



Physical Intervention & Restrictive Practices Policy

This policy is effective for all schools within The Discovery Education Trust, and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board.

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Policy/document owner	Director of Specialist Provision
Status	Statutory
Next review date	This policy does not have a fixed review date. It is assessed annually to ensure it remains accurate and up to date. In addition, it is reviewed as needed in response to changes in law, guidance or organisational practice.
Applicable to	All Discovery Primary Schools – the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all school specific information is completed.

Document History

Version	Version Date	Author	Summary of Changes
V0.1	August 2019	Megan Williams	Policy created
V1.0	September 2019	Helen Stockill	Policy approved
V2.0	January 2022	Megan Williams	Policy updated to reflect CPI Safety Intervention implementation
V3.0	September 2025	Ros Hopkins	Trust-Wide Policy Alignment
V3.1	September 2025	Ros Hopkins	Incorporated DfE 2025 guidance, KCSIE 2025 , PBS (NICE NG11), RRN Training Standards ; strengthened recording/reporting, post-incident support, prohibited practices, governance and safe space safeguards. [3] [4] [7] [5]

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1) Purpose & Scope

This policy sets out Discovery Trust’s approach to preventing, and—only when unavoidable—using reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. It applies to all Trust schools, staff, volunteers and activities on/off site. It prioritises prevention, early support, de-escalation and trauma-informed practice, ensuring any physical intervention is **lawful, necessary, proportionate** and used for the **minimum time** needed to keep people safe.

2) Legal Framework & Guidance

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006** (ss.93 & 93A); Equality Act 2010; Human Rights Act 1998; Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- **DfE: Use of reasonable force in schools** (updated 15 Jan 2025). [\[3\]](#)
- **DfE: Behaviour in schools** (Feb 2024). [\[8\]](#)
- **DfE/DHSC: Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention (Children & Young People)** (2019). [\[9\]](#)
- **DfE: Searching, screening & confiscation in schools** (July 2023). [\[10\]](#)
- **KCSIE** (Sept 2025). [\[4\]](#)
- **Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (EIF)** (Sept 2024). [\[11\]](#)

- **RRN Training Standards** (via **BILD ACT** certification). [5][6]
- **NICE NG11**: Challenging behaviour & learning disabilities (**PBS**). [7]

Emerging (consultation): *DfE, Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions* (Feb 2025). The Trust adopts now its draft statutory recording/reporting expectations for each significant incident (s.93A) as internal best practice pending final issue. [12]

3) Definitions

- **Reasonable force:** Physical contact to control/restrain using **no more force than necessary**, for the shortest time, to prevent harm/serious disruption. [3]
- **Restrictive intervention:** Any action limiting movement/liberty (e.g., restraint, seclusion, equipment).
- **Restraint:** Physical contact and force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement.
- **Seclusion:** Supervised confinement/ isolation in a space the pupil **cannot leave**; **never** used punitively in schools. [9]
- **Safe space / calm room:** Voluntary regulation area; supportive, supervised, **not** a sanction. [2]
- **Positive Behavioural Support:** Person-centred, evidence-based framework (NICE NG11) focusing on functional assessment, environmental adaptation and skills teaching; **restrictive practices are not PBS**. [7]
- **Trauma-informed practice:** Recognises trauma, prioritises safety/predictability, prevents re-traumatisation. [1]

4) Values & Principles

- Safety, dignity and **human rights** first; pupil voice central.
- Prevention and early help: routines, relationships, predictable environments, supportive teaching. [8]
- Any use of force is **last resort, proportionate, brief**. [3]
- Reasonable adjustments for SEND/trauma (Equality Act); co-production with families. [8]
- Reflective learning culture; reduce future need through review and data. [13]

5) Prevention & Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)

All schools adopt **PBS** as the organising framework for behaviour support: functional assessment, environmental adjustments, skills teaching (communication/self-regulation), reinforcement and consistent routines. Staff deploy **trauma-informed de-escalation** (calm tone, choices, time/space, remove audience, “fresh face”, supportive touch where appropriate) before any restrictive intervention. [7][2]

In special schools all pupils should have a Positive Behaviour Plan (PBP) (Appendix C). In mainstream schools’ pupils who have required or may require additional support with behaviour will have a PBP. The example in Appendix C is the recommended format for all Discovery Schools to use

6) Staff Training, Competence & Supervision

- **All staff:** annual refresh in positive behaviour for learning and de-escalation strategies.
- **Identified staff:** advanced positive-handling training (Team Teach Level 2) **certified against RRN Standards** (via **BILD ACT**); competency assessed and refreshed.
- Training proportional to need (greater coverage in special schools); reflective supervision and learning after incidents. [5][6]

7) Safe Spaces / Calm Rooms — Protocol & Safeguards

Purpose is **voluntary regulation**, not punishment. Access by choice or supportive direction; staff maintain least-intrusive supervision; dignity preserved; time-limited with check-ins; any **escorted** use during crisis is **recorded**. Patterns are analysed termly to reduce antecedents. **Doors are not locked.** [2]

8) Decision-Making & Risk Assessment

Consider necessity, proportionality and the risks of intervening **versus** not intervening, accounting for age/size, medical conditions, SEND, trauma history and known triggers; communicate intentions where possible. Use the **least restrictive** option for the **shortest** time.

