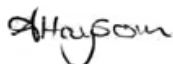





LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS, SAFE TOUCH AND USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

Statutory

Policy Approved by the Board of Trustees	
Signed:  Name: Adele Haysom Chair of Board of Trustees	Date: 25 March 2026
Authorised for Issue	
Signed:  Name: Gary Lewis Chief Executive	Date: 25 March 2026

Document History

Version	Author/Owner	Drafted	Comments
1.0		March 2026	Fully aligns with DfE guidelines effective 01 April 2026.

			Supersedes previous School Safe Touch/Use of Reasonable Force policies.
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Review cycle	Annually
Review date	September 2027

This policy applies to all schools and employees within the Lighthouse Schools Partnership.

This policy remains valid, and in operation, until a new or updated policy is published.

1. Statement of Intent

We want every pupil within Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP) to feel safe, secure and respected. Relationships matter and we expect our staff to build calm, predictable environments where pupils can learn and thrive.

Sometimes staff will need to make physical contact with pupils - to keep them safe, offer reassurance, or support learning. In rare cases, staff may need to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions to prevent harm.

This policy explains how we use safe, appropriate and considered physical contact. It also sets out our approach to restrictive interventions, including reasonable force and seclusion, in line with Department for Education guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff (including agency/supply), volunteers and contractors working with pupils in every academy in Lighthouse Schools Partnership Trust. It also applies to central services staff where relevant.

3. Legal framework

This policy reflects the following guidance and duties:

- ‘Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools’ (DfE, effective from 1 April 2026)
- ‘Use of reasonable force in schools’ (DfE, in force until 31 March 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (updated 2025)
- Behaviour in Schools (DfE, February 2024)

Note: The April 2026 guidance introduces statutory duties to record and report each significant incident involving the use of force.

4. Definitions

We use the following terms:

- Restrictive interventions: actions that limit a pupil’s movement, liberty or independence. This includes physical restraint and seclusion.
- Reasonable force: no more force than necessary, for the shortest time necessary, to prevent injury, serious damage to property, a criminal offence, or significant disruption.
- Seclusion: keeping a dysregulated pupil in a safe space away from others as a safety measure, with continuous supervision. It is not a disciplinary sanction and must end as soon as the immediate risk reduces.
- Significant incident (use of force): any incident where reasonable force goes beyond everyday appropriate contact (such as first aid or guiding).

5. Roles and responsibilities

Everyone has a part to play:

- Trust Board - approves this policy; receives termly data; challenges trends; assures training and safer practice across the Trust.
- Trust Executive - resources implementation; monitors compliance and risk; supports schools to improve practice.
- Local Governing Bodies - oversee local implementation; review data; support and challenge headteachers.
- Headteachers - make sure staff understand the policy; ensure training; oversee incident recording and parent communication; lead reviews and actions.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) - provide safeguarding oversight; liaise with parents/carers and external partners; make sure KCSIE procedures are followed.
- SENCOs/Pastoral Leads - plan preventative support; make reasonable adjustments; create and review Behaviour Support/Positive Handling Plans.

- All staff - use prevention and de-escalation first; exercise professional judgement; record and report incidents as required.

6. What we mean by safe touch

Safe touch supports a pupil's safety, comfort or learning. It is age-appropriate, non-intrusive and sensitive to the pupil's wishes and feelings.

Safe and appropriate examples include:

- Offering comfort to a distressed pupil (for example a gentle hand on the shoulder)
- Guiding or steadying a pupil to keep them safe
- Demonstrating techniques in PE, dance or music when needed
- Providing first aid

Staff use professional judgement, seek verbal consent where possible, and avoid contact that could be misinterpreted, humiliating or sexualised. We do not operate a 'no-contact' policy; appropriate contact is sometimes necessary to safeguard pupils.

7. Use of restrictive interventions, including reasonable force

Most situations are resolved through de-escalation, clear communication and strong relationships. Restrictive interventions are rare and are used only when necessary to prevent harm.

Reasonable force may be used to:

- Prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Prevent significant disruption to the school environment

Any use of force must be proportionate to the situation and applied for the shortest time possible. Staff must never use force as a punishment.

8. Unacceptable physical contact

The following are not allowed:

- Any hold or technique that restricts breathing or circulation (including pressure on the neck, mouth, nose or abdomen)

- Prone (face-down) restraint
- Pain-based techniques
- Physical contact used as punishment or intimidation

9. Searching with force

Headteachers and authorised staff may use reasonable force to search a pupil for prohibited items where there are reasonable grounds to suspect possession.

Force must not be used to search for items that are banned only under school rules.

10. Seclusion

Seclusion may be used only as a safety measure to protect the pupil or others when the pupil is extremely dysregulated and at immediate risk of harm. It is never a disciplinary measure.

Seclusion must be supervised at all times, take place in a safe and appropriate space, and end as soon as the risk has reduced. All seclusion incidents must be recorded and shared with parents or carers as soon as practicable.

11. Prevention, planning and SEND

We focus on prevention and promote positive behaviour support, early help and de-escalation by making reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND and SEMH needs.

