



The Park
Academies
Trust

Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

TPAT Policy Management

Review date	Version	Reviewer / owner	Executive approval	Approving body	Meeting date of policy approval
04/2026	1	Director of Inclusion	05/05/2026	EPSC	email approval 02/09/2026

Material changes since last publication

Section	Changes
	New policy prepared in line with updated DfE guidance effective 1 April 2026

This policy is reviewed annually. The next review is due by June 2027.

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Status and Control

Applies to all TPAT academies and central services (including primary, secondary, sixth form and alternative provision), all employees, regular volunteers, supply/agency staff and contractors while on TPAT premises or activities.

Legal and Policy Framework

- DfE: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from 1 April 2026). Includes statutory duties to record and report each significant incident involving use of force; remainder non-statutory but expected practice.
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025 – duties to record and report seclusion and restraint/immobilisation; staged commencement 9 January 2026 (regs 1 & 9) and 1 April 2026.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, s.93 (power to use reasonable force).
- Equality Act 2010 (incl. PSED) and DfE advice for schools.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; DfE health & safety responsibilities for schools.

1. Purpose and Scope

TPAT is committed to safe, inclusive environments where pupils can thrive academically, socially and emotionally. Restrictive interventions (including the use of reasonable force and seclusion) are used only when necessary to prevent harm and always in ways that uphold dignity, safety, rights and equality. This policy sets out Trust-wide principles, roles and procedures, and the recording, reporting and oversight required under the updated statutory framework.

This policy applies to all staff (teaching and support), leaders, Governors, Trustees, volunteers and contractors while supervising TPAT pupils on or off site. It must be read alongside each academy's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy, Exclusions/Suspensions, Searching, Screening and Confiscation, Health & Safety Policy, and the Trust Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

2. Definitions

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

The various restrictive interventions above have been defined for completeness and should not be construed as an endorsement or otherwise for their use in schools. Some will not be relevant to most schools.

3. Guiding Principles

1. **Prevention first** – TPAT promotes whole school positive relationships, early help, regulation and de-escalation to reduce the likelihood that restrictive interventions are needed.
2. **Safeguarding** – the welfare of pupils and staff is paramount. Interventions must protect, not compromise, safety; techniques impacting breathing or circulation are prohibited.
3. **Dignity and respect** – pupils must never be humiliated, degraded, deprived of basic needs, or subject to punitive force or seclusion.
4. **Trauma-informed and SEND-aware** – decisions consider the pupil's needs, history, communication profile and context; plans are tailored and co-produced with parents/carers and relevant professionals.
5. **Least restrictive option** – choose the minimum intervention, for the shortest time, necessary to reduce risk.

6. **Equality and fairness** – monitoring will check for disproportionality (e.g., by SEND and protected characteristics) and ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010/PSED.

4. 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

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies. We trust school leaders to make decisions on training based on their school's individual contexts and needs. When deciding what formal staff training is required, school leaders should ensure that the chosen training reflects the principles of this guidance. Employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. Therefore, schools should 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.

Force must not be used: as punishment; to inflict pain; in a way that restricts breathing or blood flow (e.g., pressure on the neck, nose, mouth or abdomen); or in any degrading or abusive manner.

Seclusion may be considered only as a safety measure, for the shortest time, where the pupil's acute dysregulation presents an immediate risk of harm and other measures are not viable. All seclusion incidents must be recorded and reported to parents under the 2025 Regulations. 'Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention'.

5. Prevention and De-escalation (Core Practice)

Staff will prioritise non-physical strategies, including: calm, non-confrontational communication; use of time/space and movement; distraction/redirecting; offering choices and adjustments to environment/routine; removing an audience; supportive adult presence; sensory/regulation strategies; and planned withdrawal.

Each academy will maintain graduated responses and access to targeted support (e.g., ELSA, MHST, behaviour mentors, pastoral staff) and will co-produce Individual Behaviour Support Plans (Positive Handling Plans and Risk Assessments are referred to as Behaviour support plans) for pupils with predictable or higher-risk behaviours.

6. If physical intervention becomes necessary

Do:

- communicate clearly what you are doing and why; prompt positive responses; use simple directions;
- use only approved, safest holds consistent with accredited training;
- use minimum force for the shortest time, continually reassessing risk;
- call for assistance where possible;
- relax/release as soon as the pupil regains self-control.

Do not:

- act in anger or beyond your competence;
- involve other pupils;
- use holds that risk the airway, breathing or circulation; twist joints, bend fingers, pull hair;
- use force as punishment, or in any degrading or abusive way.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- **TPAT Trustees** – ensures a compliant policy framework; receives termly Trust-wide data and challenge; assures training and resourcing.
- **Chief Executive Officer and Director of Inclusion** – set standards, monitor compliance, lead Trust data analysis and annual assurance.
- **Principals / Headteachers** – implement locally; maintain a register of authorised and trained staff; ensure recording/reporting systems and parental communication; ensure post-incident support and medical attention where needed.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – oversee safeguarding risk assessment; review incidents for patterns, disproportionality and contextual safeguarding; liaise with partners where thresholds are met.
- **SENCO/Assistant Principal Inclusion** – ensure plans/risk assessments are in place and reviewed; advise on reasonable adjustments/SEND strategies.