The RRN **Six Core Strategies** (leadership; data; workforce development; prevention tools; family involvement; debrief for learning) are incorporated into our practice in a school context.

9) Prohibited Practices

Not permitted due to risk and/or incompatibility with guidance and human rights:

- Any technique impeding airway/breathing/circulation (e.g., pressure to **neck/chest/abdomen**).
- **Prone** (face-down) restraint; “hog-tying”; **basket holds**; **pain-compliance**.
- Use of force as punishment or in anger.
- **Seclusion** as a disciplinary measure.
- **Mechanical** or **chemical** restraint (medication used primarily to control behaviour) in school settings. [14][3][9]

10) Lawful Use of Force (incl. Searches)

Permitted to **prevent injury**, **prevent serious property damage**, **prevent an offence**, or **maintain good order**. When searching, staff follow DfE guidance; reasonable force to search is **lawful only in limited circumstances**—de-escalation and postponement should be considered where safe. [3][10]

11) Recording, Reporting & Parental Communication

Record **every significant incident** involving **use of force** (and other restrictive interventions) **as soon as practicable** on the school's system (e.g., **Arbor**) with: parties involved; time/date/location/duration; antecedents; **de-escalation attempted**; legal basis; holds used; injuries/medical checks; post-incident support; parent contact; learning actions. Inform parents/carers **as soon as practicable**, unless this would cause **significant harm** (DSL to advise). The Head of Safeguarding in conjunction with Director of Specialist Provision provide **termly aggregated reports** to Trustees, including equality impacts and repeat incidents. (Aligns with DfE live guidance and anticipates the 2025 consultation requirements.) [1][3][12]

12) Post-Incident Support & Structured Debrief

Provide immediate medical and emotional support; complete a **restorative conversation** (24–48h, developmentally appropriate); hold a **structured debrief** (within 72h) to identify triggers, system factors and prevention steps, and update plans. Research and sector guidance place **post-incident debrief** at the heart of restraint-reduction, although the standalone evidence base is still developing. [15][16]

13) Roles & Responsibilities

- **Trustees:** oversee restraint reduction; receive termly data/assurance.
- **Director of Specialist Provision:** strategic leadership; training standards; QA; Trust-wide data governance
- **Head of Safeguarding:** QA practice; analyse trends; targeted support; report to leadership/trustees.
- **Headteacher:** implement policy; ensure training/competence; accurate records; report to Advisory Board.
- **DSL/DDSL:** assess safeguarding implications; advise on parental communication; escalate to LA/LADO.
- **SENCO:** lead functional assessment and BSPs; ensure reasonable adjustments and staff briefing.
- **Designated Physical Intervention Lead:** maintain training records; environment checks; facilitate debriefs; data audit.
- **All staff:** prevent/de-escalate; use least-restrictive last resort; record; participate in debriefs.
- **Parents/Carers & Pupils:** co-produce plans, share insights, join reviews where appropriate.

14) Complaints & Allegations

Concerns managed via the school complaints procedure. Allegations meeting the harm threshold follow **KCSIE 2025** with LADO involvement where required. Staff can raise safeguarding concerns without detriment.

15) Data Protection & Information Sharing

Incident records are personal data: comply with **UK GDPR/DPA 2018**; retain per Trust schedules; share on a **need-to-know** basis consistent with safeguarding law and guidance.

References

1. [“Revised 2025 Guidance: How Schools Must Record, Report, and ...](#)
2. [NCI Flex Risk of Restraints - edcoe.org](#)
3. [RRN training standards | bild](#)
4. [Restraint Reduction Network Training Standards - A24Group Medical Staffing](#)
5. [Challenging behaviour and learning disabilities: summary of NICE guidance](#)
6. [Behaviour in schools : Advice for headteachers and school staff ... - UCL](#)
7. [Reducing Restrictive Intervention of Children and Young People](#)
8. [Searching, screening and confiscation policy - September 2024](#)
9. [Ofsted Education Inspection Framework Behaviour and Attitudes](#)
10. [New reasonable force guidance: What schools need to know](#)
11. [Six Core Strategies for Reducing Seclusion and Restraint Use©](#)
12. [An Illustrative Review of Positional Asphyxiation in Infants Secured ...](#)
13. [The importance of post-incident debriefing - Respect Training](#)
14. [Using MAS to Achieve Restraint Reduction CALM Post incident support for ...](#)