

Salford City Academy

Restrictive Intervention and Reasonable Force Policy 2026 - 2027



Salford City Academy
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

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1. Aims and scope

Salford City Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, staff, and visitors.

We recognise that, on rare occasions, it may be lawful and necessary to use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, restraint, or seclusion, to prevent serious harm. We also recognise that such interventions can have significant physical, emotional, and psychological consequences.

Restrictive interventions at Salford City Academy are:

- Always a last resort
- Never used as punishment, threat, or sanction
- Used for the shortest time necessary
- Proportionate to the risk presented
- Focused on safety, dignity, and wellbeing

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention and de-escalation
- Ensure staff understand their legal powers, responsibilities, and limits
- Set out clear procedures for decision-making, use, recording, and reporting
- Protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of students and staff
- Ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools](#). This policy has full regard to statutory guidance contained within the Department for Education's *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools* (April 2026). Sections concerning recording and reporting carry statutory force under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

It also meets the requirements of:

- [Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, inserted by the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#)
- [Section 550ZA](#) and [section 550ZB](#) of the Education Act 1996
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) and associated regulations
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

- [The Schools \(Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint\) \(No. 2\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#)
- Department for Education guidance on [searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- Paragraph 16A of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (inserted by [The Schools \(Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint\) \(No. 2\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#))

3. Definitions

The terms used in this policy are defined below. These definitions are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance on restrictive interventions (see section 2).

Restrictive interventions

Restrictive interventions are actions used to prevent, restrict or control a student's movement or liberty, in order to prevent harm. This policy uses *restrictive interventions* as an umbrella term for both physical and non-physical approaches.

Examples may include:

- Supervised seclusion of a student in an area away from others, where the student is prevented from leaving for their own safety and/or the safety of others
- Passive physical contact, such as a staff member blocking a student's path if they are running towards danger, or positioning themselves between students to prevent a fight
- Passive positioning around a dysregulated student to create space and maintain safety
- Briefly holding a door closed or supervising an exit, where allowing a student to leave at that moment would place them or others at immediate risk

Reasonable force

Reasonable force refers to a range of actions involving physical contact, used only where necessary, for the shortest possible time, and in a manner that is proportionate to the risk. The degree of force used will depend on the specific circumstances.

Examples may include:

- Guiding a student to safety by the arm
- Intervening to separate students involved in a fight
- Restraining a student to prevent injury to themselves or others
- Using light physical contact to escort a student from a room where their behaviour poses a serious risk or disruption

Restraint

Restraint is a physical restrictive intervention used to prevent a student from harming themselves or others, causing serious damage, committing an offence, or creating serious disorder. It must be necessary, proportionate, and time-limited.

Examples may include:

- Holding a student's arms to their sides to prevent injury
- Briefly restricting movement to stop a student throwing a dangerous object
- Preventing use of mobility aids only where their immediate use presents a risk, and for the shortest time necessary

Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention in which a student is prevented from leaving a space, for the safety of that student and/or others. This may occur through physical measures or where a student reasonably believes they are not permitted to leave.

For example, placing a student in a supervised 'holding' space until they are able to regulate is a form of seclusion.

(See section 3.2 for further detail.)

Significant incident

A significant incident is one where the use of force goes beyond normal or appropriate physical contact, including where force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

(See section 3.1.)

3.1 Appropriate physical contact with students

The school does not operate a 'no contact' policy. Requests to prohibit the lawful use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions cannot be accepted.

There are circumstances where physical contact is appropriate and necessary and does not constitute the use of force. These include:

- Providing first aid
- Guiding or escorting a student safely
- Comforting a distressed student
- Offering praise (e.g., a handshake)
- Demonstrating activities during lessons such as music or PE

Staff should always exercise professional judgement, taking account of:

- Safeguarding expectations
- Context and environment
- The student's age, needs, vulnerabilities, and SEND
- Whether less intrusive alternatives are available

3.2 Seclusion

Seclusion is used only as a safety measure when a student is experiencing significant emotional or behavioural dysregulation and poses a risk.