Where a pupil is at foreseeable risk of restrictive interventions, we will agree an Individual Behaviour Support/Positive Handling Plan with parents/carers and relevant professionals, and with the pupil where appropriate. Staff complete a dynamic risk assessment before and during any intervention.

12. Recording and reporting (statutory)

We follow DfE requirements for recording and reporting. For each significant incident involving the use of force, and for every seclusion incident, the academy will:

- Complete the Restrictive Intervention Record (Bound and Numbered Record) as soon as practicable (normally the same day)

- Ensure the Headteacher/DSL completes a post-incident review and that support is offered to the pupil and staff (normally the same day)
- A copy should then be scanned and saved on CPOMS/BromCom and the incident recorded
- Inform parents/carers at the earliest practicable opportunity, and ordinarily within the same school day. Record how and when contact was made.
- Where a pupil is looked-after or has a social worker, inform the social worker and the Virtual School Head as appropriate
- Record any injuries and the first aid provided; consider health and safety reporting where relevant; follow KCSIE if any safeguarding concerns arise
- Update behaviour plans and adjustments in light of lessons learned
- Submit incident data termly to the LGB and Trust (via line management meeting) for oversight and analysis

13. Post-incident support and review

Pupils and staff involved in restrictive interventions or seclusion will be offered support and calm debrief. We will consider restorative approaches where appropriate and review triggers, plans and adjustments.

14. Staff training

Staff who may need to use restrictive interventions receive training in safe, lawful practice and in prevention and de-escalation. Training is refreshed regularly and meets the requirements of the training provider. The academy keeps a local log and maintains a central register.

15. Oversight and data

LSP line managers and Local Governing Bodies receive termly data on the use of reasonable force and seclusion. School and trust leaders use the data to identify patterns, plan prevention and reduce the need for restrictive interventions over time.

16. Complaints and allegations

Concerns about practice are managed under the Trust's Complaints Policy. Allegations against staff are managed in line with KCSIE and the Trust's Managing Allegations procedures. Staff must report concerns about their own or others' conduct.

If a student attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to DSL or Safeguarding Team, in order to prevent any allegations of inappropriate physical contact.

If another member of staff suspects or witnesses inappropriate physical contact, whereby the member of staff is willingly involved, they will report this to the DSL or Safeguarding Team immediately.

The DSL will keep a written record of all instances of reported inappropriate touch.

Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct.

17. Monitoring and review

We review this policy at least annually and sooner if guidance changes. We work with academies to strengthen prevention and promote safe practice.

18. Linked policies and procedures

- Safeguarding/Child Protection
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour
- SEND Policy
- Exclusions
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Procedures (DfE guidance)
- Health & Safety
- First Aid

Appendix A : Parent/Carer notification template (summary)

Dear [Parent/Carer],

Today at [time] there was a significant incident at [academy] in which staff used [reasonable force / seclusion] to keep [pupil name] and others safe. This was necessary because [brief reason]. The intervention lasted [duration]. [Pupil name] received [first aid / no first aid required]. We have recorded the incident and will review the behaviour plan and any adjustments. Please contact [name/role/contact details] so we can discuss next steps.

Yours sincerely,

[Name/Role]

Appendix B- Seclusion record (DfE Compliant - April 2026)

The following details must be logged/recorded:

- Pupil Name
- Date/Time of Seclusion
- Space Used
- Continuous Supervision Confirmed (Yes/No)
- Reason for Seclusion (immediate safety only)
- Trigger/Context: reason for seclusion as a safety measure
- De-escalation attempted before/during
- Start Time
- End Time
- Criteria for ending seclusion
- Welfare Checks (hydration, comfort, medical needs)
- Pupil Voice (post-incident)
- Parent/Carer Notification (time/method)
- DSL Oversight
- Review Actions / Updates to Plans

Appendix C - Restrictive Intervention Flow Chart

See below

What To Do When Restrictive Intervention Has Been Used

A guide for all school staff (Volunteers / Supply Staff only if authorised and trained)

DfE explicitly prohibits techniques that compromise breathing/circulation; pressure to neck/mouth/nose/abdomen; and cautions against ground/prone holds.

Reasonable Force May Be Used To:

- Prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Prevent significant disruption to the school environment

Has Sufficient Staff Training Taken Place?

Staff who need to use restrictive intervention must receive training in lawful practice

Was Seclusion Required?

If YES ↓

STEP 1

Document the incident and supervision level and inform parents/carers

Record the seclusion and send a written notification to parents same day where practicable.

STEP 2

Inform DSL / Headteacher

STEP 3

Ensure SEN / SEMH needs have been planned for preventative measures

Was Touch Required?

If YES ↓

STEP 1

Review the circumstances in which touch was used. Document the decision-making process.

Record same day and send a written report to parents as soon as practicable (ordinarily same day) including at least: time, date, location & approx. duration; brief reason necessity; type & degree of force; any injuries/first aid. Notify DSL/Head

STEP 2

Inform DSL / Headteacher and review any CCTV / Witness statements

STEP 3

Post Incident Support

Pupils and staff involved will need a debrief and should be offered support

Remember

All incidents involving restrictive intervention must be recorded, reviewed, and used to inform future preventative planning. Update the pupil's Behaviour Support/Positive Handling Plan and reasonable adjustments; log to the termly dataset for SLT/LGB review