Use of Restrictive Interventions, including Reasonable Force (Education Act 1996) Procedure

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This procedure is taken from DfE guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools. Guidance for schools in England April 2026'. *This replaces the previous guidance 'Use of reasonable force: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013'.*

INTRODUCTION

The Math School prides itself on being a well-ordered community in which self discipline and good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are the norm. However, it is recognised that on very rare occasions, it may be necessary to use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, in order to control or restrain pupils to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

What is reasonable force?

Reasonable force is 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.

Who can use 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.

Use of reasonable force to search pupils

Principals and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item.
A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only.
LAT has a separate policy on Searching and Screening, which lists the legally prohibited items, which should be consulted.

Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and they should know this option may be available to them. 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:

Is it necessary?
Is it proportionate?
Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

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

Training and risk assessments

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions will be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Therefore, the school will carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

'No Contact'

This school <u>does not</u> have a 'no contact' policy. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils.

Seclusion

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.

It is highly unlikely that seclusion will be needed in this school. Any decisions about using seclusion must be made by the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

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.
We will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support. We will work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

Pupil and staff support
We will 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.

Reporting

Recording and reporting "significant incidents" of force is now a mandatory legal duty under Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
Every incident record must be completed by the involved staff on the same day. Records must include the approximate duration of the intervention and the pupil's specific SEN status code.
Schools must provide written notification of the intervention to parents no later than the same day.