Seclusion is:

- Never used as punishment or threat
- Not a disciplinary response to deliberate misbehaviour

During seclusion:

- The student will be in a safe, non-threatening space
- The student will be continuously supervised in line with any individual risk assessment

Seclusion will end as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

All seclusion incidents are recorded and reported in accordance with section 12.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Board

The Local Governing Board is responsible for providing strategic oversight and assurance in relation to the use of restrictive interventions. In particular, the Governing Board will:

- Review, approve and periodically review this policy to ensure it remains compliant with statutory guidance

Ensure robust procedures are in place for the recording and reporting of every:

- Significant incident involving force
- Seclusion incident
- Restraint incident
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that statutory recording and reporting procedures are consistently followed in practice

Regularly review and interrogate data relating to restrictive interventions, including:

- Termly analysis of incident data
- Monitoring for any disproportionate impact, particularly in relation to students with SEND and those who share protected characteristics
- Identification of patterns, trends, or repeat incidents

Provide both support and challenge to senior leaders where review identifies areas for improvement, including:

- Where approaches have not been effective over time
- Where there is concern about frequency, trends, or disproportionality in the use of restrictive interventions

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation and day-to-day oversight of this policy and will:

- Ensure this policy is effectively implemented and that staff understand their responsibilities
- Ensure that appropriate, high-quality training is provided to staff who may need to use restrictive interventions, including training in prevention and de-escalation strategies, informed by the school's context and student needs
- Ensure staffing levels and deployment support positive behaviour management and safe practice
- Monitor and review incidents involving restrictive interventions in order to refine practice and reduce future risk
- Ensure full compliance with statutory recording and reporting requirements
- Authorise staff to search students or their belongings in accordance with DfE guidance where there are reasonable grounds to suspect prohibited or banned items
- Manage complaints related to restrictive interventions in line with the school's complaints policy
- Respond to any allegation of inappropriate use of force or restrictive intervention in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and safeguarding procedures

All Staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- Read, understand and comply with this policy and related school policies
- Prioritise prevention, positive behaviour management and de-escalation to minimise the need for restrictive interventions
- Use restrictive interventions only where necessary, proportionate and lawful
- Accurately and promptly record every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force in which they are involved
- Report all such incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with school procedures
- Record and report any injuries arising from restrictive intervention incidents and follow health and safety procedures, including HSE reporting where required
- Participate in relevant training on restrictive interventions and preventative strategies, in line with their role
- Engage in post-incident debriefing and reflection to support learning, understanding and recovery

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding duties are met in relation to restrictive interventions, including:

- Ensuring that parents/carers are informed of every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force, unless doing so would place the student at risk of significant harm
- Ensuring that all records are stored securely and managed in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements
- Liaising with and making referrals to the local authority where it has been determined that parents/carers cannot safely be informed, in accordance with sections 12.2 and 12.3 of this policy

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO is responsible for ensuring that the needs of students with SEND are appropriately addressed and will:

- Work with students, parents/carers and staff to develop and review individual behaviour support plans and risk assessments where there is an increased likelihood of restrictive intervention
- Ensure staff are aware of individual student needs, triggers and agreed support strategies
- Work with staff who know students well to identify and manage risks, including early indicators of escalation
- Support the development of prevention and de-escalation strategies, including reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010
- Participate in the review of incidents involving restrictive interventions for students with SEND
- Provide advice to staff on the application of this policy for students with SEND
- Contribute to staff training on SEND, behaviour support and the appropriate use of restrictive interventions

5. Acceptable uses of force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances, as set out in legislation and Department for Education guidance.

Staff may use reasonable force only where it is necessary and proportionate to prevent a student from:

- Hurting themselves or others

- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing serious damage to property
- Causing serious disorder or disruption among students, whether in lessons or elsewhere

The decision to use reasonable force will always depend on the individual circumstances of the situation and the professional judgement of the staff member involved. While all staff have this legal power, it is recognised that some staff—particularly those working closely with students who may present challenging behaviour—are more likely to need to exercise it.

