



Restrictive Interventions Policy 2026-2027

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1. Policy Statement

Durrington Multi Academy Trust (DMAT) is committed to ensuring that all pupils are educated in safe, secure, inclusive and respectful environments. Restrictive interventions can have significant physical and psychological impact and must therefore be avoided wherever possible. In accordance with the Department for Education guidance *Restrictive Interventions; including the use of reasonable force, in schools* (effective from 1st April 2026) restrictive interventions will only be used as a last resort safety measure when lawful, necessary, proportionate and for the minimum time required, once all other prevention and de-escalation strategies have been exhausted.

DMAT recognises that restrictive interventions can be distressing for pupils and staff and therefore places a strong emphasis on prevention, relational practice, early intervention, risk assessment, reasonable adjustments, de-escalation strategies and trauma-informed approaches. Any intervention must be lawful, necessary, reasonable, proportionate and for the shortest time required to reduce the immediate risk of harm. Particular consideration will be given to the needs and vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or known safeguarding concerns.

2. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all DMAT schools and provisions. It sets out DMAT's expectations for the prevention, use, recording and review of restrictive interventions to ensure consistent, lawful and transparent practice across the Trust.

Restrictive interventions within DMAT will always be:

- Prevented wherever possible through early intervention and de-escalation
- Used only when lawful, necessary and proportionate
- The least restrictive option for the minimum time
- Applied with respect for dignity, welfare and trauma-informed practice
- Recorded, reviewed and learned from

3. Definitions

Restrictive intervention: Any action that prevents, restricts or subdues a pupil's movement, liberty or independence.

Reasonable force: Physical contact used lawfully to prevent harm or serious disorder, using no more force than is necessary.

Restraint: A non-disciplinary intervention that limits a pupil's movement.

Seclusion: Confining a pupil away from others and preventing them from leaving as a safety measure.

4. Legal and statutory framework

This policy reflects Department for Education guidance effective from April 2026 on restrictive interventions, including statutory requirements for recording and reporting significant incidents involving force. It also reflects duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

5. Appropriate Physical Contact with Pupils

DMAT schools do 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 pupils 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 pupil
- Guiding or escorting a pupil through the school building or on a school trip by holding their hand
- Comforting a pupil 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 DMAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The specific circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- Factors including, but not limited to:
 - The pupil's age
 - Any known vulnerabilities, including whether the pupil has special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
 - Whether any alternative strategies that don't involve physical contact can be used

6. Prevention and de-escalation

DMAT schools will implement whole-school approaches that reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions, including consistent behaviour routines, staff training in de-escalation, and personalised support for pupils with SEND or additional needs.

7. Decision-making

Before using a restrictive intervention, staff must consider necessity, proportionality and the pupil's welfare. Less restrictive options must always be attempted first where it is safe to do so.

8. Reasonable force

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances to prevent injury, criminal offences, serious property damage or disorder. Force must never be used as a punishment.

9. Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used as a supervised, short-term safety measure. It must never be used as a disciplinary response and must end as soon as the immediate risk has reduced.

10. Recording and reporting

All significant incidents involving the use of force or seclusion must be recorded promptly and reported to parents or carers as soon as practicable, in line with statutory guidance.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed where a restrictive intervention raises safeguarding concerns, results in injury, involves a vulnerable child, forms part of a pattern of behaviour, or indicates that additional support or intervention may be required.

11. Post-incident support

Following any restrictive intervention, schools must provide appropriate support to pupils and staff, undertake a review of the incident, and update plans to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

Training and governance

DMAT ensures that staff receive appropriate training and that restrictive intervention data is monitored at school and Trust level to ensure accountability, safeguarding and continuous improvement.

12. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to guidelines, if required due to a significant restrictive intervention incident.

13. Useful Links

Useful links:

[guidance on restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools](#)

[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](#)

15. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

DMAT Behaviour Principles

Individual school Behaviour Policy

DMAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

DMAT SEND Policy

DMAT Health and Safety Policy