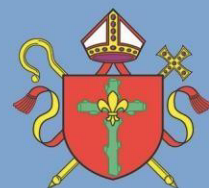




**OUR LADY
OF LOURDES**

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Restrictive Interventions Policy 2026 - 2027



Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Statement:

We are a partnership of Catholic schools.

Our aim is to provide the very best Catholic education for all in our community and so improve life chances through spiritual, academic and social development.

By placing the person and teachings of Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do, we will:

- Follow the example of Our Lady of Lourdes by nurturing everyone in a spirit of compassion, service and healing
- Work together so that we can all achieve our full potential, deepen our faith and realise our God-given talents
- Make the world a better place, especially for the most vulnerable in our society, by doing ***‘little things with great love’*** St Thérèse of Lisieux

Joshua 1:9-10 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Title of policy:	Restrictive Interventions Policy 2026		
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Reviewer:	Sue Dryden - Trust Safeguarding Foundation Director		
Normal review frequency:	Annual review		
Version number:	2		
Committee approval date:	08 July 2026		
Trust Board approval date:	16 July 2026		
Date of next review:	01 May 2027		
Document review and editorial updates:			
Version control	Date	Reason for Revision	Key revisions included
2	05/05/2026	DFE updates	• Statutory Alignment • Family Help Approach • Safeguarding Culture and Inclusion • Contextual and Emerging Risks • Vulnerable Groups • Multi-Agency Working • Staff Training and Practice

This policy has been revised in accordance with the Department for Education guidance Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from April 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

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1. DfE Advice

This policy reflects the Department for Education guidance:

- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

The Trust recognises that restrictive intervention must always be:

- lawful
- necessary
- proportionate
- reasonable
- and used for the shortest time possible
- The welfare, dignity and safety of the child remain central to all decision-making.

This policy applies whenever a school has responsibility for pupils, including while on the school site, during educational visits, off-site activities, residential visits, sporting events, alternative provision and any other school-organised or supervised activity.

2. What is reasonable Force?

Within the Department for Education guidance Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (effective from April 2026), the term “reasonable force” covers a broad range of approaches involving physical contact with pupils where it is necessary, proportionate and lawful to do so.

Reasonable force may be used to:

- prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others;
- prevent serious damage to property;
- prevent behaviour seriously prejudicing good order and safety;
- remove a pupil from a situation of significant risk;
- support a pupil to regain safety during a crisis situation.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain:
- Control may involve passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils, guiding a pupil away from danger, or blocking a pupil’s path to prevent harm.
- Restraint means holding back physically or limiting movement where there is an immediate risk of harm and less restrictive approaches have not been successful.

“Reasonable” means using:

- the minimum force necessary;
- for the shortest amount of time possible;
- in a way that is proportionate to the risk presented.

Restrictive intervention must always:

- preserve the dignity and safety of the child;
- be child-centered and trauma-informed;

- avoid pain, humiliation or unnecessary distress;
- stop as soon as the risk reduces.

School staff should always seek to avoid the use of force wherever possible through de-escalation, co-regulation and preventative strategies.

Staff should avoid any intervention which may:

- restrict breathing;
- cause pain;
- obstruct communication;
- place pressure on the neck, chest, abdomen or joints;
- deliberately humiliate or punish a child.

The Trust recognises that restrictive intervention may be distressing for children and adults. Following any use of reasonable force, appropriate support, reflection and review will take place to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

3. Definition of Restrictive Intervention

Restrictive intervention is a supportive, reasonable and proportionate response intended to prevent harm and maintain safety. It includes a range of supportive strategies, including de-escalation, diversion, guidance, environmental adaptation and, where absolutely necessary, restrictive physical intervention.

Restrictive intervention may also include seclusion, but only where this is used as a safety measure to prevent immediate harm to the pupil or others. Seclusion must never be used as a disciplinary sanction or behaviour management strategy and must cease as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

Supportive strategies such as independent study, reflection, removal from a classroom or behaviour support undertaken in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy are not considered restrictive interventions solely because they take place away from the classroom. However, where a pupil is prevented from leaving for safety reasons, this may constitute seclusion and must be managed in accordance with this policy.

