WE 'GROW AND SHINE IN GOD'S GLORY'

MOUNT CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY ACADEMY

DIOCESE OF SOUTHWELL & NOTTINGHAM

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

# Policy on the Use of Reasonable Force

Publication date: July 2026

Review date: July 2027

*How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.*

*1 John 3:17-18*

The Southwell and Nottingham Diocese Multi Academy Trust core values state that the trust encourages a holistic approach to the development of pupils, believing that each person is an individual made in the image of God and should, therefore, be supported to reach their full potential by receiving the very best education possible. In order to do this the trust is committed to ensuring each academy is a place of safety for pupils as well as a place of refuge and support in times of need.

The Trust recognises that there may times when staff need to employ reasonable force to ensure the safety of a pupil, other pupils and/or members of staff. This should be a response when all other options have been exhausted and considerate of the age and stage of the pupil.

This policy complies with the DfE statutory guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026), the Equality Act 2010, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) Regulations 2025 and the Human Rights Act 1998. It also recognises expectations set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education in respect of the power to use reasonable force.

This Use of Reasonable Force Policy is ratified by the Board of Trustees and accepted by the Local Governing Body. The local governing body is responsible for ensuring the headteacher or principal implements this policy and for monitoring its effectiveness.

Date of ratification: July 2026

Date of last review: July 2026

Date of next review*:* July 2027

| | |
|---|---|
| **Policy:** | Policy on the Use of Reasonable Force |
| **Approved by:** | SNMAT Board of Directors |
| **Date:** | July 2026 |
| **Review cycle:** | annual |

| **VERSION CONTROL** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **VERSION** | **DATE** | **AUTHOR** | **CHANGES** |
| 1 | July 2026 | SD | New Policy |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equal Opportunities Statement
- KCSiE

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The Lawful Use of Reasonable Force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.
To prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Within the remit of the Searching, Screen and Confiscation in School Guidance authorised staff may also use reasonable force to search for legally prohibited items.

Force must not be use on a pupil as a punishment. This is illegal.

Physical Contact with Pupils

There will be times when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical; contact with pupils. Examples may 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

Staff should have regard to the following at all times:

- 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
- whether the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities
- whether any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used

Preventative Strategies and De-escalation

Any restrictive measures should be a last resort and only considered when safe to do so following attempts to de-escalate. Any restrictive measures should always seek to preserve the dignity, welfare and rights of the child consistent with our Christian vision and values.
Academies will also have in place preventative strategies, for all pupils and whether specific consideration in place for example were a child has SEN or other vulnerabilities.

Preventive Strategies may include:

- consistent, effective whole class behaviour management
- management of communal spaces
- empathy
- consistent routines
- visual aids
- structured choices
- identifying and providing access to safe spaces and adults
- working with parents and external agencies
- staff training on behaviour managing and effective communication strategies

De-escalation may include:

- effective use of voice; calm, authoritative
- tactical ignoring
- access to safe spaces and adults
- consistent adult involvement/varying adult involvement
- structure choices
- empathy

Using Restrictive Interventions

The use of restrictive intervention will depend on the individual circumstances of each situation. The member of staff should ask the following questions:

1. Is it necessary?
2. Is it proportionate?

3. Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

Is it necessary?

Are the more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?

Is a restrictive intervention likely to be successful? Will it reduce the risks or could it escalate further?

Can they communicate to another member of staff the risks to the wider environment?

Is it proportionate?

Are you using the least amount of force for the least amount of time?

Is the situation escalating? Reconsider and try another approach.

Have you considered the individual's personal circumstances? E.g. Medical conditions, size, age, SEN, equality implications.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

Could the use of restrictive intervention be particularly destressing? E.g. due to past trauma, adverse life conditions, communication difficulties

Is the pupil's dignity being respected?

Are you communicating calmly and clearly what is happening? Why it is happening and what the pupil needs to do.

Are you taking into account communication difficulties, using non-verbal strategies, if necessary, and giving the pupil time to process?

Are you seeking how the pupil is feeling to determine whether intervention should continue or stop?

