



BATH & WELLS  
Multi Academy Trust

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

# Positive Handling & Restrictive Interventions policy



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## **Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust**

# **Trust Positive Handling & Restrictive Interventions Policy**

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<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>School Improvement Team</b>
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<b>Version 2 – Revision summary</b>	



## Context

The Bath & Wells Diocesan Academies Trust (the Trust) is a dynamic learning community. In order to ensure that the Trust is a safe, supportive environment where pupils and staff can learn and thrive, there needs to be clear procedures, structures, and expectations in place. Trust policies are a formal way of documenting the procedures and values of the Trust and are designed to provide an instant picture of the principles of the Trust. They form an important framework that will ensure consistency in applying the agreed values and principles across all settings.

This policy 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.

## Relevant legislation

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

## Scope

This policy relates to all staff, pupils, parents, carers and the Central Team. It sets out the principles and expectations of how Trustees wish pupils to be supported in each of the Trust's schools, including (where applicable) their nursery provision.

## Introduction

Behaviour is always a form of communication. Understanding that children communicate through their behaviour gives adults the opportunity to respond differently. Our Trust's approach to behaviour, safety and physical intervention is grounded in our shared vision:

***"To provide an excellent education for every child, enhanced by a distinctive Christian ethos within our Trust family."***

This commitment means every child is treated with dignity, compassion and respect at all times, including during moments of dysregulation or crisis. As our Education Strategy affirms:

***"Every child, regardless of background or ability, is seen, heard, valued, and empowered to flourish."***

These principles underpin our belief that when children feel safe, respected and understood, they are better able to regulate, relate and learn. They also reinforce our commitment that restrictive interventions must only ever be used as a last resort, for the shortest time possible, and always in ways that uphold safety, dignity and well-being.

Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust schools are committed to a positive behaviour culture that values relationships, consistency and emotional regulation. On rare occasions, circumstances may require some form of physical intervention. This policy ensures that all practice is aligned with the latest *DfE Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* guidance (effective April 2026).

### **Definitions and Principles**

- **Restrictive intervention** refers to any action or intervention, physical or non-physical, intended to prevent, restrict or subdue movement to maintain safety. For example, a pupil may not be allowed to use a particular area such as a corridor due to previous incidents or they may not be allowed to associate in break times with another pupil if their interactions have previously had negative consequences. The term “reasonable force” is now formally contained within this wider category.
- Interventions must always be:
  - **Necessary** to prevent harm
  - **Proportionate** to the level of risk
  - **Used for the minimum time possible**
  - **Never used as a punishment**

### Circumstances in which reasonable force might be used include the following:

- Where it is necessary for a pupil to be removed from the classroom following disruptive behaviour and they have refused the instruction to leave the classroom
- Where it is necessary to stop behaviour by a pupil that is disrupting a school event, trip or visit
- Where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom, where allowing them to leave would risk their safety
- Where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom, because allowing them to leave would lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others in the school
- Where it is necessary to stop a pupil from physically attacking another pupil or member of staff, or where it is necessary to break up a fight
- Where it is necessary to restrain a pupil who may harm themselves through physical outbursts.

*All staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, but trained staff (Team Teach) should lead whenever possible.*

### **Preventative and De-escalation Approaches**

Schools will minimise the need for restrictive intervention by:

- Recognising behaviour as communication
- Using early, relational support and co-regulation

- Developing personalised behaviour support plans where needed
- Understanding triggers, especially for pupils with SEND, including sensory overload or communication difficulties
- Creating predictable, safe environments

Prevention, emotional literacy and de-escalation remain central to safe practice. **Use of Restrictive Intervention (Including Reasonable Force)**

Restrictive intervention may be used only when no safe alternative exists, and only to:

1. Prevent injury to the pupil or others
2. Prevent serious damage to property
3. Prevent a criminal offence
4. Prevent serious disorder among pupils

#### **Unacceptable Practices**

The DfE 2026 guidance makes clear that staff must **never**:

- Apply pressure to the neck, nose, mouth, chest or abdomen
- Restrain a pupil in any way that affects breathing or circulation
- Intentionally hold a pupil on the ground
- Use force for compliance where no risk is present

#### **Expectations for Leaders and Staff**

- Assess risk dynamically
- Use only the minimum level of force, for the minimum duration
- Seek support from colleagues; two trained staff should attend wherever possible
- Communicate clearly and calmly throughout in line with Team Teach training ("I am helping to keep you safe")
- All staff trained in Team Teach must undertake annual refresher training to maintain up-to-date skills and practice.

#### **Positive Handling Plans (PHP)/Risk Assessment (RA)**

Pupils identified as presenting known risks must have a PHP/RA, written with:

- Parents/carers
- The pupil (where appropriate)
- Relevant professionals

Plans should include triggers, early indicators, de-escalation techniques, medical considerations, and preferred strategies. PHPs must align with the pupil's EHCP or other relevant plans. They should be reviewed regularly and prior to any off-site activity.

### **Responding to Unforeseen Events**

If no PHP/RA exists and an emergency arises, staff may act on a dynamic risk assessment. After the incident, a PHP/RA must be created.

### **Post Incident Support and Review**

Following an incident, pupils and staff must be supported. Schools will:

- Provide time and space to recover
- Conduct a constructive debrief
- Review the incident, PHPs, risk assessments or policies as needed

Pupils should receive medical assessment where appropriate, recognising that harm may not always be immediately visible.

### **Recording and Reporting (Statutory Duties from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026)**

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, schools must follow new statutory requirements on the recording and reporting of significant incidents involving the use of force.

### **Significant Incidents**

Defined as any episode where restrictive intervention exceeds appropriate everyday physical contact.

#### **Schools Must:**

- **Record each significant incident as soon as practicable**, ideally the same day
- **Report the incident to parents as soon as practicable**, unless doing so may cause harm
- **Record:** names of staff/pupils involved, date/time/location, reason for force, degree/duration of intervention, post-incident support and actions
- Record and report any use of **seclusion**, a non-disciplinary safety measure used only to prevent harm and never through locking a door

Records must be logged on the school's online system (Arbor) and retained in line with safeguarding requirements. If the child is on CIN/CP plan or is being monitored due to safeguarding, the incident must also be logged on CPOMS. This will ensure that any relevant behaviour incidents are recorded within the safeguarding chronology on CPOMS.

### **Monitoring and Oversight**

Headteachers must review all incidents to identify patterns and ensure equity

TLCs must monitor data to ensure restraint is not disproportionately applied to any protected or identifiable group.

Trustees will regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to ensure school leaders:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability

### **Complaints and Allegations**

Complaints follow the Trust's Complaints Procedure.

Allegations involving staff follow safeguarding procedures.

### **Other Legitimate Physical Contact**

It remains appropriate for staff to use everyday, non-restrictive physical contact when:

- Offering comfort (side on)
- Guiding a pupil safely
- Supporting practical learning (e.g., PE, instruments)
- Providing first aid

### **Monitoring**

This policy is owned by the School Improvement Team and will be subject to annual review and approval by the Board of Trustees.