Restrictive intervention must only ever be used:

- to prevent harm to the child or others;
- to prevent serious damage to property; or
- where there is a serious risk to good order and safety.

4. General Policy Aims

The Trust is committed to:

- promoting relational, trauma-informed and child-centred practice
- reducing the need for restrictive intervention
- understanding behaviour as communication
- ensuring restrictive practices are reduced wherever possible

5. Specific Aims of the Restrictive Intervention Policy

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of restrictive intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- Ensure that restrictive intervention is used only as a last resort
 - Reduce the frequency and duration of restrictive interventions
 - Promote approaches based on de-escalation, regulation and relationship
 - Ensure all incidents are reviewed for learning and safeguarding implications
 - Protect children's dignity, rights and wellbeing at all times

6. Why Use Restrictive Intervention?

Restrictive intervention should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm themselves or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which restrictive intervention would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the circumstances described in this policy.

Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Failure to take appropriate action to prevent harm to a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another child, in certain circumstances, may lead to an accusation of negligence.

At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

The Trust recognises that behaviour which challenges may indicate:

- unmet communication needs
- trauma or adverse childhood experiences
- sensory needs
- mental health difficulties
- neurodivergence
- safeguarding concerns
- distress or dysregulation

Responses should therefore prioritise understanding, regulation and support before considering restrictive intervention.

7. Alternative Strategies

Each academy within Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT is committed to creating a calm, safe and inclusive environment that minimises the likelihood of situations arising where restrictive intervention may be required. Through positive relationships, a consistent behaviour culture, high-quality pastoral support and a curriculum that promotes respect, dignity and emotional wellbeing, our schools seek to prevent incidents from escalating. Restrictive intervention will only ever be used as a last resort where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so. Staff are expected to use skilled de-escalation, co-regulation and preventative strategies wherever possible to restore safety without the need for physical intervention. Schools will prioritise preventative and proactive approaches, including:

- co-regulation
- relational practice
- predictable routines
- sensory support
- emotional regulation strategies
- safe spaces
- restorative approaches
- environmental adaptation

8. Prevention and use of de-escalation strategies

It is recognised that extreme behaviours such as those requiring restrictive intervention can indicate communication of an unmet need from the child. We recognise that there may also be safeguarding, trauma, medical or special educational needs which may lead to children behaving in manners which might require restrictive intervention.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive or dysregulated way that may require the use of restrictive intervention, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises.

Such planning will address:

- Preventative strategies: training on de-escalation strategies, understanding specific special educational needs, development of risk assessments around the pupil/student.
- Management of the pupil/student (e.g. identification of need, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds, as directed through training, to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take.
- Briefing of staff to ensure they understand pupils'/students' needs and what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

Guidance outlined in this plan will be followed along with liaison with external agencies to ensure that the best support for the pupil/student is implemented.

Staff must make every reasonable effort to avoid the use of restrictive intervention through skilled de-escalation and preventative practice.

De-escalation may include:

- verbal reassurance
- reducing demands
- offering choices
- strategic withdrawal
- distraction or diversion

- changing the environment
- use of trusted adults

9. Deciding Whether to Use Restrictive Intervention

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, school staff are empowered to use reasonable force where it is necessary and proportionate to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others;
- committing an offence;
- causing serious damage to property;
- seriously prejudicing the maintenance of good order, discipline or safety within the school.

The Trust recognises that the use of restrictive intervention is a serious step and should only be used:

- where there is a genuine and immediate risk of harm;
- after preventative and de-escalation strategies have been considered or attempted where appropriate;
- when less restrictive options are unlikely to be effective.

All staff must use professional judgement when deciding whether restrictive intervention is necessary. Decisions should be based on a dynamic assessment of risk and the specific circumstances at the time.

