



TARBIYYAH SECONDARY SCHOOL

مدرسة التربية الثانوية الإسلامية

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RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

Formerly the Physical Restraint & Use of Reasonable Force Policy

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026 – 2027

Policy name	Restrictive Interventions and the Use of Reasonable Force Policy 2026–2027
Applies to	All staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school, including Trustees, and to all pupils
Approved by	Haneef Sandhar
Position	Headteacher
Updated by	S. Ahmed, Deputy Headteacher
Agreed with	The Chair of Trustees
Last reviewed on	August 2026
Next review due by	August 2027
Review cycle	Annual, and immediately following any serious incident or any change to statutory guidance
Supersedes	Physical Restraint & Use of Reasonable Force Policy 2025–2026
Availability	Published on the school website, issued to all staff at induction, and provided to parents on request

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1. Purpose and Scope

Tarbiyyah Secondary School fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This is a whole-school policy and applies to all pupils. Care and consideration will be given to the age and needs of the pupil when following the guidance in it.

It applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school, including Trustees.

The principle that governs this policy

Force is a last resort. The best restraint policy is one that is rarely needed, because the school has prevented, defused and de-escalated everything it could.

Every use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the circumstances, and must use the minimum force for the minimum time.

Reasonable force is never used as a punishment. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools, including independent schools.

The school works actively to reduce the use of force over time, and measures whether it is succeeding.

2. Legal Framework

Source	Relevance
Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 93	Gives all members of school staff a legal power to use reasonable force.
Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 93A	Commenced in 2025. Requires the proprietor of a school to have a procedure for recording each significant incident in which a member

Source	Relevance
	of staff uses force on a pupil, and to have regard to the statutory element of the DfE guidance.
Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025	Set out the recording and reporting duties in relation to the use of force, seclusion and non-force restraint.
Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE)	Published 18 December 2025, in force from 1 April 2026, replacing the 2013 Use of Reasonable Force guidance. Largely non-statutory, but containing a statutory section on recording and reporting issued under section 93A.
Education Act 1996, section 548	Prohibits corporal punishment in all schools, including independent schools.
Education Act 2002, section 157	The school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
Equality Act 2010, and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)	The duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
Keeping Children Safe in Education	Governs allegations against staff and the school's safeguarding response. The 2026 edition applies.
Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention (DfE and DHSC)	Guidance on children with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties.

3. Definitions

The new guidance draws a clearer distinction between ordinary physical contact and restrictive practice than the 2013 guidance did. These definitions matter, because they determine what must be recorded and reported.

Term	Meaning
Reasonable force	Using no more force than is needed in the circumstances. It covers a broad range of actions, from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more restrictive holds.
Restrictive intervention	Any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act. It may or may not involve force, and may include the use of equipment or seclusion.
Restraint	The positive application of force to protect or prevent a pupil from causing injury to himself or others, or seriously damaging property. It is necessary only in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.
Seclusion	Placing a pupil alone in a room or area from which he is prevented from leaving. See section 9.
Appropriate physical contact	Ordinary contact that is not a restrictive intervention — comforting a distressed pupil, giving first aid, supporting a pupil in PE, or demonstrating a technique. This is a normal part of school life and is not restraint.
Significant incident	Any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This is the threshold that triggers the recording and reporting duties in sections 11 and 12.

Term	Meaning
Injury	Significant injury. This includes actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of or injury to themselves or others by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning.

4. Preventing the Need for Force

The new guidance places considerable weight on minimising the need for force through prevention and de-escalation. Force used because a situation was allowed to escalate is force that could have been avoided.

- Staff who know a pupil well help identify and manage risk where challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of force being needed.
- De-escalation is the first response in every case: lowering the voice, reducing the audience, giving space and time, offering a choice, using an agreed cue, and involving a member of staff the pupil trusts.
- Known triggers are recorded and planned around, particularly for pupils with a behaviour support plan under section 10.
- Where an incident is foreseeable, staff plan in advance who will respond and how, rather than improvising under pressure.
- Removing an audience of other pupils is often the single most effective de-escalation step available.

5. Who May Use Reasonable Force

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school.
- It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on a school-organised visit.
- The decision whether or not to intervene physically rests on the professional judgement of the member of staff concerned, and always depends on the individual circumstances.
- Pupils are never involved in restraint. A pupil may be sent to fetch an adult.
- No member of staff is ever required to use force, and no member of staff should place themselves at risk.

6. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Reasonable force may be used:

- to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, from committing an offence, or from causing disorder;
- to control pupils or to restrain them;
- to remove a disruptive pupil from the classroom where he has refused an instruction to leave;
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or visit;
- to prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing him to leave would risk his safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts others;
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight;
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming himself through physical outbursts.

