Newhouse Academy

Hollingworth Learning Trust

A Hollingworth Learning Trust Academy

Use of Restrictive Interventions Policy (including reasonable force and seclusion) 2026 to 2027

This is a new policy that has been developed following the Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools Guidance for schools in England, April 2026.

Statutory or non-statutory:	It is not statutory to have a stand-alone policy, however, as this links closely to the academy's Behaviour Policy, it will be treated as such.
Date created:	1st June 2026
Review schedule:	Annually
Last reviewed:	Summer 2026
Version number:	1
Policy responsibility:	Matt Aspden, Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral
Reviewing body:	Full Governing Board or Standards Committee
Last ratified:	Ratified at a meeting of the Standards Committee on 30th June 2026
Date of next review:	Summer 2027

Contents

1. Aims and scope

2. Legislation and guidance

3. Definitions

4. Roles and responsibilities

5. Acceptable uses of force

6. Unacceptable uses of force

7. Using reasonable force to search students

8. Prevention and de-escalation strategies

9. Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

10. Considerations for students with SEND

11. Training and risk assessments

12. Recording and reporting arrangements

13. Complaints and allegations

14. Monitoring and review

15. Links with other policies

1. Aims and scope

At Newhouse Academy we strive to create a safe, secure and supportive environment for all our students and staff.

There are times when the use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, is lawful and necessary to keep people safe. However, we understand that the use of restrictive interventions can have a significant impact on students, staff and parents/carers. In our academy, they are only ever considered as a last resort, once all other prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted.

This policy aims to:

- Minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, through early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Help academy staff feel confident in knowing how to use restrictive interventions safely, appropriately and lawfully, when they are necessary
- Clearly set out the steps for recording and reporting incidents of reasonable force, seclusion and restraint
- Protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all students and staff, and help create a positive and safe place for everyone at our academy.

2. Legislation and guidance

- This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools. It also meets the requirements of:
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Section 550ZA and section 550ZB of the Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Paragraph 16A of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (inserted by The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025)
- This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

The terms we use in this policy are defined as follows. These definitions are based on the Department for Education's guidance on restrictive interventions (linked to in section 2 of this policy).

Restrictive interventions are used to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain students in different ways.

Examples of restrictive interventions could include:

- Supervised seclusion of a student in an area away from others, where the student is prevented from leaving for their own safety and/or the safety of others
- Passive physical contact, such as a staff member blocking a student's path if they're running towards danger (like a busy road), or staff standing between students to prevent a fight

Reasonable force refers to the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to restrain children, using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Examples of the use of reasonable force could include:

- A staff member guiding a student to safety by the arm
- Staff breaking up a fight between students
- A staff member restraining a student to prevent injury to the student, or others, for example

Restraint is a form of non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a student or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact.

Examples could include:

- A staff member holding a student's arms to their sides when the student is attempting to harm themselves or others

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a student confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that student and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the student aware that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a student into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

See section 3.2 of this policy for more information on seclusion.

A significant incident is any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between a member of staff and a student. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

See section 3.1 of this policy for more information on appropriate physical contact.

3.1 Appropriate physical contact with students

Our academy does not have a 'no contact' policy. We do not grant any requests by parents/carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with students which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force or other restrictive interventions.

Examples include:

- Providing first aid to a student

- Guiding or escorting a student through the academy building
- Comforting a student who is upset
- Offering congratulations or praise, such as with a pat on the back or handshake
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- When demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, staff should use their professional judgement, and have regard to:

- Our academy's child protection and safeguarding policy
- The specific circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- Factors including, but not limited to:

    a) The student's age
    b) Any known vulnerabilities, including whether the student has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
    c) Whether any alternative strategies that don't involve physical contact can be used

3.2 Seclusion

As defined above, seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention that keeps a student confined to a place away from others and prevents them from leaving, for the safety of that student and/or others. This could be through physical obstruction or by making the student aware that they will be punished if they leave. For example, putting a student into a 'holding' room until they calm down is a form of seclusion.

We only use seclusion as a safety measure when a student is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. Seclusion is not used as a threat or punishment. Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. Please see our behaviour policy for information on our response to misbehaviour.

During seclusion:
The student will be secluded in a safe place that does not feel threatening or intimidating to them. At Newhouse Academy, this could be a classroom, office or a holding space such as our Isolation Room or Aspire Centre.