In considering whether the use of reasonable force is appropriate, staff should take account of:

- the seriousness and immediacy of the risk;
- the likely consequences of not intervening;
- whether the intervention is proportionate to the risk presented;
- the age, size, understanding and developmental stage of the pupil;
- any known SEND, communication, medical, sensory or mental health needs;
- any known trauma, adverse childhood experiences or safeguarding concerns;
- whether less restrictive approaches remain viable.

Staff should recognise that behaviour which challenges may communicate distress, dysregulation, fear, unmet need or trauma. Responses should therefore remain calm, child-centred and focused on restoring safety.

Restrictive intervention must never be used:

- as a punishment;
- to secure compliance where there is no risk of harm;
- because of insufficient staffing or resources;
- in response to verbal refusal alone.

Staff should also recognise that, in some situations involving significant risk, the safest response may be to:

- withdraw;
- seek additional support;
- contact senior leaders;
- request emergency services assistance where necessary.

Schools will ensure staff are informed of any known risks relating to individual pupils through appropriate risk assessments, EHCPs, behaviour support plans, pupil passports, communication plans, medical plans and safeguarding information.

10. Use of Restrictive Intervention

Restrictive intervention should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment. A calm approach is needed, and the adult should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration or to punish the pupil. Intervention should be proportionate to risk and for the minimum amount of time required to establish safety.

Where appropriate, staff must first consider and implement alternative strategies. Restrictive intervention should only be used as a last resort when other approaches are ineffective or inappropriate because of the immediate level of risk.

Restrictive intervention must:

- use the minimum force necessary
- continue for the shortest possible time
- preserve the dignity and safety of the child
- stop immediately when the risk reduces

Staff must avoid:

- prone restraint
- interventions that restrict breathing
- pain-inducing techniques
- restriction of communication
- any intervention that may cause humiliation or psychological harm

11. Using Reasonable Force

When using reasonable force, members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome.

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme circumstance where there was no viable alternative and pupils/students, or staff are in danger without this. Staff should also avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance, unless there is an emergency situation.

Ideally, prior to intervening physically, staff will have been trained in Physical Intervention and Coping with Risky Behaviours (formerly MAPA), Team Teach or another accredited form of training and follow the guidance issued. Only in emergency situations should staff intervene physically who have not been trained.

The Trust recognises that some children may be more vulnerable to restrictive intervention due to SEND, disability, trauma, medical need or communication difficulty.

Staff must take account of:

- equality duties
- reasonable adjustments
- individual risk assessments
- known triggers and protective factors

Planned restrictive physical interventions should only be undertaken by staff who have received appropriate accredited training. However, any member of staff may use reasonable force in an emergency where immediate action is necessary to prevent harm, provided the intervention is lawful, reasonable and proportionate.

12. Actions After an Incident

Where any restrictive intervention gives rise to a safeguarding concern, allegation against a member of staff, concern about adult conduct or low-level concern, this must be reported immediately to the Headteacher. The concern will be managed in accordance with the Trust Safeguarding Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy, Allegations Against Staff procedures and, where appropriate, referred to the LADO and Trust Safeguarding Team.

Restrictive intervention often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil/student. **A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural provision map, which may involve external agency support or other strategies agreed by the SENCO and parents/carers.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately. (See Appendix 1) All sections of this report should be completed. The report should be uploaded to CPOMS.

A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it. **This conversation must be followed up in writing.**

It is recognised that the need to use restrictive intervention is distressing for both the pupil/student concerned and staff involved. Following the use of restrictive intervention, staff and pupils will be supported and the immediate physical and well-being needs of all parties will be met. Staff will work to ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

Following any restrictive intervention:

- the child's physical and emotional wellbeing must be checked
- staff wellbeing and support must also be considered
- the child must be given an opportunity to share their views
- parents/carers must be informed as soon as reasonably possible, in writing

All incidents must be reviewed to identify:

- lessons learned
- safeguarding concerns
- triggers or patterns
- opportunities to reduce future restrictive intervention

13. Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil/student is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of restrictive intervention, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises through the development of a personal risk assessment. Such planning will address:

- Preventative strategies: use of de-escalation strategies, identifying potential triggers for dysregulation, understanding specific special educational needs
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take.
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance).
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

Individual risk assessments and support plans should:

- identify known triggers
- include preventative and de-escalation strategies
- reflect the child's voice wherever possible
- involve parents/carers and relevant professionals
- be reviewed regularly following incidents

Risk assessments for individuals will be shared with parents/carers and all relevant adults involved in working directly with the pupil/student.

