

Positive Handling

Use of reasonable force

Applies to: All BDMAT schools (19 settings), employees, volunteers, contractors, supply staff and trainees

Issued: May 2026

Next review due: Spring 2027



1. Aims

- To keep pupils and staff **safe**, minimising the need for restrictive interventions through strong relationships, prevention and de-escalation.
- To ensure any use of reasonable force or seclusion is **lawful, necessary, proportionate and time-limited**, and **never** used as punishment.
- To codify Trust-wide procedures for **recording and reporting** significant uses of force and all **seclusion/restraint** in line with new DfE/statutory duties applying from **1 April 2026**.
- To set out the **support, review and learning** that follow incidents, so practice continuously improves and relationships are repaired.

2. Scope & Principles

2. This policy applies across all 19 BDMAT schools. It sits within our behaviour and safeguarding framework and must be read alongside: Behaviour, Safeguarding/Child Protection (inc. KCSIE), SEND, Equality, Health & Safety, Exclusions, Searching/Screening/Confiscation, Data Protection, Complaints.

Core principles (Team Teach & DfE aligned):

- **Prevent-de-escalate-repair**: build relationships; reduce triggers; use calm, respectful communication; repair and reflect after incidents.
- **Last resort**: use restrictive interventions only when necessary to keep people safe (not as a response to non-harmful non-compliance).
- **Reasonable, proportionate, least-restrictive, time-limited** application of force where required.
- **No punishment**: force and seclusion must never be used as a sanction.
- **Record, report, learn** record significant uses of force and all seclusion/restraint promptly; inform parents as soon as practicable (endeavour same day); review and learn.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

- **Sections 93 & 93A, Education and Inspections Act 2006** (power to use reasonable force; duty to record/report significant incidents from April 2026).
- **Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025** (duty to record/report seclusion and restraint).
- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; Equality Act 2010; Human Rights Act 1998.**
- **DfE Guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)** — statutory elements on recording/reporting; advisory elements on practice.

4. Definitions (DfE 2026)

- **Restrictive intervention:** actions that prevent/restrict/subdue movement (includes physical and non-physical means).
- **Reasonable force:** no more force than necessary, for the least amount of time, in limited circumstances.
- **Significant incident:** any use of force beyond ordinary, appropriate contact (triggers reporting/recording duties).
- **Seclusion:** non-disciplinary confinement away from others where the pupil is **prevented from leaving**; safety-only measure, supervised, recorded and reported.

5. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force where necessary to prevent a pupil from **injuring themselves/others, committing an offence, damaging property, or causing serious disorder**.

Force **may** be used to search for **prohibited items** (not for items banned by school rules only).

Unacceptable uses include any use as punishment; techniques that compromise the **airway, breathing or circulation**; or prone/ground holds that create heightened risk (move to safer alternative swiftly if this occurs unintentionally).

No “no-contact” policy: schools should **not** adopt blanket no-contact rules; appropriate, non-restrictive contact (e.g., first aid, comforting, guiding) remains lawful and often necessary.

6. Seclusion

Seclusion is **not** a disciplinary sanction and must **only** be used as a **safety** measure during acute dysregulation to protect from harm; it must be **supervised**, used for the **shortest** time necessary, and recorded/reported in line with statutory duties.

7. SEND, Vulnerability and Equality

We recognise pupils with SEND or other vulnerabilities may be disproportionately affected. Leaders must ensure **proactive support**, environmental adjustments, and **co-produced behaviour support plans** with parents and relevant professionals, identifying triggers, de-escalation strategies, and any agreed parameters for increased physical contact. Risk assessments must be in place where there is identified increased likelihood of restrictive interventions.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board

- Approves this policy; ensures appropriate insurance/indemnity; scrutinises Trust-level data on restrictive interventions (inc. disproportionality by protected characteristics).

Executive Leadership

- Ensures implementation across all 19 schools: monitors compliance and improvement actions.

