

Care and Control of Students

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Care and Control of Students policy: document provenance

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Summary of changes in this review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy has been updated in light of the relevant DfE guidance update in April 2026 • These updates include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update to the list of policies and guidance ○ Note added to section 2.0 on use of data ○ Incorporation of guidance on the definition and use of seclusion ○ ‘Other physical contact with students’ has been made into a separate section ○ A new section on expectations around non-statutory recording and reporting ○ Updates to wording to better reflect the importance of managing the care and control of students proactively and preventatively ○ Other minor updates to wording to better reflect the DfE’s guidance
Related policies and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Children Safe in Education • Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026) • Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (2023) • Behaviour in schools (2022) • When To Call the Police – guidance for schools and colleges (NPCC, 2020) • Searching, screening and confiscation – advice for head teachers, school staff and governing bodies (DfE, January 2018) • Equality Act (2010) • The Education and Inspections Act (2006) • Human Rights Act (1998) • The Education Act (1996) • Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as per the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

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1.0 Policy statement

Dixons Academies Trust firmly believes that, in most instances, staff should not use any form of reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention on students. The Education Act of 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act of 2006 make clear the powers of teachers, and other staff in school, to use reasonable force to prevent students committing a crime, causing injury, damage or disruption. There are times when use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions is lawful, for example to keep individuals and the wider community safe, but it can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of students, peers, staff members, and parents / carers. As such, this policy seeks to promote preventative and de-escalation strategies whilst also ensuring as much clarity as possible around the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention so that it can be used safely when needed. Under no circumstances can force be used as a punishment or as a premeditated strategy for control of students.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the DfE's 2026 guidance, and to reflect Dixons Academies Trust's commitment to prevention, a fair and inclusive academy culture, and our three-way partnership with students and families.

This policy draws from the following:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations (2025)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (2023)
- Behaviour in schools (2022)
- When To Call the Police – guidance for schools and colleges (NPCC, 2020)
- Searching, screening and confiscation – advice for head teachers, school staff and governing bodies (DfE, January 2018)
- Equality Act (2010)
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Education Act (1996)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)

This document should be read alongside the following Dixons policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Positive Behaviour
- Professional Conduct
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

2.0 Scope and purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define reasonable force and other restrictive interventions, explain when it can be used and for what reason, and how to work preventatively and proactively as a priority. This includes whole academy approaches, bespoke intervention for individual students, working with parents / carers and other agencies, and use of data analysis and reflection to learn and continue to reduce the need for reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention over time.



This policy also outlines statutory duties on schools to record any significant incidence of reasonable force and, where appropriate, to report to parents / carers in a thorough and timely manner, as well as non-statutory expectations around recording and reporting of other restrictive intervention.

Academy and trust leaders should regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions in order to:

- 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, supporting academies, departments and individual staff members to improve understanding and practice
- Understand students' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of the support measures in place and share this information with those who support those students, so they are better able to support them and, where appropriate, work with parents / carers to review and update existing support plans
- Identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to students who share protected characteristics, are identified as having special educational needs, or other types of vulnerability

This policy covers all students on roll at, and all staff working for, Dixons academies.

3.0 Definitions

These definitions are paraphrased from the 2026 guidance. They are provided to support understanding and their inclusion should not be construed as an endorsement or otherwise for their use in schools.

3.1 Reasonable force

A term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

3.2 Restrictive interventions

A means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a student. DfE guidance and this policy use the term 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain students in different ways.

3.3 Seclusion

A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a student confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave. This should only be used as a safety measure, to protect others when a student is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the student is not acting with intent. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat or punishment. The place the student is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to them. They should be supervised at all times and allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

3.4 Restraint

A term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a student or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a student's arms to their sides or removing a student's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

3.5 Significant incident

Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between students and staff as described in 'other physical contact with students' section within this document. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.



4.0 Other physical contact with students

Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy or grant any requests by parents / carers or staff members not to use reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions as this can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect students.

