

Use of Reasonable Force & Restrictive Interventions Policy




'Let your light shine!'

Reviewed and updated: March 2026

Ratified by Governors: 31.3.26

Next review: March 2027

Signed: ... 

Signed: 

Name: Laura Martin
(Executive Headteacher)

Name: Peter Hilton
(Chair of Governors)

1. Policy Statement

This Aspire Federation of Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, dignity and rights of all pupils. The use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions will only be used **as a last resort**, in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and current legislation.

The school recognises that:

- All staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances.
- Any intervention must be **necessary, proportionate, and for the shortest time possible**.
- Restrictive interventions must **never be used as punishment**.
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2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025
- DfE Guidance:
 - *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* (until 31 March 2026)
 - *Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools* (from 1 April 2026)

From April 2026:

- There is a **statutory duty to record and report all significant incidents** of force or seclusion.

3. Definitions

- **Reasonable Force:** The minimum force necessary to prevent harm, disorder, or damage.
- **Restrictive Intervention:** Any action limiting a pupil's movement or liberty (including restraint or seclusion).

- **Restraint:** Holding or immobilising a pupil.
- **Seclusion:** Preventing a pupil from leaving a space.

4. Principles

The school will:

- Prioritise **prevention and de-escalation strategies**.
- Use restrictive interventions **only where there is a real risk of harm or serious disruption**.
- Ensure all interventions are:
 - Necessary
 - Proportionate
 - Reasonable
 - Time-limited
- Maintain the **dignity and safety of pupils at all times**

- **5. When Reasonable Force May Be Used**

Staff may use reasonable force to:

- Prevent injury to a pupil or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Maintain good order and discipline

6. Prohibited Practices

The school will not:

- Use force as punishment
- Use excessive force or pain compliance

- Restrict breathing or circulation
- Use prone (face-down) restraint
- Use seclusion except as a **safety measure**

7. Prevention & De-escalation

The school will:

- Use positive behaviour support and early intervention
- Identify triggers and implement individual behaviour plans
- Work with parents/carers and external professionals
- Provide reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND

Prevention is a key expectation under the 2026 guidance.

8. Staff Training

- Staff likely to use force will receive appropriate training
- Training will include:
 - De-escalation strategies
 - Safe physical intervention techniques
 - Safeguarding and legal responsibilities

Training decisions remain the responsibility of school leaders.

9. Recording and Reporting (Statutory Requirement from April 2026)

The school will:

- Record **every significant incident** involving:
 - Use of force
 - Restraint
 - Seclusion

- Complete records **as soon as practicable (ideally same day)**
- Include:
 - Date, time, location
 - Pupils and staff involved
 - Reason for intervention
 - Type and duration of force – including marking on a body map where contact was made with the child
 - Any injuries
- Inform parents/carers **as soon as possible**

10. Post-Incident Support

After any incident:

- Check for injuries (pupil and staff)
- Provide emotional support
- Debrief with staff and pupil
- Review behaviour plans where necessary

11. Safeguarding & SEND Considerations

The school recognises that:

- Restrictive interventions can be distressing, particularly for pupils with SEND or trauma backgrounds
- Interventions must be **individualised and proportionate**
- Safeguarding duties apply at all times

12. Monitoring and Governance

The governing body will:

- Approve and review this policy regularly

- Monitor incident data to identify patterns
- Ensure equality and safeguarding compliance
- Use data to improve practice and reduce interventions

13. Complaints

Any concerns regarding the use of force will be managed through:

- The school complaints procedure
- Safeguarding procedures where appropriate

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following any significant incident or legislative change

Appendix A – Key Principles Summary (Staff Quick Guide)

- Use force **only as a last resort**
- Use **minimum force for minimum time**
- Always aim to **de-escalate first**
- Record and report **every significant incident**
- Never use force as punishment