The student will be supervised at all times, by at least 1 member of staff.

As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the student will be allowed to leave.

Any incident involving the use of seclusion will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in section 12 of this policy.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board
The governing board is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving this policy
- Ensuring that a procedure is in place for recording and reporting each:
- Significant incident involving force
- Seclusion incident
- Restraint incident

- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the procedures for recording and reporting the use of force, seclusion and restraint are followed
- Regularly reviewing and interrogating data on the use of restrictive interventions in our academy
- Supporting and challenging academy leaders to identify where changes may be needed to practice. For example:

    a) If approaches have been used for some time but haven't been effective
    b) If there is any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions, including in relation to students who share protected characteristics or have SEND or other types of vulnerabilities

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall implementation and oversight of this policy
- Making sure that appropriate and high-quality training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions is provided for staff who need it, based on our academy's individual context and needs
- Ensuring adequate staffing levels to support positive behaviour management
- Monitoring incidents involving restrictive interventions, including regular review of incidents to refine and improve processes
- Ensuring compliance with recording and reporting requirements
- Authorising staff to search a student or their belongings if they have good reason to think the student has a prohibited or banned item
- Following the procedures set out in our complaints policy to deal with any complaint about the use of restrictive interventions
- Following the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education if an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive intervention is made against a member of staff

4.3 All staff

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Making sure they have read and understood the principles of this policy and any other linked policies
- Using de-escalation techniques and positive behaviour management strategies to try to minimise and prevent the need for restrictive interventions
- Accurately recording every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force that they are involved in
- Reporting these incidents to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- Recording any injuries that occur as part of an incident involving restrictive intervention, and following our health and safety policy to ensure these are reported to the Health and Safety Executive where necessary
- Taking part in training on preventative strategies and the safe and lawful use of restrictive interventions, if relevant to their role (this may include additional training appropriate to their responsibilities)
- Engaging in follow-up conversation(s) to debrief and reflect on incidents involving restrictive intervention that they were involved in, to help us understand what happened and why

4.4 Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
The DSL is responsible for:

- Reporting every seclusion incident, restraint incident and significant incident involving force to each parent/carer of the student involved
- Making sure records are kept securely and in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures
- Contacting the local authority in cases where informing a student's parent/carer of the use of reasonable force, seclusion or restraint on their child would put that child at risk of significant harm (see sections 12.2 and 12.3 of this policy)

4.5 Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)
The SENCO is responsible for:

- Working with students, parents/carers and relevant academy staff to develop and review behaviour support plans and risk assessments for any students with SEND where it's been identified that there is an increased likelihood of the need to use restrictive interventions
- Ensuring staff are aware of individual students needs and associated behaviour support strategies
- Working with staff who know students well, to identify and manage risk (such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur)
- Working with students, parents/carers, staff and other relevant professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Advising on reasonable adjustments for any students with disabilities when considering prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Participating in the review of restrictive intervention incidents involving any student with SEND
- Providing advice and support on the application of this policy for students with SEND
- Contributing to staff training on SEND and behaviour management, including the use of restrictive interventions

5. Acceptable uses of force

All our academy staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain situations. Staff can use reasonable force to prevent or stop a student from:

- Hurting themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among students, in or out of lessons

While all staff have this power, some staff, especially those who work closely with students who might show challenging behaviour, are more likely to need to use it than others.

We will ensure staff are adequately trained and that risk assessments are carried out where necessary. See section 11 of this policy for information on training and risk assessments.

Any significant incident involving the use of force will be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures set out in section 12 of this policy.

6. Unacceptable uses of force

It is illegal to use force on a student for the purpose of punishment. We never use force as a sanction, threat or deterrent.

Our staff understand that any form of force or restraint carries a risk of physical and psychological harm, so we always avoid using these measures where possible.

The following uses of force are never acceptable:

- Staff using force for the purpose of punishment
- Staff restraining a student in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example by covering their nose and/or mouth or applying pressure to their neck or abdomen
- Staff using force on the ground. If a student is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their hold or move into a safer position as quickly as possible

Section 5 of this policy sets out the instances where staff may use reasonable force. Section 9 of this policy provides guidance for staff on what to consider before using it.

7. Using reasonable force to search students

The headteacher and any member of staff authorised by the headteacher have a statutory power to search a student or their belongings if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student may have a prohibited item (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance) or an item banned under our academy's rules.