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 and / or other restrictive interventions. In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to the Child Protection Policy, the applicable circumstances (e.g. whether there are other adults present), the individual student's age, and any other material factors, including but not limited to, whether the student has SEND or other vulnerabilities, or whether any alternative strategies which do not include physical contact can be used. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- To give first aid
- To guide or escort e.g. holding the hand of a student at the front of the line when going to assembly
- To comfort a distressed student
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during a PE lesson
- To guide and support a student with SEND
- To provide personal and / or intimate care, as per a student's care plan

5.0 Authorised staff

5.1 Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act allows all staff employed by a school, including temporary and unpaid voluntary staff, to use reasonable force in certain circumstances (see below). It should always be remembered that the use of reasonable force is a last resort and should only be used when deemed to be 'reasonable under the circumstances'; this is open to interpretation and depends on a staff member's risk assessment of the situation at the time. A guiding principle is to carefully consider whether all available other strategies have been exhausted and, wherever possible, to work preventatively by having clear and consistent behaviour expectations and by building positive relationships.

5.2 Appropriate staff training is dependent on a school's individual context and needs but, as a minimum, there should be:

- Annual training on this policy for all staff working directly with students
- Enhanced training delivered by a reputable external provider for any staff who regularly work with students where use of reasonable force is more likely to be required
- Each academy will keep a record of when training has taken place, what type, and who participated.

6.0 Acceptable and unacceptable use of force

6.1 The decision on whether it is reasonable to use force and / or other restrictive interventions depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. The member of staff should use their professional judgement and where possible, communicate with other staff members to better understand any broader risks in the environment. The factors listed below are not definitive and consideration must be given to all other relevant factors.

6.2 Factors staff might want to consider include:

- Is it necessary?
 - Are there reasonable alternative ways to manage the situation and achieve the desired outcome?
 - Is use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks?



- Could it escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the consequences of what it aims to address?
 - Is it proportionate?
 - Use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention, and for the least amount of time necessary
 - Consider the personal circumstances of the student such as medical conditions, SEND and other vulnerabilities, characteristics such as age and size, and relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010
 - Have you considered the student's welfare?
 - Consider the impact on overall welfare, balanced against actions taken
 - Consider whether the student has experienced adverse life events or has characteristics that may mean that they find the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions particularly distressing
 - Seek to always maintain respect for the student's dignity by, for example, changing location or removing peers
 - Where possible, clearly and calmly communicate with the student what is happening and why, making reasonable adjustment for students with speech, language and communication difficulties or who speak English as an additional language
 - Seek to understand how the student is feeling and use this information to determine whether the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped
- 6.3 Use of force must never be for the purpose of punishment.
- 6.4 Students should not be deliberately restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example by covering the mouth and / or nose or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen.
- 6.5 The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a student is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.
- 6.6 For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.
- 6.7 Head teachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that they have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the academy rules only. The decision to use reasonable force should be taken on a case-by-case basis. For further information refer to the Positive Behaviour Policy.

7.0 Prevention and de-escalation

- 7.1 Dixons Academies Trust recognises the importance of prevention and de-escalation as a means of minimising the need to use reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions, and that this requires a combination of whole academy measures as well as tailored approaches for individual students.
- 7.2 In order to work preventatively and minimise the need the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention, each academy will use a combination of, but not limited by, the following principles:
- Ensuring safe and purposeful classroom and communal environments
 - Lessons follow the principles of adaptive teaching so that all students can achieve and thrive
 - Positive behaviour management, as per the Positive Behaviour policy
 - Training staff in effective communication strategies, including use of appropriate tone of voice and empathy
 - Development of positive staff-student relationships and trust
 - Recording and analysing data on the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions to inform planning
- 7.3 Tailored approaches for individual students may include, but are not limited to:



- Working closely with parents / carers and other agencies, including making referrals for further assessment or support where appropriate
- Developing a bespoke Behaviour Support Plan and / or Positive Handling Plan, with a focus on recognising triggers, early indicators, and de-escalation strategies, as well as response and follow-ups that best support the student - any such plan should be reviewed periodically and following any incident, with parents / carers and, where appropriate, the student, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has and has not worked for that student
- Developing a risk assessment to make clear the risks and triggers in the environment and routines and how they can be proactively mitigated and managed.