<u>Pupils with SEND and Vulnerabilities</u>

Pupils with SEND or a history of trauma may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal obligation to support pupils with disabilities by making reasonable adjustments, ensuring they can fully benefit from the school's offer without being disproportionately subjected to restrictive interventions.

For pupils identified as likely to experience high levels of dysregulation, the Academy SENCo will work closely with the pupil, their parents, and any relevant health or pastoral professionals to co-produce any necessary Behaviour Support Plans and Risk Assessments based on their needs.

These plans will detail:

- specific known triggers and warning signs.

- preventative primary strategies and safe, agreed secondary interventions.
- environmental adjustments to address aspects of the school the pupil finds challenging.
- strategies to help the pupil communicate their needs effectively.
- clear parameters and circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with the pupil.

Recording Reporting and Monitoring

Recording of the incident should take place as soon as possible following the event (Appendix 3). A copy should be attached to the pupil's CPOMS record. Witness statements should be gathered and the pupil voice included wherever possible.
Parent should be informed as soon as possible unless this is likely to place the pupil at risk of significant harm. The academy can evidence this by a signature or email of acknowledgement (Appendix 4).
If an incident of restraint occurs without physical contact, for example, removal of a walking aid, this must also be recorded (Appendix 5) and a copy supplied to parents as soon as possible unless this is likely to place the pupil at risk of significant harm.

Post-incident response and support

If necessary, the pupil and member of staff should receive medical treatment and this should be recorded appropriately.
Each incident should be evaluated with best practice and lessons learnt identified. These should be attached to the pupil's CPOMS record and shared with relevant personnel. This may be trust wide. If in place, risk assessments should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

The evaluation should reflect upon:

- why restrictive intervention was used
- the impact on pupils and staff
- emerging patterns and trends
- how restrictive interventions might be avoided in the future
- whether risk assessments/behaviour plans need amending
- does the member of staff need further support, this maybe from colleagues and/or the staff assistance programme
- do witnesses (pupils and staff) need further support

The wellbeing of all those involved should continue to be monitored to determine whether further follow up conversations or counselling be required.

Seclusion

Seclusion should only be used a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is feeling a high level of dysregulation. It should not and is not a form of punishment. The place should be safe and not threatening or intimidating. Throughout their time in seclusion the pupil should be supervised and once the immediate risk of harm has dissipated the pupil should be allowed to leave.

Governing Body Responsibilities

The governing body must ensure the academy has in place the appropriate mechanisms and procedures to implement this policy. They should ensure that they regularly review and interrogate data. This can be included on the headteacher's termly report to the governing body (Appendix 6)

Governors should consider:

- improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches are not proving effective.
- identifying areas of learning and development for school staff.
- understanding pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures and how this can be improved.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's normal complaints procedure.

If an allegation regarding the inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the SNMAT Managing allegations Policy and Procedure, SNMAT Policy for Child Protection to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children and within Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) will be strictly followed. This includes all provisions regarding the suspension of staff pending investigation.

## Appendices

1. Terminology and Definitions

Parents refers to parents, carers or those with guardianship for the pupil should they be in local authority care.

Headteacher also refers to Principal where the norm is to use this title in the academy.

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This can be both physical and non-physical actions.

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. 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.

2. Training Requirements

Academies and Local Governing Bodies should ensure:

- staff are conversant with the Academy Behaviour Policy
- staff receive ongoing CPD in respect to effective communication strategies, adaptive teaching and de-escalation
- any members of staff likely to use reasonable force have appropriate training in both preventative strategies and safe physical contact
- all members of staff are aware of acceptable holds to aid misidentification of appropriate physical touch.