Force and searching

Staff may use reasonable force to search a pupil without consent for prohibited items — including weapons, knives, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and vapes, fireworks, pornographic images, and any article used or likely to be used to commit an offence or cause injury or damage.

Force may not be used to search for items banned only by the school's own rules, such as a mobile phone or a smartwatch. A pupil who refuses to hand over a banned item is dealt with under the Consequence System, not by force.

This distinction is easily missed and should be covered in staff training.

7. When Reasonable Force May Not Be Used

Reasonable force can never be used as a form of punishment.

- Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools, including independent schools.
- Force is not used to enforce compliance with school rules where there is no risk of injury, damage, offence or disorder.
- Force is not used to search for items banned only by school rules.
- Force is not used because a pupil has been rude, refused to work, or is otherwise defiant, where there is no safety risk.

8. How Force Must Be Applied

Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency, provided they follow this policy. Staff should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues. In any application of force, the minimum reasonable force is used to calm the situation, and help is summoned from colleagues.

Approach

- Approach the pupil calmly but firmly.
- Where possible, explain the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour.
- Communicate that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- Maintain a calm and measured approach throughout.

Restraint must not

- involve hurting the pupil;
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil;
- restrict the pupil's breathing;
- involve contact with sexually sensitive areas;
- involve locking the pupil in a room.

During any incident the person restraining should

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil;
- cause the minimum level of restriction of movement;
- reduce the danger of any accidental injury;
- cease the restraint immediately if there are any signs of physical distress, such as a sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting.

Do

- Summon help immediately. A pupil may be sent to fetch another adult.
- Ensure a free passage of air through the airways.
- Be aware of your own feelings of anger.
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way.
- Provide a soft surface if possible.
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil that could cause injury.
- Monitor the pupil's respiration, circulation and state of consciousness.

Do not

- Try to manage on your own.
- Stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply.
- Straddle the pupil.
- Push his arms up his back.
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head.
- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points — the inside of the upper arm, the groin, the neck.
- Use face-down holds.

Forms of physical intervention

Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff physically interposing between pupils, blocking a pupil's path, holding, pulling, leading a pupil by the hand or arm, shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back, or in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds. Restraint may be partial, restricting particular movements, or total, as in immobilisation.

9. Seclusion and Isolation

The new guidance introduces a formal definition of seclusion and strict rules around it, which the 2013 guidance did not contain. The recording and reporting duties cover seclusion as well as restraint.

Seclusion	Placing a pupil alone in a room or area from which he is prevented from leaving. A pupil is never locked in a room.
Supervised isolation	Requiring a pupil to work away from his class under the supervision of a member of staff, with access to the toilet, food, drink and medication, and free to leave in an emergency. This is not seclusion.
The C5 Reflection Room	Internal isolation under the Consequence System is supervised isolation and is not seclusion, provided a member of staff remains present and the pupil is not prevented from leaving.

10. Pupils with SEND and Disabilities

The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.

- Force is more likely to be used on pupils with SEND, and the school treats that as something to be reduced, not accepted.
- Where force may foreseeably be needed for a particular pupil, a behaviour support plan is co-produced with the pupil and his parents, setting out triggers, de-escalation strategies that work for him, and any pre-agreed intervention.
- Pre-agreed interventions recorded in a behaviour support plan still count as significant incidents when used, and must be recorded and reported in the same way.
- Plans are reviewed at least termly and after every incident.
- The SENDCo is involved in developing every plan and is informed of every incident involving a pupil with SEND.
- A pupil's disability may affect how he experiences physical contact, how he responds to instruction under stress, and how he should be supported afterwards. These are recorded in his plan.
- Where a pupil has a medical condition or a physical disability, the plan sets out any hold or position that must never be used with him.

11. Recording Significant Incidents

A statutory duty since 1 April 2026

Every significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable after the incident.

This applies even where the use of force was agreed with parents in advance as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

It is best practice to apply the same recording approach to restrictive interventions where force was not used.

The record must capture at least the following. A form is at Appendix A.

- The name of the pupil, and the names of staff involved and of any witnesses.
- The date, time and location of the incident.
- Any relevant needs of the pupil, including whether he has a special educational need or disability.
- What happened before the incident, and what de-escalation was attempted.
- The rationale for using force — why it was necessary and proportionate.
- What force or intervention was used, and for how long.
- Any injury to the pupil, to staff or to anyone else, and the medical attention given.
- The post-incident support provided to the pupil and to staff.
- When and how parents were informed.

All incidents are reported to the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher as soon as possible, and recorded on the Behaviour and Safeguarding Log.

12. Reporting to Parents

A statutory duty since 1 April 2026

Significant incidents must be reported to the parents of the pupil involved, as soon as reasonably practicable and ideally on the same day.

