through prevention and effective de-escalation

1.2 Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.

1.3 Pupil dignity should be regarded at all times

2. Who can use reasonable force?

2.1 All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

2.2 To prevent or stop a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others
- committing a criminal offence

- damaging property
- causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

2.3 All staff have a duty of care to take the action needed to keep pupils, staff and visitors safe.

2.4 Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power appropriately.

3. Prevention and De-escalation

3.1. All staff promote positive behaviour to minimise the use of restrictive interventions. These approaches include:

- Using positive behaviour strategies (e.g. Praise, Dojos, merits)
- Making reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND.
- Providing structured routines alongside visual timetables/now and next boards and where appropriate, pre-warning of transitions and changes.
- Using calm, neutral tones and body language.
- Offering sensory breaks and access to safe spaces for calming and self-regulation.
- Using high interest activities (e.g., football, iPad, outdoor play) for diversion when appropriate.
- Using Zones of Regulation and sensory tools (e.g., stress balls, fiddle toys).
- Offering a change of face and use of trusted adults.
- Use of direct instruction, boundaries and limited choices.
- Use of 'safe spaces' with limited stimulation.

4. When can reasonable force be used?

4.1 The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

4.2 Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

4.3 Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010

4.4 Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

5. Power to search pupils without consent

5.1 In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, principals and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items":

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

5.2 Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules that are not also included above.

6. Unacceptable use of force:

6.1 It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.

6.2 Pupils should 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. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

6.3 Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

7. Other physical contact with pupils

7.1. Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy as it can leave staff unable to intervene were reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils.

7.2. Examples of where touching a pupil is generally appropriate:

- 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

8. Seclusion

8.1. Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent.

8.2. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

8.3. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil.

8.4. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion.

- 8.5. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.
- 8.6. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the section on 'Recording and reporting'.

9. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- 9.1. Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.
- 9.2. Schools should seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used.
- 9.3. They should also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies. 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
- 9.4. Where appropriate, school staff should work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans. Behaviour support plans should outline any adjustments, including circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil.
- 9.5. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, schools must have risk assessments in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through training and prevention strategies. Whether the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan.
- 9.6. Any behaviour support plans should be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil.
- 9.7. Where a pupil has a disability, the school has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage so that the pupil can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils

10. Recording

- 10.1. Incidents must be recorded on CPOMS as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. Acre Hall Primary have an adapted CPOMS incident form which collects all information outlined below.
- 10.2. Records of restrictive interventions must be clear, factual and written in neutral, third-person language suitable for multiple audiences, including pupils, parents, carers, inspectors, safeguarding partners and legal bodies. Entries should describe only observable actions, staff responses, de-escalation attempts and outcomes, and should avoid subjective language, implied intent or second-person narration. This helps records be legally defensible, inspection-ready and safe for disclosure under GDPR and education-record rights. Any behavioural interpretation or analysis should be documented separately within behaviour-support planning rather than included in the incident record.
- 10.3. Even if agreed with parents and written into a pupil's behaviour plan, each incident must be recorded (as above).
- 10.4. Schools should record the following details as a minimum:
- names of pupil and staff directly involved
 - any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
 - time
 - date
 - location
 - approximate duration of the intervention
 - brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known,
 - any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant)
 - what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
 - brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
 - any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

11. Reporting

- 11.1. Parents/ Carers of pupil involved will be informed as soon as practicable after the incident, and staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

11.2. Exceptions to the requirement to report are where:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over; or
- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

11.3. A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

- time
- date
- location
- 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

11.4. The requirement to report applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

11.5. Schools should communicate this information to parents in writing. For example, via email or online messaging system.

11.6. Best practice would involve a follow-up discussion with parents and amendments to any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

12. Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

12.1. Incidents involving the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint (such as removal of walking aids) should be recorded in the same way as detailed above

12.2. Parents should be informed and receive a written report as detailed above.

12.3. If an incident also required the use of force, it does not need reporting on twice. One report containing all information should be provided.

13. Use of Data

13.1. The governing body of a maintained school and the proprietor of other schools must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with.

13.2. Governing bodies and proprietors should regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to ensure school leaders:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

13.3. Governing bodies and proprietors should consider the limitations of data and what can be inferred from it. Analysis should be proportionate and avoid over-interpreting small subgroups of people.

14. Support after an incident

14.1. Schools should evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in future, for example by amending or introducing a behaviour support plan.

14.2. Schools should also hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. This conversation should be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and look to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved, as well as to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue.

15. Staff training

15.1. Leaders should make decisions on training based on their individual school needs, ensuring adequate numbers of staff are trained.

15.2. Schools should carry out risk assessments to ensure staff who regularly work with pupils where use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions may be used can do so as safely as possible.

16. Managing complaints and allegations

16.1. In the event of a complaint being received the matter will be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff.

16.2. Procedures in Keeping Children Safe in Education should be followed, which includes provisions regarding the suspension of staff.