3. Recording template

*This template maybe uploaded to your academy's CPOMS templates and completed there or completed separately and then uploaded to the pupil's CPOMS record.*

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Restrictive Interventions Reporting Form – Physical Contact</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Pupil Name:</td><td>DoB:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">SEN: Y/N If yes status code:</td><td>Class/Form:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Is there a behaviour plan in place: Y/N<br>Is there a risk assessment in place: Y/N</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Incident Details</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td colspan="2">Time:</td><td>Location:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Type of hold/intervention:</td><td rowspan="2">Approx Duration of the Intervention:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Degree of force applied:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Member/s of Staff Involved:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Description of the incident:<br>Include what led up to the incident; identified or potential triggers if known; any preventative or de-escalation strategies used</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Why was force assessed as necessary:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Post Incident Support</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Medical assessment made: Pupil: Y/N Staff Member/s: Y/N<br>Was any treatment sought: Y/N If yes who and what?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Has the wellbeing of pupils and staff been checked? Y/N<br>What actions have been implemented as part of this?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Date of evaluation and reflection of the incident completed:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Have parents been informed: Y/N How? (see appendix 4)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Name of member of staff completing this form and role in the incident:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Name of senior Leader informed, date and time:</td></tr>
</table>

4. Reporting to parents – Restrictive Interventions involving physical contact

*This template maybe uploaded to your academy's CPOMS templates and completed there or completed separately and then uploaded to the pupil's CPOMS record. A copy should be shared with parents as soon as possible after the incident and within 24 hours. Acknowledgment from the parent can by signing the receipt at the bottom of this form or by email or by online messaging service used by the academy.*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Restrictive Interventions Reporting to Parents Form – Physical Contact</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Pupil Name:</td><td>DoB:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">SEN: Y/N If yes status code:</td><td>Class/Form:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Is there a behaviour plan in place: Y/N<br>Is there a risk assessment in place: Y/N</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Incident Details</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td colspan="2">Time:</td><td>Location:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Type of hold/intervention:</td><td rowspan="2">Approx Duration of the Intervention:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Degree of force applied:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Why was force assessed as necessary:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Post Incident Support</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Medical assessment made: Pupil: Y/N<br>Was any treatment sought: Y/N</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Has the wellbeing of pupils and staff been checked? Y/N<br>What actions have been implemented as part of this?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Signature of parent if a physical copy has been shared:<br>If no signature, indicate how the information has been shared and retain a copy.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Date of follow up discussion with parents:<br>This should always be offered to parents.</td></tr>
</table>

5. Reporting Seclusion and non-force related restrictions

*This template maybe uploaded to your academy's CPOMS templates and completed there or completed separately and then uploaded to the pupil's CPOMS record.*

| Restrictive Interventions (no physical contact) or Use of Seclusion Reporting Form | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pupil Name: | | DoB: |
| SEN: Y/N If yes status code: | | Class/Form: |
| Is there a behaviour plan in place: Y/N<br>Is there a risk assessment in place: Y/N | | |
| Incident Details | | |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Type of intervention: seclusion/non-force related intervention | | Approx Duration of the Intervention: |
| Member/s of Staff Involved: | | |
| Description of the incident:<br>*Include what led up to the incident; identified or potential triggers if known; any preventative or de-escalation strategies used* | | |
| Why was the intervention assessed as necessary: | | |
| Post Incident Support | | |
| Medical assessment made: Pupil: Y/N Staff Member/s: Y/N<br>Was any treatment sought: Y/N If yes who and what? | | |
| Has the wellbeing of pupils and staff been checked? Y/N<br>What actions have been implemented as part of this? | | |
| Date of evaluation and reflection of the incident completed: | | |
| Name of member of staff completing this form and role in the incident: | | |
| Name of senior Leader informed, date and time: | | |

6. Reporting to Parents - Seclusion and non-force related restrictions

*This template maybe uploaded to your academy's CPOMS templates and completed there or completed separately and then uploaded to the pupil's CPOMS record. A copy should be shared with parents as soon as possible after the incident and with 24 hours. Acknowledgment from the parent can by signing the receipt at the bottom of this form or by email or by online messaging service used by the academy.*

