

An Daras Multi Academy Trust

Restrictive Interventions Policy

The An Daras Multi Academy Trust (ADMAT) Company
An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee
Company Number/08156955

Status: Approved	
Recommended	
Statutory	Yes
Version	V2.0
Adopted v1.0	Summer 2016
Review v1.0	23 September 2026
Next Review	September 2029
Advisory Committee	ADMAT LSS
Linked Documents and Policies	DFE Use of Reasonable Force and other Restrictive Interventions (April 2026) ADMAT Behaviour Policy ADMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy ADMAT Intimate Care policy ADMAT Safe Touch policy ADMAT Intimate Care Policy ADMAT Inclusion Policy

Positive Handling Strategies for Pupils with Emotional or Behavioural Difficulties

This policy sets out the framework for the use of reasonable force or positive handling, but it must be clearly understood that this should always be set within the school's overall behaviour management framework and is only used as a last resort underpinned by sound risk assessment. Providing successful inclusion may necessitate physical restraint but only as one of the strategies available for the management of challenging behaviour. Only in the event of failure of clearly defined protocols to bring control to the situation, or imminent danger to persons, should positive handling be considered.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the DFE 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance' April 2026. The principal legislation to which this guidance relates are:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Equality Act 2010

These publications establish the power of teachers and other staff to use reasonable force if required. This applies to all occasions when that member of staff is in charge of children both on and off school premises. There is no legal definition of reasonable force; this would depend on the individual circumstances of each case. Only a court may judge what is reasonable in terms of the amount of force used in physical handling and obviously does so retrospectively.

The use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of restrictive interventions will be lawful and necessary; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe. This document aims to help schools proactively minimise the need to use restrictive interventions through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies, and when necessary, to help school staff feel more confident in knowing how to use these interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully.

The document has been updated to:

- reflect new statutory guidance about recording and reporting the use of force effective from April 2026
- provide detail about the new legal duty to record and report the use of seclusion effective from April 2026
- provide additional clarification on the use of reasonable force to help school staff use this power safely and appropriately
- provide advice on the use of seclusion
- provide advice on how schools can minimise the need to use restrictive interventions
- provide specific support for staff who work with pupils with special educational needs and

disabilities (SEND)

- make clearer the responsibilities of school staff, governing bodies and proprietors

Reasonable force would include those methods taught and practised in training (for example, TEAM TEACH). The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. In all cases, the person exercising the restraint must be authorised by the Head of School or Head Teacher and have received appropriate approved training.

Terminology

The definition of restraint is **the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering the child**. The use of restraint requires skill, judgement and knowledge of non-harmful methods of control. For clarity, this guidance will use the following definitions:

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.

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.⁴ Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

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.

Seclusion: Seclusion - a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving - should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.

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.

Rationale

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

Reasonable force would not include any of the following:

- holding a child around the neck, collar or other way that may restrict breathing;
- slapping, punching, kicking or tripping a child. Holding or pulling a child by their hair or ear;
- twisting or forcing limbs against joints;
- indecently touching or holding;
- holding a child face down on the ground;

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen.

The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

The use of physical restraint must be placed within the context of:

- identification of potential pupils by a staff group through risk assessment;
- appropriate planning for possibility of restraint, via a care plan;
- appropriate training for members of staff likely to be involved;
- all restraint or handling of a young person is in line with the above mentioned documents / guidelines; and
- the application of this Policy is in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Safe Touch and Health and Safety Policies.

Determining when use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions, and they should know this option may be available to them. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.

- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.¹⁴

In the event of restraint becoming necessary, before touching the child, the member of staff should advise the child calmly and repeatedly about what they are going to do and why, and how the child might change his/her behaviour, in order that the restraint would become unnecessary. Wherever possible, this member of staff should have undertaken the TEAM TEACH training.

Any other children and adults present should also be warned.

Note: this warning must not comprise of any threat of unlawful attack.

A second adult should be called to reduce the risk of the member of staff or child suffering bodily harm and as a witness if allegations of assault are made later by the child. Wherever possible, this member of staff should also have undertaken the TEAM TEACH training.

Types of restraint which may be appropriate following the TEAM TEACH training;

- any holding tactic in which a young child is restrained without injury until the young child calms down;
- physical contact with a young person designed to control the young person's movements, which pose a danger (e.g. holding by the arms against the side of the body). Standing by the side of the young person is likely to minimise the risk to adult and young person;
- the holding of a young person's arms or legs to prevent/restrict striking/kicking;
- use of sufficient physical force – without causing injury – to remove a weapon/dangerous object from a young person's grasp (if foreseeable this requires specialised training); and
- physically preventing a young person from exposing themselves to possible danger by leaving the premises.

