

REASONABLE FORCE AND RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

Compass Learning & Education

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy Owner: Director – Rosie Aylward

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Approved By: Director

1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out the legal framework, principles and procedures governing the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions within this Alternative Provision (AP).

The provision is committed to:

- Maintaining a safe and calm learning environment.
- Reducing the need for restrictive intervention through preventative practice.
- Ensuring any use of force is lawful, proportionate and necessary.
- Protecting the dignity, welfare and rights of all learners.
- Ensuring transparency, accountability and proper recording.

Reasonable force is used only as a last resort and never as a form of punishment.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)** – provides school staff with the power to use reasonable force.
- **Education Act 2002 (Section 175)** – duty to safeguard and promote welfare.
- **Children Act 1989 and 2004** – safeguarding duties.
- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** – duty to ensure health and safety of employees and others.
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** – requirement to assess and manage risk.
- **Equality Act 2010** – duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition).**

- **Behaviour in Schools (DfE).**
- **Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (DfE Guidance).**
- **Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (DfE, effective 1 April 2026).**

From 1 April 2026, there is a statutory requirement to record and report significant incidents involving restrictive intervention to parents/carers.

3. Scope

This policy applies:

- On site.
- During off-site provision.
- During work placements and employer visits.
- During transport organised by the provision.
- During vocational and practical activities including construction workshops.

It applies to all staff employed by the provision.

4. Definitions

Reasonable Force

“Reasonable force” refers to the physical contact used by staff to control or restrain a learner in order to prevent harm.

Force is reasonable where it is:

- Necessary.
- Proportionate to the risk.
- Used for the shortest time required.
- The least restrictive option available.

Restrictive Intervention

Restrictive intervention refers to any action that restricts a learner’s movement, liberty or freedom to act independently in order to prevent harm.

This may include:

- Physical restraint.
- Guided removal from a room.
- Blocking a doorway to prevent unsafe exit.
- Restricting access to dangerous equipment.

Seclusion (isolating a learner in a room without supervision) is not used in this provision.

5. Principles

The provision operates on the following principles:

1. Restrictive intervention is a last resort.
2. Prevention and de-escalation are always prioritised.
3. The welfare and dignity of the learner must be maintained.
4. Staff safety is a legitimate consideration.
5. Use of force must always be lawful and defensible.
6. Incidents must be recorded and reviewed.
7. The aim is to reduce future need for intervention.

6. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force to:

- Prevent injury to the learner, another learner or a member of staff.
- Prevent serious damage to property.
- Prevent the commission of a criminal offence.
- Prevent behaviour that poses a serious and immediate safety risk.
- Stop a fight or serious physical altercation.
- Prevent unsafe use of tools or equipment in vocational settings.

In a construction or workshop context, force may be used where a learner is:

- Swinging tools or equipment dangerously.
- Refusing to stop when immediate injury risk is present.
- Attempting to throw objects capable of causing harm.

Force may also be used to remove a learner from a classroom where serious disruption creates risk of harm.

7. When Reasonable Force Must Not Be Used

Reasonable force must not be used:

- As punishment.
- To enforce compliance with minor instructions.
- In response to verbal abuse alone.
- Where no safety risk exists.
- In a way that deliberately causes pain.
- In a way that restricts breathing.
- By applying pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen.
- To humiliate or degrade.

8. De-escalation and Prevention

Before using force, staff must, wherever practicable:

- Use calm verbal instruction.
- Provide clear choices.
- Use space and positioning to reduce tension.
- Offer time-out opportunities.
- Use restorative language.
- Call for senior support.

De-escalation strategies are embedded in staff training and behaviour risk planning.

9. Behaviour Risk Assessments and Planning

Where learners present foreseeable risk, a Behaviour Risk Assessment must:

- Identify triggers.
- Identify risk behaviours.
- Set out preventative strategies.
- Clarify when physical intervention may be necessary.
- Specify trained staff.
- Be reviewed regularly.

Planned restrictive intervention must still meet the test of necessity and proportionality at the time of use.

10. Staff Authorisation and Training

All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

However, the provision will ensure:

- Identified staff receive accredited physical intervention training.
- Training includes de-escalation, safe holds and post-incident procedures.
- Staff understand legal thresholds.
- Staff are aware of safeguarding implications.

Untrained staff should only intervene physically in extreme emergencies where immediate harm would otherwise occur.

11. Use of Force in Vocational and Construction Settings

Given the increased risk associated with tools and equipment:

- Safety instructions must be followed immediately.
- Unsafe behaviour results in immediate removal.
- Physical intervention may be used to prevent tool-related injury.

- Workshop access may be temporarily restricted following incidents.

Safety overrides staged behaviour processes in workshop environments.

12. Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving reasonable force must be recorded as soon as possible on the official recording system.

The record must include:

- Names of learner and staff involved.
- Date, time and location.
- Antecedents and triggers.
- Description of behaviour.
- Description and duration of force used.
- Rationale for use.
- Any injuries sustained.
- Witnesses present.
- Follow-up actions.

From 1 April 2026, parents/carers must be informed of any significant restrictive intervention as soon as practicable, typically the same day.

Records will be reviewed by senior leadership.

13. Post-Incident Support

Following any incident involving force:

- The learner must be offered emotional support.
- A restorative conversation must take place.
- Risk assessments and behaviour plans must be reviewed.
- Staff involved must have opportunity for debrief.
- Injuries must be documented and treated.
- Patterns must be analysed to reduce recurrence.

14. Safeguarding Considerations

Any use of force that:

- Results in injury,
- Raises concerns about staff conduct,
- Appears disproportionate,
- Involves vulnerable learners,

Must be reviewed by the DSL and may require referral to external agencies.

Allegations against staff will be managed in line with safeguarding procedures.

15. Equality and SEND

Under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments must be considered for learners with disabilities or SEND.

However:

- Disability does not prevent use of force where safety requires it.
- Adjustments must not compromise safety of others.
- Proportionality must always be considered.

16. Governance and Monitoring

The Director will:

- Monitor incidents termly.
- Review patterns and trends.
- Ensure staff training is current.
- Review this policy annually.

17. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier in response to changes in statutory guidance or serious incidents.