



LIONHEART
EDUCATIONAL
TRUST

**RESTRICTIVE HANDLING AND REASONABLE
FORCE POLICY**

**This policy applies to all schools within
the Lionheart Educational Trust**

Approved by the Trust

October 2026 – October 2028



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Purpose

In The Lionheart Educational Trust we believe pupils and staff have a right to learn and work in a calm, safe environment, free from disruption. We believe having high expectations for pupil behaviour and conduct, and enforcing these expectations consistently, is an act of kindness because lowering expectations simply allows children to fail.

The Trust recognises that behaviour is a form of communication and that most incidents can be successfully managed through positive relationships, effective behaviour management and appropriate de-escalation strategies. We are committed to understanding the underlying causes of behaviour and supporting pupils to develop self-regulation and positive behaviour choices.

Occasionally there may be situations where a pupil's behaviour presents a significant risk of harm to themselves or others. In these circumstances, staff may need to use reasonable force or restrictive intervention in order to prevent injury, serious damage to property or serious disorder. Any such intervention must be lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate.

This policy aims to:

- Provide a consistent approach to the use of restrictive interventions and reasonable force.
- Promote preventative and de-escalation strategies.
- Safeguard pupils, staff and visitors.
- Ensure interventions are used appropriately and only when necessary.
- Ensure incidents are recorded, reviewed and monitored effectively.

Legislation and Statutory Requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education including:

- Behaviour in Schools
- Restrictive Interventions and the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- The Equality Act 2010
- The SEND Code of Practice
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

This policy should be read alongside the Trust Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy, Suspension and Exclusion Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

Definitions

Reasonable force covers a broad range of actions that involve a degree of physical contact with a pupil. In determining whether force is reasonable, staff must consider whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent.



A restrictive intervention is an act carried out with the purpose of restricting a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently.

Examples may include physically guiding a pupil away from danger, blocking a pupil's path to prevent injury, escorting a pupil to a safer location or, where absolutely necessary, holding a pupil to prevent harm.

De-escalation refers to strategies and approaches used to reduce distress, conflict and risk before a situation reaches crisis point.

The Trust's Approach

The Trust expects staff to seek to understand the reasons behind behaviour and to use effective behaviour management and de-escalation strategies wherever possible. Restrictive interventions should form only a small part of a wider behaviour support approach and should never be viewed as a routine response to challenging behaviour.

All decisions regarding restrictive interventions should place the safety, welfare and dignity of the pupil and others at the centre of decision-making. Particular consideration should be given to the age, maturity, understanding, communication needs, medical conditions, disabilities and special educational needs of the pupil involved.

The Trust recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice. Staff will consider whether a pupil's behaviour may be influenced by an unmet need, disability, communication difficulty or other vulnerability and will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Restrictive intervention must never be used as a punishment or solely to secure compliance with instructions. It should only be used when there is no practicable alternative for preventing harm or serious disruption.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for approving this policy. Local Governing Bodies are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy within their school and holding the Principal to account for its implementation.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy, ensuring appropriate staff training, monitoring incidents and identifying any emerging trends or concerns.

All staff are responsible for maintaining safe learning environments through positive behaviour management, effective de-escalation and adherence to this policy. Staff must accurately record incidents and participate in training relevant to their role.

Use of Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force

Staff may use reasonable force where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Hurting themselves.
- Hurting another person.
- Causing serious damage to property.
- Committing a criminal offence.



- Causing serious disorder which places themselves or others at risk.

Where restrictive intervention is necessary, staff must ensure that any action taken:

- Is used as a last resort.
- Uses the minimum force necessary.
- Is applied for the shortest time possible.
- Maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Is reasonable and proportionate to the risk presented.
- Is never used as a punishment.

Individual Risk Assessments and Support Plans

Some pupils may require additional planning and support due to behaviours that place themselves or others at risk.

Where appropriate, schools may develop risk assessments, behaviour support plans, positive handling plans or SEND support plans. These plans should identify known triggers, successful de-escalation strategies, agreed responses and arrangements for reviewing support following incidents.

Parents and carers should be involved in the development and review of such plans wherever possible.

Following an incident requiring restrictive intervention, schools should review existing plans and consider whether additional support, adaptations or referrals are required.

Recording, Reporting and Parental Communication

All incidents involving restrictive intervention or reasonable force must be recorded on the school's safeguarding recording system.

Schools must maintain accurate records detailing the circumstances leading to the incident, the de-escalation strategies attempted, the intervention used, those involved, any injuries sustained and any follow-up actions required.

Parents and carers must be informed whenever restrictive intervention has been used. Schools will follow the Trust's three-stage approach:

1. Communication with parents or carers by telephone or in person on the day of the incident.
2. Written follow-up using the approved Trust template.
3. A planned meeting where appropriate to discuss future support, review risk assessments and reduce the likelihood of a similar incident occurring in future.

Post-Incident Support

Following a significant incident, schools will ensure that appropriate emotional and physical support is provided to pupils and staff involved.

The school will review the factors that contributed to the incident and consider whether adjustments to risk assessments, behaviour support plans or wider provision are required.



Where appropriate, pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reflective and restorative discussions to support future success.

Training

The Trust will ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate training in behaviour management, de-escalation and restrictive interventions.

Monitoring

The Principal will monitor incidents involving restrictive intervention and reasonable force, identifying patterns, trends and areas requiring additional support, training or intervention.

The Local Governing Body will receive appropriate assurance regarding the implementation of this policy within their school and seek assurance that restrictive interventions are lawful, proportionate and used only where necessary.

The Trust will monitor the use of restrictive interventions and reasonable force across all schools to identify trends, ensure consistency of practice and provide challenge and support where required.

The Board of Trustees will receive periodic assurance regarding the implementation of this policy, including analysis of trends, training compliance and any significant incidents or emerging risks. The Board will use this information to satisfy itself that the Trust is meeting its statutory responsibilities and that restrictive interventions are being used only when necessary, reasonable and proportionate.



Appendix 1 - Parent Notification Letter Following Restrictive Intervention

Dear [insert parent / carer name]

Further to our conversation, here are the details of the recent incident involving your child:

Date, time, duration, and location of the incident	
Details of the incident	<i>Include:</i> • <i>names of the student and staff involved</i> • <i>relevant student needs or circumstances, including SEND status</i> • <i>brief summary of the incident: lead-up, triggers (if known), de-escalation attempts, type and degree of intervention used, and any injuries</i> • <i>rationale for why intervention was deemed necessary</i> • <i>post-incident support, including medical treatment or other impacts</i>

We understand that you may be feeling worried or upset about what has happened. Please be reassured that the safety and wellbeing of your child is always our priority and physical interventions are only used as a last resort in order to keep everyone safe. The Team Teach information leaflet included explains more about the ways we support your child at school.

We would like to find a convenient time to discuss what we can do to reduce the likelihood of this happening again and find the best ways to support your child moving forward.

Please get in touch to let us know when you would be available to meet [insert contact details].

If you have any concerns about your child's physical, emotional or mental wellbeing as a result of this incident, or want to ask any questions, please do get in contact. If you are worried about your child's health, especially in relation to any physical symptoms, please contact your doctor immediately.

Yours sincerely