They can use reasonable force to search for prohibited items (as listed in the DfE's searching, screening and confiscation guidance), such as knives, weapons, stolen items or illegal drugs. They cannot use reasonable force to search for items that are banned under our academy's rules only, such as mobile phones, earphones, smartwatches etc.

The decision to use reasonable force to carry out a search should be made carefully, on a case-by-case basis and taking into consideration the level of risk to students and staff. Please see our behaviour policy for more information on how we conduct searches.

8. Prevention and de-escalation strategies

Restrictive intervention is used only when necessary. We aim to minimise its use as much as possible, using both whole-academy and individual approaches.

Our whole-academy approach includes:

- Consideration of how our academy and classroom environment can support all students to achieve and thrive
- Sharing best practice for whole-class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation
- Development of working staff-student relationships and trust
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning

The individual approaches we use include:

- Working closely with parents/carers to support individual students
- Strategies to support individual students based on their identified needs, including:
- The development of behaviour support plans
- Strategies to help students calm down before their behaviour escalates
- Making 'reasonable adjustments' where a student has a disability, to help them participate in academy life as fully as possible

8.1 De-escalation when a situation arises

When a staff member is faced with a situation where a restrictive intervention may need to be used, they should consider using de-escalation techniques first, wherever possible. Techniques that could be used in these situations include:

- Having open body language and being aware of a student's personal space
- Taking a student away from an 'audience' – speaking to them on their own rather than in front of a group of other students or staff
- Using empathy – asking the student to help you understand their feelings
- Distraction techniques
- Offering a calm space for the student to go to so they can self-regulate
- Verbal warnings – calmly reminding the student of the consequences of their behaviour

9. Deciding when the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate

9.1 Necessity and proportionality

The decision on whether to use restrictive interventions is down to the professional judgment of the staff member and will always depend on the individual circumstances of each situation.

Staff should always consider whether there are other ways to manage the situation, such as the de-escalation techniques outlined in section 8.1 of this policy and/or seeking assistance from a colleague. However, there may be times when staff have no other choice but to use restrictive interventions, to reduce the risk of harm to the student and/or others.

When assessing whether a restrictive intervention is required, staff should always consider:

- **Is it necessary?**
  a) Are there other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage the situation?
  b) Is a restrictive intervention likely to successfully reduce the risks, or could its use escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself?

- **Is it proportionate?**
  a) Staff should use the least amount of force or the least restrictive intervention for the least amount of time required to reduce the risks
  b) If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy
  c) Staff should consider the individual circumstances of the student, such as their age, size and any medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities

9.2 Student and staff welfare

Student welfare
The most important consideration when using a restrictive intervention is the safety and wellbeing of the student involved, as well as the safety of other students and staff. Staff should always consider the potential impact on the student's welfare balanced against any actions taken. For example, staff should bear in mind that students who have experienced adverse life events, trauma or neglect, or who have diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, communication difficulties or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

If a restrictive intervention is needed, staff should always aim to maintain respect for a student's dignity. This includes consideration of the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.

Staff should, wherever possible, clearly and calmly communicate to the student what is happening, why, and what the student needs to do, including using verbal and non-verbal strategies where needed, and giving time for the student to process information and respond where appropriate.

Staff should seek to understand how the student is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Support following an incident
As soon as possible after any use of restrictive intervention, our academy will evaluate the incident to understand why restrictive intervention was used, the impact on students and staff, any patterns and trends, and how another incident could be avoided in the future.

Our academy will make sure each student and staff member involved get the right support, including a medical assessment and treatment if needed, and an opportunity to reflect on and talk through the incident.

This follow-up conversation(s) will be part of the overall debriefing process to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from all parties involved. Conversations should also aim to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue.

Wherever possible, this process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident. It may also include the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support. The academy will continue to monitor student and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed.

Depending on the circumstances, support may also be offered to those who witnessed the incident.

10. Considerations for students with SEND

We understand that students with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Students who have difficulty communicating verbally might show their needs and discomfort through their actions.

Our academy is committed to understanding what might trigger challenging behaviour in students with SEND, and to providing the right support and an inclusive environment.

We will carry out risk assessments for students with SEND, where we identify that there is an increased likelihood of needing to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. Our academy is aware of its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to avoid disadvantage and ensure they can take part in academy life as fully as possible.