The school will ensure that:

- Staff who may need to use reasonable force receive appropriate training, including training in prevention and de-escalation
- Risk assessments are completed and reviewed where there is an identified likelihood that restrictive interventions may be required

Following any incident involving physical restraint, staff will consider whether a medical assessment is required, including in cases where no immediate injury is apparent.

Any significant incident involving the use of force will be recorded and reported in line with the procedures set out in section 12 of this policy.

Unacceptable Uses of Force

It is illegal and unlawful to use force on a student for the purpose of punishment. Force is never used at Salford City Academy as a sanction, threat or deterrent.

The school recognises that any use of force or restraint carries an inherent risk of physical and psychological harm. For this reason, restrictive interventions are avoided wherever possible and are used only when necessary to prevent serious harm, in line with this policy and statutory guidance.

The following uses of force are never acceptable:

- Using force for the purpose of punishment, discipline, compliance or to assert authority
- Restraining a student in any way that restricts breathing, affects the airway, or compromises circulation, including but not limited to:
 - Covering a student's nose or mouth
 - Applying pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen
- The deliberate use of ground restraint

If a student is unintentionally brought to the ground during an incident, staff must release contact or move to a safer position immediately and take steps to reduce risk, seeking assistance where necessary.

Staff are reminded that:

- Section 5 of this policy outlines the limited and lawful circumstances in which reasonable force may be used
- Section 9 sets out the decision-making considerations staff must apply before, during and after any use of force

6. Using reasonable force to search students

The principal, and any member of staff authorised by the principal, has a statutory power to search a student or their belongings where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the student is carrying a prohibited item (as defined in the Department for Education's [searching, screening and confiscation guidance](#)) or an item banned under the school's behaviour policy.

Authorised staff may use reasonable force to conduct a search only where this is necessary to search for prohibited items listed in the DfE guidance, such as knives or weapons, stolen items, or illegal drugs. Reasonable force must not be used to search for items that are banned under school rules only, for example mobile phones or other non-prohibited contraband.

Any decision to use reasonable force when carrying out a search must be made carefully and on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the level of risk to the student, other students, and staff. Staff must always use the least intrusive and least restrictive approach required to manage the risk safely.

Further information on the school's procedures for searching, screening and confiscation is set out in the Behaviour Policy, which must be followed at all times.

7. Prevention and de-escalation strategies

Restrictive intervention is used only when necessary. Salford City Academy is committed to minimising the use of restrictive interventions through a strong focus on prevention, early intervention and de-escalation, using both whole-school and individual approaches.

Whole-school approaches

Our whole-school approach to prevention and de-escalation includes:

- Consideration of how the school environment and classroom organisation support students' emotional wellbeing, regulation and engagement in learning
- Sharing and promoting best practice in whole-class behaviour management, including expectations in communal areas such as corridors, social spaces and playgrounds
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, including the use of calm tone, clear instructions, empathy and active listening to support de-escalation
- Promoting positive, respectful relationships between staff and students, built on trust, consistency and understanding
- Recording, monitoring and analysing data on restrictive interventions to identify patterns, inform improvement planning and reduce future need

Individual approaches

Where appropriate, additional individual strategies are used to reduce the likelihood of escalation, including:

- Working in partnership with parents/carers to support individual students
- Implementing strategies based on identified needs, including:
 - The development and regular review of individual behaviour support plans
 - Proactive strategies to help students recognise and manage emotions before behaviour escalates
 - Making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities or SEND, to reduce barriers to participation and inclusion

7.1 De-escalation when a situation arises

When a member of staff is faced with a situation where a restrictive intervention may be required, they must consider de-escalation strategies first, wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

De-escalation aims to reduce risk, support regulation and restore calm, without the need for physical intervention.

Strategies may include:

- Using open, non-threatening body language and awareness of a student's personal space
- Removing or reducing an audience, for example by speaking to a student away from peers where appropriate
- Demonstrating empathy and curiosity, including asking questions to help understand the student's feelings or needs
- Use of distraction or redirection techniques
- Offering access to a calm or quiet space to support self-regulation, such as a sensory room or supervised office space
- Giving clear, calm verbal reminders of expectations and potential consequences, allowing time for the student to process and respond

Staff should adapt de-escalation strategies to the individual student and context, taking into account age, SEND, communication needs and any known triggers or vulnerabilities.

8. Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

8.1 Necessity and proportionality

The decision to use a restrictive intervention is based on the professional judgement of the member of staff involved and will always depend on the individual circumstances of each situation.

Staff must first consider whether the situation can be managed safely through alternative strategies, including the de-escalation techniques set out in section 7.1 of this policy and/or by seeking support from a colleague. However, staff may determine that there are occasions where restrictive intervention is the only available option to prevent a significant risk of harm to the student or to others.

When deciding whether to use a restrictive intervention, staff must consider the following principles:

Is the intervention necessary?

- Are there other effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
- Is the intervention likely to reduce the immediate risk, or could it escalate the situation or cause greater harm than the behaviour itself?

Is the intervention proportionate?

- Is the least restrictive intervention being used?
- Is the least amount of force being applied for the shortest time necessary to reduce the risk?
- If the intervention appears to be escalating the situation, can the approach be adjusted or an alternative strategy used?
- Have individual factors been considered, including the student's age, size, medical needs, SEND, communication differences, trauma history or other vulnerabilities?

Restrictive interventions must be continually reviewed in the moment and reduced or stopped as soon as it is safe to do so.

8.2 Student and staff welfare

The primary consideration when using any restrictive intervention is the safety, dignity and wellbeing of the student, alongside the safety of other students and staff.

Staff must consider the potential physical, emotional and psychological impact of a restrictive intervention. Students who have experienced trauma, adverse life experiences, neglect, or who have medical conditions, sensory sensitivities, communication difficulties or other additional needs may find restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

Where a restrictive intervention is necessary, staff should:

- Act in a way that maintains the student's dignity, including considering the location of the intervention and minimising exposure to peers where possible
- Communicate clearly and calmly, explaining what is happening, why, and what the student needs to do
- Use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies appropriate to the student's needs
- Allow time for the student to process information and respond, where practicable

- Continuously monitor the student's emotional and physical state and use this to inform decisions about whether the intervention should continue, be reduced, or stop

Support following an incident

As soon as possible following any use of restrictive intervention, the school will review the incident in order to:

- Understand why the intervention was necessary
- Consider its impact on students and staff
- Identify patterns, trends or contributing factors
- Reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring in the future

The school will ensure that all students and staff involved receive appropriate support, including:

- A medical assessment and treatment, where required, including consideration of medical assessment following any restraint even where no immediate injury is visible
- An opportunity to reflect on and discuss the incident in a supportive and restorative way

These follow-up conversations form part of a wider debriefing process, allowing separate reflections from those involved and supporting the repair and rebuilding of relationships. Wherever possible, this process will be facilitated by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident and may include an additional person to ensure support and impartiality.

The school will continue to monitor the wellbeing of students and staff following an incident and provide additional support where required. Where appropriate, support may also be offered to students or staff who witnessed the incident.

9. Considerations for students with SEND

Salford City Academy recognises that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may respond to distressing, overwhelming or confusing situations in ways that can place themselves or others at risk. Students who experience difficulties with communication may express unmet needs or emotional distress through behaviour rather than words.

The school is committed to understanding individual needs, identifying potential triggers, and providing appropriate support within an inclusive environment that reduces the likelihood of restrictive interventions being required.

Risk assessment and reasonable adjustments

Where it is identified that a student with SEND may be at an increased likelihood of requiring reasonable force or other restrictive interventions, the school will carry out a risk assessment. This will be informed by staff who know the student well and, where appropriate, by input from parents/carers and relevant professionals.

The school is mindful of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, to avoid disadvantage and ensure students are able to participate in school life as fully as possible.

Preventative and proactive strategies

Staff will work proactively to reduce risk and prevent escalation by:

- Identifying individual trigger points or early indicators of distress
- Using staff who know the student well to support effective planning and response
- Working collaboratively with students, parents/carers and external professionals to agree appropriate strategies
- Implementing tailored prevention and de-escalation approaches based on individual need

Strategies may include:

- Adjusting the environment to remove or reduce stimuli that may cause distress
- Adapting communication, including body language, facial expressions and tone of voice
- Supporting students to express emotions and needs before becoming overwhelmed
- Engaging students in calming or regulating activities
- Using familiar objects or activities to redirect attention safely

Behaviour support plans

Where appropriate, students with SEND will have an individual behaviour support plan. These plans will be reviewed regularly, and following any significant incident, in partnership with the student and their parents/carers.