14. Complaints

A clear restrictive intervention policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should prevent the need complaints from parents. However, it is unlikely to prevent all complaints and a dispute about the use of restrictive intervention by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under the complaints policy and procedures. The complaints policy is available to all staff, pupils, parents and governors on the school website and upon request from the school.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust is committed to ensuring that restrictive intervention is used lawfully, safely, proportionately and only as a last resort. The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through regular review of incidents, safeguarding practice and staff training.

The Headteacher will ensure that every incident involving restrictive intervention is reviewed to:

- ensure the intervention was necessary, reasonable and proportionate
- identify any safeguarding concerns, low-level concerns or concerns about adult conduct
- consider whether further support, training or professional reflection is required
- review whether individual risk assessments, behaviour support plans, EHCPs, pupil passports,

- communication plans or medical plans require updating
- identify opportunities to reduce the likelihood of future restrictive interventions.

The Trust recognises that repeated or disproportionate use of restrictive intervention may indicate that additional support or alternative strategies are required. Schools should therefore monitor patterns and trends, including where appropriate:

- repeat incidents involving individual pupils
- frequency, duration and location of incidents
- time of day or other recurring triggers
- involvement of pupils with SEND, medical needs or other identified vulnerabilities
- any disproportionality relating to disadvantaged pupils or those with protected characteristics
- injuries to pupils or staff
- the effectiveness of de-escalation strategies
- staff training needs
- lessons learned to inform future practice.

The Trust Safeguarding Team may undertake periodic review of restrictive intervention practice across academies to identify emerging themes, promote consistency, share effective practice and provide additional support where required.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance or following significant incidents or learning identified through safeguarding reviews.

Appendix 1: Record of the use of Restrictive Intervention.

Record of the use of Restrictive Intervention:

Date of Incident: Time of Incident: Place of incident:

Pupil Name: DOB:

Member(s) of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to restrictive
intervention: Pupil witnesses to
restrictive intervention:

Outline of events leading to restrictive intervention:

Outline of de-escalation strategies implemented prior to restrictive intervention:

Outline of incident of restrictive intervention (including method used, and duration);

Outcome of restrictive intervention:

Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment:

Date/time parent/carer informed of incident:

Informed by whom:

Confirmed in writing:

Outline of parent/carer response:

Signatures of staff completing report:

Name:..... Signed:..... Name:.....
Signed:.....

Name:..... Signed:.....

Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:

Reflection and learning points:

Appendix 2: Letter to Parents

[School Name]
[School Address]
[Contact Details]

Date: [Insert date]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

Re: Notification of Restrictive Intervention involving [Child's Name]

I am writing to inform you that a restrictive intervention was used in relation to [Child's Name] on [date] at approximately [time].

Summary of the incident:

[Provide a brief, factual description of what happened leading up to the intervention.]

Reason for the intervention:

[Explain why the intervention was necessary, e.g., to prevent harm to the pupil or others.]

Type of intervention used:

[Briefly describe the intervention in plain language.]

Duration:

[Approximate length of time the intervention was used.]

Outcome:

[Explain how the situation was resolved and the child's condition afterwards.]

Support provided following the incident:

[Outline any support given to the pupil, e.g., debrief, first aid, emotional support.]

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils, and restrictive interventions are only used when absolutely necessary and in line with our policies.

We will review this incident to help prevent similar situations in the future and to support [Child's Name] effectively.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact [name/role] on [contact details].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Role]

[School Name]