We will utilise staff who know individual students well to help identify and manage risk, such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. We will also work with the student, their parents/carers and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

These strategies might include:

- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress to the student
- Staff members changing how they communicate with the student, such as being more mindful of body language, facial expressions and/or tone of voice
- Helping the student express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- Engaging the student in activities to help them regulate their emotions
- Distracting the student with familiar objects or activities to redirect their attention

Where appropriate, we will create individual behaviour support plans for students with SEND. The plan will be reviewed regularly, and following any significant incident, with the student and parents/carers to make sure it's still working well. The plan will:

Outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the academy environment which the student finds challenging

- Explain the best ways to communicate with the student
- In some cases, specify when increased physical contact with staff might be appropriate. These situations will be discussed with everyone involved and clearly written down in the plan

11. Training and risk assessments

Our academy will make sure that all staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in their safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

We also have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff. Therefore, we carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside students where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

12. Recording and reporting arrangements

We have a legal duty to record and report all:

- Significant incidents involving force (see section 3 of this policy for a definition of 'significant incident')
- Seclusion incidents

- Restraint incidents

12.1 Recording incidents
Our academy has a clear process in place for recording the incidents listed above. Incidents are reported to and recorded by the DSL.

Staff must record incidents in writing, as soon as possible after the event, and should endeavour to do this on the same day. Staff should do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a student's behaviour support plan.

For significant incidents involving force, we will record:

- The names of the student and staff members directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the student, including whether they have an identified special educational need or disability, and their SEN status code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A clear and brief description of what happened, including:

    a) What led up to the incident
    b) Any known or potential triggers for the behaviour
    c) Any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
    d) The type and degree of reasonable force used
    e) Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

- A brief explanation of why using force was assessed as necessary in that situation
- Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support

For seclusion incidents and restraint incidents, we will record**:**

- The names of the student and staff members directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the student, including whether they have an identified special educational need or disability, and their SEN status code
- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- Details of any support given after the incident, such as medical help or emotional support

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will record it in line with our procedure for recording significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be recorded twice.

Completed reports will be kept securely and retained in line with our data protection procedures.

12.2 Reporting incidents to parents/carers
When reporting an incident to parents/carers, we will take the following steps:

We will inform parents/carers about an incident as soon as we can after it happens and will endeavour to do this on the same day. We will do this even if the use of restrictive interventions is agreed as part of a student's behaviour support plan.

There may be exceptions to this, such as:

- If a member of staff thinks that telling the student's parents/carers would likely result in significant harm to that student. In these cases, we will report the incident to any parent(s)/carer(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority where the student ordinarily resides (see section 12.3 of this policy)

When we report significant incidents involving force to parents/carers, we will include the following details:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

Note: if a seclusion or restraint incident also constitutes a significant incident involving force, we will report it in line with our procedure for reporting significant incidents involving force. It does not need to be reported twice.

When reporting to parents/carers, we will have regard to data protection requirements when deciding what information to share. For example, we will not include any identifying details of any other student.

Following up with parents/carers after an incident
It is good practice to invite parents/carers to have a follow-up discussion about the incident, where appropriate. For example, the discussion might include:

- 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

12.3 Reporting incidents to the local authority

In cases where we have assessed that an incident needs to be reported to the local authority where the student ordinarily resides (as outlined in section 12.2), this report will include all the information that we would normally share with the student's parents/carers, as well as the reasons why we thought it was unsafe to tell the student's parents/carers directly.

In cases where a student has parents/carers and is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or is being accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, we will report the incident to the relevant local authority in addition to the parents/carers (unless we deem it unsafe to inform the parents/carers, as set out in section 12.2 of this policy).

13. Complaints and allegations

Any complaints about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled through our trust's complaints procedure, which you can find on the Newhouse Academy website.

We take any allegation of inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff very seriously. We will deal with allegations in line with the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14. Monitoring and review

As this policy is closely linked with the Behaviour policy and Safeguarding & Child Protection policy, it will be reviewed annually.

Following its review by the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team, it will be ratified at a meeting of either the Local Governing Board, or the Standards Committee.

15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour policy
- Suspensions and Exclusions policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Hollingworth Learning Trust Complaints procedure
- Health and safety policy
- SEND policy

Newhouse Academy's policies can be found at
https://newhouseacademy.co.uk/policies/