Plans may:

- Outline environmental or curriculum adjustments
- Set out agreed approaches to communication and support
- In limited and carefully considered circumstances, specify when increased physical contact may be appropriate to support safety. Any such situations will be discussed in advance with all parties and clearly documented.

10. Training and risk assessments

The school will ensure that all staff who may be required to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions receive appropriate and up-to-date training. This training will include:

- Safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions
- Prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Understanding the risks associated with physical intervention

The school also has a duty to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of staff. Risk assessments will therefore be carried out for staff who regularly work with students where challenging behaviour may present a foreseeable risk, to ensure that interventions can be carried out as safely as possible.

11. Recording and reporting arrangements

The school has a **statutory duty** to record and report all:

- Significant incidents involving force
- Seclusion incidents
- Restraint incidents

11.1 Recording incidents

The school operates a clear and consistent recording process. Staff involved in an incident will complete the appropriate form and ensure it is uploaded to **CPOMS** as soon as possible, and ideally on the same day. Incidents must be recorded even where actions are referenced within an individual support plan.

Significant incidents involving force

Records will include:

- Names of the student and staff involved
- Relevant student context, including SEND status and SEN code
- Date, time, location and approximate duration
- A factual account of:
 - Events leading up to the incident
 - Known or potential triggers
 - Preventative or de-escalation strategies attempted
 - The type and degree of force used
- Details of any injuries
- Rationale for why force was assessed as necessary
- Support provided following the incident

Seclusion and restraint incidents

Records will include:

- Names of students and staff involved

- Relevant contextual information, including SEND needs
- Date, time, location and approximate duration
- Rationale for the intervention
- Details of any injuries
- Support provided following the incident

Where a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, it will be recorded once, using the significant incident process.

All records will be:

- Logged on CPOMS with supporting documentation
- Marked to confirm parental communication
- Stored securely in line with data protection requirements

Incident data will be reviewed by the Local Governing Board on a **termly basis**, including:

- Analysis of trends
- Monitoring for disproportionate impact (SEND / protected characteristics)

11.2 Reporting incidents to parents/carers

Parents/carers will be informed of relevant incidents as soon as possible, and wherever practicable on the same day. This applies even where restrictive interventions form part of an agreed behaviour support plan.

The only exception is where informing parents/carers is assessed as likely to place the student at risk of significant harm. In such cases, the incident will be reported to the local authority.

When reporting significant incidents involving force, parents/carers will receive information including:

- Date, time, location and duration
- Rationale for the intervention
- Description of the force used
- Any injuries sustained

For seclusion or restraint incidents, parents/carers will be provided with a written report and, where possible, a verbal explanation.

All communications will comply with data protection requirements, including the omission of identifying information about other students.

Follow-up with parents/carers

The school will review incidents with parents/carers, including:

- Triggers or warning signs
- Adherence to agreed support plans
- Effectiveness of de-escalation strategies
- Consideration of alternative approaches for the future

11.3 Reporting incidents to the local authority

Where an incident has not been reported to parents/carers due to safeguarding concerns, the school will report the incident to the local authority where the student ordinarily resides, including:

- All information normally shared with parents/carers
- The rationale for not informing parents/carers

Where a student is subject to a care order or accommodated under the Children Act 1989, incidents will be reported to the relevant local authority in addition to parents/carers, unless this is assessed as unsafe.

12. Complaints and allegations

Complaints relating to restrictive interventions will be managed in accordance with the school's **complaints policy**.

Any allegation of inappropriate use of force or restrictive intervention against a member of staff will be taken seriously and addressed in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and local safeguarding procedures.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where required by changes in legislation or guidance. All reviews will be approved by the Governing Body.

14. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and safety policy
- SEND policy