



Achievement Through Collaboration Trust

Policy on Restrictive Interventions, Reasonable Force, and Seclusion

Approved by	Adele McKeever
Date adopted:	1st April 2026
Review due:	1st April 2027

1. Statement of Intent

This policy outlines the ATC Trust's approach to the use of restrictive interventions, reasonable force, and seclusion. In alignment with the April 2026 Department for Education (DfE) guidance, **our core aim is to proactively minimise the need for restrictive interventions through early support, prevention, and de-escalation**. While the use of force or seclusion can have a significant impact on all involved, we recognise that there are times when it is lawful and necessary to keep individuals and the school community safe.

2. Legal Framework and Statutory Duties

This policy reflects the statutory guidance under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the new *Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025*. The 2026 guidance shifts from discretionary advice to imposing **new legal duties on schools to record and report incidents involving reasonable force, seclusion, and restraint**.

3. Terminology

- **Restrictive Intervention:** An umbrella term for physical and non-physical actions aimed at preventing, restricting, or subduing movement of a pupil's body.
- **Reasonable Force:** Physical restrictive interventions using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time.
- **Significant Incident:** An incident where force goes beyond appropriate everyday physical contact.
- **Restraint:** A non-disciplinary intervention immobilising a pupil or limiting movement, with or without physical contact (e.g., removing a walking aid).
- **Seclusion:** A non-disciplinary safety measure keeping a pupil confined to a safe place away from others, supervised at all times, and prevented from leaving.

4. Staff Powers and Acceptable Physical Contact

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

1. Causing injury to themselves or others.
2. Committing a criminal offence.
3. Damaging property.
4. Causing disorder among pupils.

The Trust expressly forbids a 'no contact' policy. All staff have a duty to use physical intervention if circumstances require it, and requests from parents or staff to opt out of this duty will not be granted. Everyday appropriate physical contact is permitted for (but not limited to); giving first aid, guiding or escorting pupils, comforting a distressed pupil, praising a pupil, or demonstrating techniques in PE/music.

5. Unacceptable Uses of Force and Prohibited Techniques

- **Force must never be used as a punishment.**
- Staff must avoid techniques that affect a pupil's airway, breathing, or circulation (e.g., covering the mouth/nose, or applying pressure to the neck/abdomen).

- **Staff should avoid holding pupils on the ground.** If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff must release their hold or reposition them into a standing/safer position as quickly as possible.

6. Safe Use of Seclusion

Seclusion is only to be used as a **safety measure to protect others from harm** during high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. It must never be implemented through the threat of punishment. The pupil **must be supervised at all times** and allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

7. Determining Necessity, Proportionality, and SEND Support

Before intervening, staff must consider:

- **Necessity:** Are there more effective, less restrictive de-escalation strategies available?
- **Proportionality:** Use the least amount of force for the shortest time required. If the intervention escalates the situation, staff must reconsider their approach.
- **Welfare & SEND:** Staff must account for the pupil's SEND status, medical conditions, and past trauma (in line with the Equality Act 2010).

For pupils with SEND, schools should seek to understand triggers and co-produce **Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs)** with parents. These plans should detail parameters for increased physical contact, though staff can still intervene appropriately regardless of whether a plan is in place.

8. Post-Incident Support

Following an incident, the pupil and staff should receive a medical assessment if necessary. Schools must hold a **follow-up conversation (debrief)** to facilitate learning, reflection, and the repair of relationships. This should ideally be facilitated by an impartial staff member not involved in the incident.

9. Mandatory Recording Procedures

The Trust has a **strict legal duty** to record every significant incident of force, seclusion, and restraint.

- **Procedure:** Incidents should be logged electronically on Arbor (linked to the behaviour incident) and via the Trust's Google Form for the use of force:
 - **Google form for logging the use of force:** <https://forms.gle/Y4hQvUd7ikGfp2ir5>
- **Timeframe:** Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable, with staff endeavouring to complete records **no later than the same day**.
- **Minimum Data Required:** Names of those involved, SEN status, time/date/location/duration, brief account of the incident and triggers, de-escalation strategies used, why force was necessary, type/degree of force, injuries, and post-incident support.

10. Mandatory Reporting to Parents

Schools have a statutory duty to inform parents of each significant use of force, seclusion, or restraint **as soon as practicable, ideally the same day**.

- **Procedure:** Notification must be provided in writing (e.g., via Arbor's messaging system or email). It is also good practice to notify parents directly by phone or in person, and invite them for a follow-up discussion to review Behaviour Support Plans.

- **Minimum Information Provided:** Time/date/location/duration, why it was necessary, type/degree of force, and any physical injuries.
- **Exceptions:** Staff do not report to a parent if the pupil is aged 20 or over, or if reporting would likely result in serious harm to the pupil (in which case, report to the Local Authority or an alternative parent).

11. Leadership, Governance, and Complaints

Governing bodies and Trust leaders will regularly interrogate data on restrictive interventions (collated via Arbor). This oversight ensures the identification of disproportionate impacts on pupils with SEND or protected characteristics, and informs future staff training and policy adjustments.

Any complaints regarding restrictive interventions will be managed via the standard school complaints procedure. Allegations of inappropriate force against staff will be handled under *Keeping Children Safe in Education* procedures. Employers must also ensure risk assessments are in place to guarantee the health and safety of staff who regularly work where force may be required.