

All Saints Inter-Church Academy

Reasonable Force Policy



June 2026

1. Our Commitment

At All Saints Inter Church Academy, we strive to create a safe, secure and supportive environment for all pupils and staff. We are committed to providing excellent education for every child, every day, and to strengthening our partnership with families and the wider community.

There are times when the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, may be lawful and necessary to keep people safe. We recognise that such actions can have significant physical and emotional impacts on pupils, staff and parents/carers. Therefore, they are only ever considered as a last resort, for the least time necessary, once prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted or where the risk is immediate and significant.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines on the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions by staff members to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors within the school environment. The policy aims to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment while respecting the rights and dignity of all individuals. This policy applies to all staff members, including teachers, administrators, support staff, and any other individuals authorised to supervise pupils within the school premises or during school-related activities.

2. Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy aligns with, and should be read alongside:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, s.93 and s.93A
- Education Act 1996, s.550ZA–ZB
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*
- DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* guidance
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended (including paragraph 16A for academies)

3. Definitions

For clarity, this policy uses the following definitions:

- **Reasonable force:** Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions or movements. “Reasonable” means using no more force than necessary and for the least possible time. Any use of reasonable force is a form of restrictive intervention and may or may not involve restraint.
- **Restrictive interventions:** Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil’s movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. This may include the use of equipment or seclusion, and may or may not involve reasonable force. Examples of restrictive interventions could include:
 - Supervised seclusion of a pupil in an area away from others, where the pupil is prevented from leaving for their own safety and/or the safety of others
 - Passive physical contact, such as a staff member blocking a pupil’s path if they’re running towards danger (like a busy road), or staff standing between pupils to prevent a fight.

- **Restraint:** A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force with the intention of preventing, restricting or subduing movement of the body, or part of the body.
- **Seclusion** is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a ‘holding’ room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.
- A **significant incident** is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

These terms are not mutually exclusive. For example, if two members of staff briefly pull apart two pupils who are fighting, all three definitions may apply.

Note: References to “reasonable force” elsewhere in this policy also apply to restrictive interventions and restraint.

4. Appropriate Physical Contact

There are circumstances where appropriate physical contact with pupils is necessary and does not raise concerns regarding reasonable force or restrictive intervention. Examples include:

- Providing first aid
- Guiding or escorting a pupil where the pupil does not resist being guided and offers no adverse force to the person guiding them (e.g., holding their hand – applies to younger children in preschool and reception classes)
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Offering praise (e.g., handshake or pat on the back)
- Demonstrating the use of a musical instrument
- Demonstrating techniques in PE or sports coaching

When deciding whether physical contact is appropriate, staff must use professional judgement and consider:

- The school’s safeguarding policy
- The specific context, including the presence of other adults
- Relevant factors such as:
 - The pupil’s age
 - Known vulnerabilities, including SEND
 - Whether non-contact alternatives are available

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force when necessary. Where relevant and available, staff will receive training in preventative strategies and the safe use of restrictive intervention and restraint.

The SENCO will work with pupils, parents/carers and staff to develop or review risk-reduction plans for pupils at heightened risk, including:

- Advice on reasonable adjustments and proactive strategies
- Ensuring staff are aware of individual needs and triggers
- Participation in post-incident reviews for pupils with SEND
- Supporting staff training on SEND and behaviour

Examples of strategies to reduce the need for force include:

- Reducing sensory triggers or offering alternative spaces
- Adjusting communication methods (pace, tone, body language, use of visuals)
- Providing regulation activities or movement breaks
- Using pre-emptive cues, choices and predictable routines

5 Seclusion

As defined above, seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that pupil and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the pupil believe that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a pupil into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

We only use seclusion as a safety measure when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is not used as a threat or punishment. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour.

During seclusion:

- The pupil will be secluded in a safe place that does not feel threatening or intimidating to them.
- The pupil will be supervised at all times, by at least 1 member of staff, SLT should be informed enabling them to support where necessary.

As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil will be allowed to leave.

Any incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

6. Guiding Principles

The decision to use reasonable force or restrictive interventions depends on the specific circumstances. Staff must use professional judgement and consider:

Necessary

Staff must assess whether:

- There is immediacy of threat
- A severity of harm or disruption
- Whether de-escalation has been attempted
- There are safer or less restrictive alternatives
- The intervention is likely to reduce the risk
- The intervention could escalate the situation
- They can seek support from another staff member and SLT.

Examples of situations where reasonable force may be required include:

- Preventing a pupil from harming themselves or others
- Preventing a criminal offence
- Preventing serious damage to property
- Managing serious disorder

These examples must not be treated as a threshold; every situation must be judged individually.

Proportionate

Staff will:

- Use the least amount of force necessary
- Apply force for the shortest time possible
- Use open palms where possible to guide pupils to safety
- Consider the pupil's age, size, medical needs, SEND or vulnerabilities
- Consider equality implications
- Provide clear instructions
- Maintain a calm and controlled demeanour

Pupil Welfare

Staff will:

- Ascertain whether de-escalation has been attempted
- Comply with laws and school policies
- Respect pupils' rights and dignity
- Consider the emotional and physical impact on the pupil. Avoid unnecessary pain or injury.
- Maintain dignity wherever possible (e.g., avoiding interventions in public spaces)
- Communicate clearly and calmly
- Give pupils time to process instructions
- Use supportive communication methods for pupils with SEND or EAL, such as gesture.

Staff should continually assess whether the intervention should continue, be reduced, or stop.