Headteachers

- Ensure dissemination/training; quality assure **risk assessments** and **behaviour support plans**; ensure compliant **recording and reporting** systems and timely parent notification (endeavour same day).

Team Teach Leads (Train-the-Trainers)

- **Natasha Johnson (Headteacher)** and **Susan Friend (Headteacher)** deliver accredited Team Teach training across BDMAT; ensure content reflects Team Teach principles and DfE guidance; maintain staff competence and refreshers in line with certification periods.
- The 'Team Teach Leads' train in line with the Headteacher's school risk assessments. It is at the Headteacher's discretion whether all or selected staff are trained within their school.

All staff and regular volunteers

- Use prevention and de-escalation; apply reasonable force/seclusion only where lawful and necessary; **record** and **report** incidents promptly; participate in post-incident debrief/learning.

Local Academy Board

- Monitor school-level data termly; ensure interventions are minimised and effective; identify trends and address any disproportionality.

9. Training

- Each school maintains a training matrix identifying roles likely to require restrictive intervention skills; training includes **prevention, de-escalation, legal thresholds, safe and least-restrictive holds, seclusion protocols, recording/reporting and post-incident learning**.
- Formal training provided by **Team Teach** via Trust Train-the-Trainers; refreshers scheduled in line with certification requirements and risk profile.
- Induction includes policy awareness for all staff and regular volunteers.

10. Deciding to Use a Restrictive Intervention (On-the-spot Judgement)

Staff must consider: **Necessity** (are there safer alternatives?), **Proportionality** (least force/least time), and the **pupil's welfare and characteristics** (age, size, SEND/medical factors, equality implications) before, during and after. If an intervention escalates risk, **change or cease** it. Communicate clearly and calmly throughout.

11. Recording and Reporting (Statutory from 1 April 2026)

Significant use of force (s.93A EIA 2006):

- Schools must have procedures to **record** each significant incident **as soon as practicable** (endeavour same day) by staff involved. Minimum details include who was involved; time/date/location/duration; antecedents and de-escalation attempted; type/degree of force; why necessary; injuries/adverse impacts; post-incident support.
- Schools must **report to parents** as soon as practicable (endeavour same day), with minimum details: time/date/location/duration; why necessary; type/degree of force; injuries (if any). Limited exceptions apply where reporting would be likely to result in **serious harm** to the pupil (alternative reporting route applies).

Recording should take place in a bound and numbered book or via CPOMS. Each school within the trust may choose to record in one of these ways for positive handling.

Seclusion & Restraint (No. 2) Regs 2025):

- Record **every** incident of seclusion or restraint (including non-physical restraint such as removal of a walking aid). Inform parents as soon as practicable (endeavour same day). Provide the prescribed information and copies in accordance with setting type.
- All recording should take place via CPOMs. This should be recorded under the **Seclusion** category.
- Where a restraint incident **also** constitutes a significant use of force, follow the **s.93A** reporting route (no duplicate report required).
- BDMAT schools will use the Trust's agreed incident recording system and templates to ensure consistency.

12. Post-Incident Support, Reflection and Learning

- Offer medical assessment/treatment for any injuries **as soon as possible** (pupil and staff). Consider RIDDOR/HSE reporting as appropriate.

- Facilitate a **debrief** with the pupil and staff member(s) involved (ideally by someone not involved in the hold), to understand what happened and how to reduce recurrence; agree any restorative actions.
- Update individual plans/risk assessments and adjust practice/training as needed.

13. Safeguarding, Complaints and Allegations

- Any concern about misuse of force/seclusion is addressed under the school's safeguarding and complaints procedures and, where relevant, **KCSIE** processes (including referral to the LADO and decisions regarding staff suspension).

14. Data, Monitoring and Governance

- Headteachers submit termly data to the Trust on restrictive interventions (trend analysis; context; actions taken). LAB **regularly review** data to identify improvements, staff development needs, effectiveness of support for individual pupils, and any **disproportionate impact** on pupils with protected characteristics or SEND.