7.4 **Consideration for students with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND)**

Some students with SEND may react to situations they find distressing or confusing by displaying behaviours which could be harmful to themselves or to others. Students with speech, language and communication difficulties may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through such behaviours. The Trust is aware that this can lead to students with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions and prioritises seeking to understand the underlying triggers to be proactive in providing support and creating inclusive environments where all students can achieve and thrive. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Consideration of how the academy culture and environment may be experienced differently by some students
- Maximising on positive relationships with staff
- Identifying trigger points and developing proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention being used
- Working with the student, parents / carers, and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies
- Developing bespoke Behaviour Support Plans, Positive Handling Plans, or risk assessments (any such plan should be reviewed periodically and following any incident, with parents / carers and, where appropriate, the student, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has and has not worked for that student)
- Where a student has a disability, taking reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage and ensuring the student can fully participate in the education provided by the academy, including enjoying the benefits, facilities and services provided for other students, as per the Equality Act 2010

8.0 **Student and staff support**

- 8.1 Following any significant incident involving the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention, academy leaders should evaluate the incident to understand why it was needed, the impact on students and staff, any patterns or trends, and how to avoid similar situations in the future. In this way, academies can foster a culture of continuous improvement.
- 8.2 If necessary, the student and staff member should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Any injuries must be recorded as part of the recording process described in the 'recording the use of force' section of this policy and should also be recorded as part of the academy's usual procedures for recording injuries.
- 8.3 Following a significant incident, academy leaders should hold a follow-up conversation to facilitate reflection, learning and to support student and staff wellbeing. This conversation should form part of the overall debriefing process and seek to understand what happened and why, based on separate reflections from staff and students, as well as repairing and rebuilding the relationship through dialogue. This process should be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident and may also benefit from the presence of an additional person to ensure impartiality and support.
- 8.4 Academy leaders should continue to monitor student and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed.
- 8.5 Any student who witnessed an incident of reasonable force and / or restrictive intervention should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.
- 8.6 Supporting colleagues when managing an incident



The actions of any subsequent member of staff arriving at a situation where reasonable force and / or other restrictive intervention is taking place, whether they were called to support or arrive by chance, is a critical opportunity. It is crucial that all staff know what to do in these situations as well as when they are the main staff member dealing with an incident. All staff should follow these principles:

- make your presence known and ask what you can do that would be supportive
- do not assume that additional intervention is required
- be prepared to take over as the main person managing the situation – sometimes simply a change of face is enough to diffuse and de-escalate an incident and for physical intervention to no longer be required
- act as a witness to the incident for both the student and staff member

9.0 Recording the use of force (statutory)

- 9.1 A written record of any significant incidence of use of reasonable force must be made by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable after the event.
- 9.2 The requirement to record applies equally in circumstances where use of reasonable force is agreed with parents / carers, e.g. as part of a Positive Handling Plan, and where it is not.
- 9.3 All significant incidences of use of reasonable force will be recorded in detail on CPOMS. Appendix 2 of this policy can be used to make a record of the incident and uploaded to CPOMS, or the details can be recorded as an incident directly onto CPOMS.
- 9.4 For each significant incidence of use of reasonable force, the following should be recorded as a minimum:
- Name of student
 - Name of staff directly involved
 - Any relevant needs or circumstances of the student, including any identified SEND and the relevant SEN status code
 - Time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
 - Brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
 - Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
 - Any post-incident support such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
 - Any witness accounts, including both staff and students
 - When and how parents / carers were notified
 - Any longer-term follow-up
- 9.5 There is no requirement in law to record instances of restrictive intervention where force has not been used, however, it is best practice for schools to apply the same recording policy to restrictive interventions of any type and therefore the expectation is for all Dixons academies to record all uses of restrictive intervention, making clear in the record whether force was used or not – see section 11.

10.0 Reporting the use of force (statutory)

- 10.1 Any significant incidence of use of reasonable force, except for the circumstances in 9.2, must be reported to the parent / carer of the student as soon as practicable after the incident.



- 10.2 A report should not be made to parents / carers if it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the student. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect. Instead, and at the first opportunity, the staff member must liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow the academy's safeguarding procedures.
- 10.3 The requirement to report to parents / carers applies equally in circumstances where use of reasonable force is agreed with parents / carers, e.g. as part of a Positive Handling Plan, and where it is not.
- 10.4 The report to parents should include the following details as a minimum:
- Time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
 - Brief account of what type of reasonable force was applied and the degree of force used
 - Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
 - Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- 10.5 How the information is communicated to parents / carers is at the discretion of the academy and may vary from incident to incident. Methods may include phone call, email, or online messaging system.
- 10.6 Wherever possible, parents / carers should be invited in for a follow-up discussion. This discussion could include writing or updating documents such as Behaviour Support Plans, Positive Handling Plans, or risk assessments.
- 10.7 There is no requirement in law to report instances of restrictive intervention where force has not been used, however, it is best practice for schools to apply the same recording policy to restrictive interventions of any type and therefore the expectation is for all Dixons academies to record all uses of restrictive intervention, making clear in the record whether force was used or not – see section 11.