| Restrictive Interventions Reporting to Parents Form – Physical Contact | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pupil Name: | | DoB: |
| SEN: Y/N If yes status code: | | Class/Form: |
| Is there a behaviour plan in place: Y/N<br>Is there a risk assessment in place: Y/N | | |
| Incident Details | | |
| Date: | Time: | Location: |
| Type of intervention: seclusion/non-force related intervention | | Approx Duration of the Intervention: |
| Why was the intervention assessed as necessary: | | |
| Post Incident Support | | |
| Medical assessment made: Pupil: Y/N<br>Was any treatment sought: Y/N | | |
| Has the wellbeing of pupils and staff been checked? Y/N<br>What actions have been implemented as part of this? | | |
| Signature of parent if a physical copy has been shared:<br>*If no signature, indicate how the information has been shared and retain a copy.* | | |
| Date of follow up discussion with parents:<br>*This should always be offered to parents.* | | |

## 7. Reporting to the Governing Body and Trust

*This table can be used as part of the termly headteacher report to inform the governing body of any restrictive interventions. A copy should also be forwarded each term, to the trust safeguarding lead.*

| Types of intervention | Autumn Term | | Spring Term | | Summer Term | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of intervention | Note no of interventions with protected characteristics | Number of intervention | Note no of pupils with protected characteristics | Number of intervention | Note no of pupils with protected characteristics |
| Physical Contact | *e.g 5* | *e.g. 2 SEN*<br>*1 EAL* | | | | |
| Non Physical Contact | | | | | | |
| Seclusion | | | | | | |
| Comments | *e.g. these interventions relate to 3 children*<br>*these interventions relate to children from the same family* | | | | | |

8. Example Risk Assessment template

| Pupil Behaviour Risk Assessment | |
|---|---|
| Pupil Name: | Year group: |
| Additional needs: *SEN/EAL…* | Date: |
| Assessor: | Review date: |
| Shard with: | |

| What health and safety hazards arise or could arise from the behaviour of this pupil? | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What risks do they pose and to whom? | LEVEL OF RISK: High/Medium/Low |
| | | |
| 2 | What has been done so far to remove or reduce the risks? | REMAINING RISK: High/Medium/Low |
| | | |
| 3 | What further action is required to reduce the risk further? | LEVEL OF RISK ONCE ALL CONTROL MEASURES ARE IN PLACE (High/Medium/Low): |
| | | |
| 4 | List any activities which <u>cannot</u> be safely managed, as far as it is possible to foresee. | |
| 5 | Any further comments | |

Possible options to consider as control measures

***Note: This list is indicative of the types of interventions which might be applied. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and those carrying out the risk assessment should seek to implement a tailored strategy to address the specific needs of the student within existing school behaviour and/or special needs policies. Some SEND students will require reasonable adjustments to the strategies below and in relation to behaviour policies and practice, but the safety of the individual and other students and staff should always be the priority. Measures set out in IEPs/IBPs will clearly always take priority over any others.***

De-escalation strategies

Tackle offensive behaviour through school behaviour policy, with consistent application of sanctions every time the behaviour is repeated (unless due to SEND needs this is deemed inappropriate eg. a student with pathological demand avoidance may need a different approach)

Behaviour chart for each day

Requires clear/explicit tasks of short duration

Use non-confrontational strategies

Immediate withdrawal from lesson or area as a consequence of certain pre-determined acts, such as swearing at staff (unless an adjustment is required due to a condition such as Tourette's Syndrome)

Specific instructions given to staff not to try to stop if s/he attempts to leave a room, instead allowed to go to … until calmed down

Look at the possible fixed term removal of pupil from lessons in which the inappropriate behaviour is most evident, during which time s/he receives appropriate support.

Seek funding for an increase in deployment of classroom assistant/behaviour mentor support.

Behaviour contract after fixed term exclusion and meeting with parent(s)/carer(s)

Withdrawal from danger areas i.e. practical classrooms, labs, mobile classrooms where teacher is isolated

To meet behaviour mentor each morning for briefing

Use experienced teacher call-out if required: "refer to head of department/head of year/senior teacher"

Procedures put in place where a senior member of staff can be called to a class immediately should an incident arise or where signs of an impending incident are apparent

Involvement of local authority behaviour support specialists, where available