15. Links to Other Policies

Behaviour; Child Protection & Safeguarding (incl. KCSIE); SEND; Equality; Health & Safety; Exclusions; Educational Visits; Searching, Screening & Confiscation; Data Protection; Complaints.

16. Policy Ownership and Review

Policy owner: **MAT Education Lead for Inclusion and SEND** with **Team Teach Leads (Natasha Johnson & Susan Friend)**. Reviewed **annually** (or sooner if guidance changes).

Appendices (Trust Templates)

1. **Significant Use of Force Record** (s.93A minimum dataset) — school version on Trust system.
2. **Parent Notification Template** (significant force) — endeavour same-day; exception wording included.
3. **Seclusion/Restraint Record & Parent Notification** (Regulations 2025 dataset).

4. **Pupil Behaviour Support Plan & Individual Risk Assessment** (inc. triggers, reasonable adjustments, agreed strategies, parameters for increased contact).
5. **Post-Incident Debrief & Restorative Conversation** (pupil & staff versions).

Notes on Team Teach Integration

- Team Teach's emphasis on **prevention, de-escalation, last resort, necessity, proportionality, least-intrusive holds, time limitation, and post-incident learning** underpins the Trust's approach and training content.
- Training and refreshers will be scheduled Trust-wide and adapted to school context and risk profile, led by the Trust Train-the-Trainers.



Appendix 1

Significant Use of Force Record (s.93A minimum dataset) — school version on Trust system.

The following must be recorded in the bound book or via CPOMS on the same day:

- Pupil name
- Date and time
- Location
- Staff involved
- Witnesses
- Any SEND needs
- Any antecedents /triggers identified
- De-escalation used
- Type/degree of force
- Time duration rough /close estimate
- Injuries/adverse impact if any
- Why force was necessary
- Reported to parents- date/time
- Post incident support- what this looked like for the pupil and staff members
- De brief – date/time, comments discussed

Appendix 2

Parent Notification Template (significant force) — endeavour same-day; exception wording included.

In addition to using the template below to notify parents/carers, it is expected that, following any significant use of force, staff make direct contact with parents/carers at the earliest appropriate opportunity. This should take place prior to issuing the written notification and should aim to inform them of the incident, provide appropriate reassurance, and offer support in line with the school's duty of care.

Subject: Important: Notification of Significant Use of Force

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to inform you that a **significant use of force** occurred today involving your child. In line with statutory guidance, we are notifying you as soon as practicable and providing the key details below.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Reason why force was necessary:

(e.g., to prevent injury to your child, another pupil, or a member of staff)

Type and degree of force used:

Duration of the intervention:

Any injuries or medical treatment required:

Staff member completing this notification:

If you would like to discuss the incident further or require additional information, please contact the school office to arrange a follow-up conversation.

Kind regards

[Name]

[Role]

[School]

Appendix 3

Seclusion/Restraint Record & Parent Notification (Regulations 2025 dataset).

The following must be recorded via CPOMS on the same day:

- Pupil name
- Date and time
- Location
- Duration
- Type of seclusion
- SEND needs
- Why seclusion was necessary
- Injuries
- Post incident support
- Parent informed- date/time
- Staff completing



Appendix 4

Pupil Behaviour Support Plan & Individual Risk Assessment (inc. triggers, reasonable adjustments, agreed strategies, parameters for increased contact).

Behaviour Support Plan

Pupil Profile- Name	
Strengths:	
Identified needs/SEND:	
Known triggers:	Early warning signs:
Preventative strategies:	De-escalation strategies:
Agreed approaches:	Increased physical contact parameters:

Individual Risk Assessment:

Risk description:	Likelihood	Severity	Risk reduction actions:



Appendix 5

Post-Incident Debrief & Restorative Conversation prompts

- Pupil View of Incident
- Staff View of Incident
- Triggers Identified
- What Helped?
- What Didn't Help?
- Repairing Relationships
- Next Steps
- Review Required?