Prevention and De-escalation

Restrictive intervention is exceptional and minimised through:

Whole-School Measures

- Predictable routines and expectations
- High-quality teaching and inclusive practice
- Sharing good practice for transitions, corridors and playgrounds
- Training in communication, empathy and de-escalation
- Monitoring data to reduce the need for interventions

Individual Measures

- Close work with families and professionals
- Behaviour Support Plans and risk-reduction plans
- Calm-down strategies and access to safe spaces
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND

De-escalation in the Moment

Staff should attempt:

- Open, non-threatening body language – stand with a sideways stance, and keep some distance between staff and pupil.
- Removing the audience
- Reflective listening (“Help me understand how you’re feeling...”)
- Distraction, offering choices, time-out (non-seclusion)
- Clear, calm instructions and processing time

7 Documentation and Reporting

- It is every staff members responsibility to record any significant incident where reasonable force was used or incidents where seclusion was necessary.
- Incidents must be recorded in writing using the Recording and Reporting of Reasonable Force form and added to the physical intervention book (kept in the Head of School’s office)
- Records must include: Child’s name and date of birth, Staff members involved in the incident date/time/location/duration, justification, type/degree of force, injuries, actions taken
- Parents/carers must be informed as soon as possible in writing (emails are acceptable).
- Exceptions apply where informing parents may cause significant harm
- Trustees and school leaders must ensure robust procedures for recording each significant incident involving force or the use of seclusion.
- The staff involved must complete the written record as soon as possible.
- All incidents must be reported to the DSL via CPOMS.
- Records are stored securely in line with the Data Protection Policy.

8 Debriefing and Support

- Debriefing sessions will be held for staff and pupils involved
- Support services will be offered where needed

9 Environmental Considerations

- Ensure the environment is safe and free from hazards
- Have another member of staff present where possible

10 Use of Reasonable Force to Search Pupils

The Executive Head, Head of school or other staff member given authority by the Executive Head or Head of school, have the statutory power to search pupils where they have reasonable grounds to suspect possession of a prohibited item. Reasonable force may only be used to search for legally prohibited items (e.g., knives, weapons, stolen items, illegal drugs).

Force must not be used to search for items banned solely under school rules.

11 Unacceptable Use of Force

Staff will never:

- Use force as punishment
- Restrain a pupil in a way that affects breathing, airway or circulation
- Hold a pupil on the ground
- Use techniques that cause pain

If a pupil is unintentionally taken to the ground, staff must release or reposition immediately.

Medical assessment must be sought where necessary.

12 Complaints

Complaints will be handled in accordance with the school's complaints process. Investigations will begin as soon as possible.

13 Monitoring and Review

- The SLT and DSL will audit incident data regularly and report termly to Trustees.
- Actions to reduce incidents and disproportionality will be monitored.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant incidents or legislative changes.

Recording and Reporting the Use of Reasonable Force by Staff



Date of incident:	Time of incident:	Location of incident
Name of pupil:	Year group:	Specific needs of the pupil:
Name/s of staff members involved in intervention:	Staff member recording the incident – Name: Role within the incident (circle) – witness / person using reasonable force	
Description of the Incident A clear, factual, and brief account including: What led up to the incident (including known or potential triggers) A description of the behaviour that created risk Why a restrictive intervention or use of force was assessed as <i>necessary</i> Whether the incident meets the definition of a significant use of force	Prevention & De-escalation Attempts Record all preventative strategies attempted prior to using force	
Type of Restrictive Intervention and the amount of time it was used for;	Injuries or harm and who they affected;	

Detail any follow up action / learning below. E.g. risk assessment / safety plan / safe place etc.	When and how were parents notified of the incident and by who:
Was the possible use of reasonable force explained to the student in advance of using it?	
Was the possible use of reasonable force explained to the student in advance of using it?	
Signed (Staff Member): Date:	
Signed (Headteacher): Date:	
LADO informed: Outcome:	

Communication template to Parents/Carers following RI Incident

Subject: Follow-up Notification Regarding a Restrictive Intervention Involving [Child's Name]

Dear [Parent/Carer's Name],

I am writing to follow up on the conversation you had earlier today with a member of our staff regarding an incident involving [Child's Name].

As discussed, during this incident a **Restrictive Intervention** was used. Under Department for Education guidance, schools are required to **formally notify parents in writing** whenever a significant incident of restrictive intervention occurs. This email therefore serves as the written record and confirmation of what was shared with you verbally at the time.

The details of the incident are set out below to ensure transparency and clarity:

Summary of the Incident

- **Date and time:**
- **Location:**
- **Reason for intervention:**
- **Strategies used to avoid restrictive intervention being used:**
- **Type of restrictive intervention used:**
- **Duration:**
- **Outcome and support provided following the incident:**

(Please note that any restrictive intervention is only ever used as a last resort, where necessary, to keep a child or others safe, and for the shortest possible time.)

This information has been **recorded in line with statutory requirements** and is held securely on the school's safeguarding system. It is treated as **strictly confidential** and is only accessible to appropriate safeguarding and senior staff.

We want to reassure you that the school is committed to working **openly and collaboratively** with families. We recognise that incidents of this nature can be upsetting, and we place a strong emphasis on reflection, learning, and prevention.

We would very much welcome any further discussion with you about:

- what may have contributed to the incident
- how we can continue to support [Child's Name] effectively
- what steps we can take together to **reduce the risk of a similar situation occurring again**

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you would like to arrange a meeting or talk this through further. Your insights are an important part of ensuring the best possible support for your child.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and trust.