- **All staff** – follow this policy; use preventative strategies; use restrictive interventions only where necessary and proportionate; record and report in line with Section 10.

8. Training and Authorisation

- Schools will provide regular, accredited training in de-escalation and safer holding techniques, aligned to national standards and the DfE guidance, with annual refresh for identified roles where the Head teacher feels this is needed.
- Principals will maintain an academy register of trained/authorised staff (including supply/agency where applicable) and make this available to the Trust on request.
- Staff will not be directed to use techniques outside their training/competence.

9. After an Incident

Immediate actions: check for injuries; provide first aid/medical assistance; stabilise the environment; offer emotional support to the pupil and others; inform a senior leader/DSL.

Debrief & learning: a timely, restorative debrief with the pupil, involved staff and, where appropriate, witnesses. Focus on understanding triggers, improving plans/risk assessments, and reducing future need for intervention.

10. Recording, Reporting and Oversight (Statutory Duties)

10.1 What must be recorded

Schools must have procedures to record in writing each significant incident involving use of force, and each incident of seclusion or restraint, as soon as practicable (ideally the same day).

Records must include, 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 and 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
- Any report to parents will be signed by the Head teacher / Principal.

10.2 Reporting to parents / carers

The Head / Principal will sign any report to parents and staff names will not be shared. A report of the incident made to parents should include the following details as a minimum:

- time, date, location and 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

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.

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

Best practice would include inviting parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This could involve a discussion about:

- any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident
- whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed
- what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were
- what might be done differently in the future

The school may use this information to amend any existing behaviour support plans, as needed.

10.3 Systems and data

- Academies will use the Trust-approved safeguarding/behaviour recording system (CPOMS/Arbor) configured to capture all mandatory fields above.
- Senior leaders will review data at least termly with the Local Governing Committee, including disproportionality analysis (Vulnerable groups / protected characteristics), patterns, locations, staff training needs, and links to behaviour/curriculum/environment. Trust-wide analysis will be reported termly to the TPAT Board.

10.4 Information governance

Records will be retained, stored and shared in line with UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018, TPAT retention schedules and safeguarding information-sharing principles.

11. Planning for Predictable or Higher-Risk Behaviours

Where behaviours are reasonably foreseeable, academies must co-produce and routinely review with parents/carers and relevant professionals:

- **Individual Behaviour Support Plans/Positive Handling Plans** (including proactive support, reasonable adjustments and agreed holds if ever necessary)

12. Complaints and Allegations

TPAT will respond to concerns via academy Complaints procedures and manage any staff allegations under Managing Allegations (KCSIE) processes. Serious incidents may be investigated by police and/or children's services. Comprehensive records will be available for scrutiny by safeguarding partners, Ofsted and the TPAT Board.

13. Monitoring, Assurance and Review

- **Academy level:** SLT/DSL undertake routine audits of incident records and practice; LGCs receive termly reports.
- **Trust level:** Director of Inclusion leads termly multi-academy analysis within the DSL Trust meeting and annual assurance to the TPAT Board.
- **Review:** Policy reviewed biennially or sooner if legislation/guidance changes or serious incidents indicate a need.

14. Linked / Supporting Documents

- Behaviour Policy; Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy; SEND Policy; Searching, Screening & Confiscation; Health & Safety Policy; Data Protection Policy/Records Management; Exclusions/Suspensions.

15. Academy-Level Appendices (to be completed by each TPAT academy)

A. Local register of trained / authorised staff (role, training date, refresh due)

B. Local spaces and supervision arrangements (e.g., calm rooms/safe spaces; note: any seclusion must meet legal tests and be recorded/reported)

C. Incident recording and parental notification workflow (system steps; same-day contact aims; safeguarding exception route)

D. Templates – Positive Handling Plan; Risk Assessment; Post-Incident Debrief; Parent Notification Letter (Force) / Written Record (Seclusion/Restraint).

Annex 1 – At-a-Glance: What’s New from April 2026

- 2013 DfE guidance replaced by Restrictive interventions... (Apr 2026).
- Statutory duty to record and report each significant use of force (guidance, p.14–15).
- Legal duty to record and report seclusion and restraint (SI 2025/1348); staged commencement 9 Jan 2026 / 1 Apr 2026.
- Clearer prohibitions (e.g., techniques impeding breathing/circulation).
- Stronger expectations on prevention, data use and leadership oversight.

Annex 2 – Staff Quick Guide (summary)

Use prevention and de-escalation first. If you must intervene:

- Check necessity (immediate risk?) and proportionality; call for help.
- Use only trained, safest holds; never use techniques that restrict breathing/circulation.
- Afterwards: check injuries; reassure; record full details same day; inform parents per Section 10 (consider safeguarding exception).

Note on terminology

Throughout, “parents” includes carers and others with parental responsibility. “Academy” refers to any school within TPAT. “Staff” includes all adults working with pupils under TPAT direction.