Pupils should not be placed on the floor. Specialist accredited training is necessary for this procedure (TEAM TEACH).

If restraint is required for an extended period (for example, more than five minutes), a senior member of staff must monitor the situation closely with a view to safeguarding the child and the staff concerned. After the incident, it is vital that a full report is completed by all concerned in the school TEAM TEACH recording book, this is kept in the locked filing cabinet in the Main Office). The agreed de-briefing procedures will be adhered to in order to support the child, the members of staff involved, any other children involved and the parents of any

children involved.

The incident forms will be completed within 24 hours of the event of any incident requiring physical restraint. All staff and children involved will undertake a de-briefing meeting with the Head of School/Head Teacher within 24 hours. They will be asked to complete witness statements. These will be completed separately avoiding collusion and using the exact language used by both adults and children involved. The Head of School/Head Teacher will also meet with the parents/guardians or carers as soon after the incident as possible.

Copies of the TEAM TEACH form will be logged onto the “My Concern” or “CPOMS” database following the incident and sent to all concerned in the incident including parents if deemed appropriate. If an injury has been incurred to anyone involved, the usual procedures regarding this will be followed.

If physical restraint is necessary to manage the behaviour of an individual, it would be appropriate to instigate a **Positive Support Plan** (PSP) during de-briefing meetings, in the event of physical restraint being necessary on more than one occasion, it would be appropriate to include detailed **positive handling advice** in the PSP. It is also necessary to compile an **individual risk assessment** in discussion with all staff, parents and any relevant outside agencies. In the case of a child with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), there will be opportunities to address issues of challenging behaviour at annual review meetings and an interim review organised in exceptional circumstances.

Looked After Children/Child in Care will have a **Personal Education Plan** (PEP) which features planning and strategies to address challenging behaviour, where appropriate.

The Head of School Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Local Governors need to ensure that all authorised teachers and other authorised staff are appropriately trained and updated by approved trainers and accept the responsibility of their role by being aware of the guidelines in this policy.

Recording and reporting duties

Recording the use of force (statutory guidance)

Governing bodies of maintained schools and the proprietors of other schools must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each seclusion or restraint incident as part of the school’s duty under the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025.

In circumstances where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, schools only need to follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force incidents under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as outlined above. The same information does not need to be reported twice. However, if a restraint incident does not constitute a significant incident of use of force, for example, the removal of a walking aid, this must be reported under the procedures outlined in this section.

Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by

the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. The requirement to record applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Staff should record the following details 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.

Staff should also record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

It is a statutory expectation that the school report each significant use of force to the parents of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

Exceptions to the requirement to report are where:

- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

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. This information should be communicated to the 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.

Our Trust expects that all incidents of seclusion to be recorded and reported to parents.

The Head of School/Head Teacher, Leadership Team and Local Governors need to ensure that, as far as possible preparation and planning has taken place to identify areas where physical restraint might be used. However, the school may also have to intervene in circumstances where preparation and planning have not been possible. When physical restraint takes place, the school will always endeavour to protect children and adults from physical harm however, there may be cases in which some discomfort and/or bruising may occur, to both staff and children, as a result of the restraint taking place.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy, Positive Handling Policy, Intimate Care Policies and Equality Policies.

Policy Principles

The An Daras Trust believes that to deny pupils all physical contact with adults is to deny a basic human need and an expression of care and concern for all pupils. Physical contact may be appropriate:

- when a pupil needs to get comfort or reassurance, e.g. following an accident or personal crisis;
- when a pupil needs encouragement to attempt a new challenge, e.g. to climb on a piece of apparatus; and
- when there is a need to take urgent action to avoid an incident or injury.

However, physical contact must be appropriate for the age, understanding and gender of the child and must never threaten or be sexually inappropriate.

Staff should aim to be sensitive to:

- cultural backgrounds;
- the need to maintain pupils' personal space; and
- be aware of pupils who have been sexually abused and will
- either seek physical contact or positively avoid it.

Staff should take extreme care when offering physical comfort to pupils, particularly as they approach puberty, as physical contact may be misconstrued causing distress to all concerned.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure.

If, after receiving the report of an incident where physical intervention has occurred, the Head of School/Head Teacher considers the school's guidelines have been seriously

breached and that further investigation is warranted, the incident should not be pursued, but action in accordance with Child Protection procedures must be taken. In these circumstances, any school internal investigation must cease and no further statements should be taken. If the school's guidelines have been breached, the Head of School/Head Teacher will contact the Chief Executive Officer and advise the staff member to consult his/her professional association.