11.0 Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

- 11.1 An incident of restraint, including seclusion, may occur with or without direct physical contact. In those instances, these must be recorded under the procedures outlined in this section.
- 11.2 A written record of any significant incidence of use of seclusion or restraint must be made by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable after the event.
- 11.3 The requirement to record and report applies equally in circumstances where use of seclusion or restraint is agreed with parents / carers, e.g. as part of a Positive Handling Plan, and where it is not.
- 11.4 All incidences of use of seclusion or restraint will be recorded in detail on CPOMS.
- 11.5 For each significant incidence of use of seclusion or restraint, the following should be recorded as a minimum:
- Name of student
 - Name of staff directly involved
 - Any relevant needs or circumstances of the student, including any identified SEND and the relevant SEN status code
 - Time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
 - Brief account of why the use of seclusion or restraint was assessed as necessary in that instance
 - Any post-incident support such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts
- 11.6 Parents / carers must be informed of the incident of seclusion or restraint being used as soon as practicable after the incident and the school should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. Schools must ensure there is a procedure for supplying a copy of the written record of the seclusion or restraint incidents to parents.



- 11.7 A report should not be made to parents / carers if it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in significant harm to the student. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect. Instead, and at the first opportunity, the staff member must liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow the academy's safeguarding procedures.
- 11.8 Wherever possible, parents / carers should be invited in for a follow-up discussion. This discussion could include writing or updating documents such as Behaviour Support Plans, Positive Handling Plans, or risk assessments.
- 11.9 In circumstances where a restraint incident also constitutes a significant use of force, the school only needs to follow the recording and reporting procedures for significant use of force incidents outlined in sections 9 and 10 – the same incident does not need to be recorded and reported twice.

12.0 Complaints and allegations

- 12.1 Any complaints regarding the use of reasonable force and / or other restrictive interventions should follow the Trust's usual complaints procedures. This can be found in the Complaints policy.
- 12.2 Any allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and / or other restrictive interventions made against a member of staff will be handled following the procedures outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education and according to the Trust's Dealing with Allegations of Abuse and Concerns Against Staff policy.

Appendix 1: Positive Handling Plan

Name: Enter name		Class: Enter class	Year group: Enter year
Review date: Select date		Written by: Enter name	
EHCP: <input type="checkbox"/>	EHCP Referral: <input type="checkbox"/>	SENK: <input type="checkbox"/>	Need type: Enter here

Additional information: Text here

Prevention strategies: Text here
Triggers: Text here
Early indicators: Text here
Positive handling strategies: Text here
Restorative / follow up: Text here

Review 1: Text here	
Review Date: Text here	Reviewers: Text here

Review 2: Text here	
Review Date: Text here	Reviewers: Text here

Review 3: Text here	
Review Date: Text here	Reviewers: Text here

Principal signature / date: Text here	Select date
Lead staff member signature / date: Text here	Select date
Parent or carer signature / date: Text here	Select date

Appendix 2: Incident Record (use of reasonable force)

Name: Enter name		Class: Enter class	Year group: Enter year
Review date: Enter date		Written by: Enter name	
EHCP: <input type="checkbox"/>	EHCP Referral: <input type="checkbox"/>	SENK: <input type="checkbox"/>	Need type: Enter here

Incident details:

Date: Enter date	Time: Enter time	Location: Enter location	Length: Enter length
Name / role of all staff involved: Enter text			
Witnesses (staff name / role and any students / other): Enter text			

Parents informed:

Date / Time: Enter date / time	Summary / notes: Text here
Method (e.g phone, email): Text here	
By (staff name / role): Text name	

Incident record:

Any relevant needs or circumstances of the student, inc. SEND: Text here
What led up to the incident, potential triggers, preventative / de-escalation strategies used: Text here
Why use of force was assessed to be necessary in this instance: Text here
Any injuries / medical treatment: Text here
Post-incident follow-up: Text here

Checklist:

<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded on CPOMS (detail / narrative and follow-ups)
<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded on Bromcom (CPOMS incident ID included)
<input type="checkbox"/> All witness statements collected and attached
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents informed
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent meeting booked
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Handling Plan updated or considered / completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessment updated or considered / completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Longer term follow-up work planned
Notes: Text here

Signatures:

Form completed by (signature / date): Text here	Select date
Form witnessed by (signature / date): Text here	Select date