This is no longer a matter for the professional judgement of the member of staff involved.

- Parents are informed on the day of the incident wherever possible, and the conversation is followed up in writing.
- The report explains what happened, why force was used, whether the pupil was injured, and what support has been given.
- The record and the report are distinct: reporting to parents does not necessarily mean sharing the full written record, and the school takes account of the privacy of other pupils involved.
- Where a parent wishes to discuss an incident further, a meeting is offered.
- Where an incident involves a pupil with a behaviour support plan, the plan is reviewed with parents afterwards.

13. Post-Incident Support

What happens after an incident matters as much as how it was handled.

- The pupil is checked for injury by a first aider, and medical attention is sought where there is any doubt.
- The pupil is given time to calm and is spoken to by a member of staff he trusts, once he is ready. This is not the same conversation as any behaviour consequence that may follow.
- Staff involved are supported. Being part of a restraint is distressing, and a member of staff is offered a debrief with a senior colleague the same day.
- Other pupils who witnessed the incident are spoken to, and their questions answered honestly and appropriately.
- The incident is reviewed by the Deputy Headteacher: what led to it, what worked, what could have prevented it, and what should change.
- Where the incident indicates a change is needed to a pupil's behaviour support plan, the plan is amended.

14. Staff Training

- Staff who may need to use restrictive interventions receive training before they are expected to do so.
- Training equips staff to judge whether an intervention is appropriate, and to assess whether their response is reasonable under pressure — not merely to perform holds.
- Training covers prevention and de-escalation, the legal framework, the recording and reporting duties, safe practice, and the specific needs of pupils with SEND.
- The school carries out a risk assessment for staff who regularly work with pupils where force may be required, so that they can do so as safely as possible.
- All staff receive an awareness briefing on this policy at induction and annually thereafter, whether or not they are trained in physical intervention.
- Refresher training is provided at intervals set by the training provider.

Item	Detail
Training provider and course	An accredited provider of de-escalation and positive handling training
Staff trained in physical intervention	Recorded on the school's training log
Date all staff last received an awareness briefing	At the start of each academic year

Item	Detail
Next refresher due	As set by the training provider, and at least every three years

The DfE guidance does not mandate a particular accreditation. School leaders should choose training that reflects the principles of the guidance.

15. Complaints and Allegations

- All complaints about the use of force are investigated thoroughly, speedily and appropriately.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law — using reasonable force to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder — this provides a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy are followed, including referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer where the allegation meets the harm threshold.
- A member of staff who is the subject of an allegation is supported throughout, and is told what is happening and what to expect.
- A pupil who makes a complaint is taken seriously and is not treated less favourably for having made it.

16. Monitoring, Data Analysis and Review

- The Deputy Headteacher reviews all recorded incidents each half term.
- Data is analysed by pupil, by year group, by SEND and disability status, and by ethnicity, and any disproportionality is investigated and acted on.
- Repeated incidents involving the same pupil trigger a review of his behaviour support plan and of the strategies being used.
- Repeated incidents involving the same member of staff trigger a supportive conversation about training and workload, not an assumption of fault.
- The Headteacher reports to the Trustees at least annually on the use of force and restrictive interventions, including the number of incidents, the trend over time, and actions taken to reduce them.
- This policy is reviewed annually and immediately after any serious incident or change in guidance.

The measure of success

A school is not doing well on restraint because it has a thorough policy. It is doing well when the number of incidents falls, and when the incidents that do occur were genuinely unavoidable.

The purpose of recording and analysing incidents is to reduce them.

A. Appendix A — Incident Record

Completed as soon as practicable after any significant incident involving the use of force or a restrictive intervention, including seclusion, and including pre-agreed interventions used under a behaviour support plan.

Pupil name and form	
Does the pupil have SEND or a disability?	Yes / No — if yes, give details
Does the pupil have a behaviour support plan?	Yes / No — was the intervention pre-agreed?
Date, time and duration	
Location	
Staff involved	
Witnesses — staff and pupils	
What happened immediately before	
De-escalation strategies attempted	
Why force was necessary and proportionate	
What intervention was used, and for how long	
Was seclusion used?	Yes / No — if yes, give details
Injuries to the pupil	
Injuries to staff or others	
First aid or medical attention given	
Post-incident support given to the pupil	
Post-incident support given to staff	
Parents informed — by whom, when, how	
Written follow-up sent to parents	Yes / No — date
Pupil's account of the incident	
Actions arising and changes to the support plan	
Reported to Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher	Yes / No — date

Recorded on the Behaviour and Safeguarding Log	Yes / No — date
Completed by, and date	

B. Appendix B — Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy and the C1–C5 Consequence System
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Student & Parent Handbook 2026–27, including the Reflection Room and searching and confiscation
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Disability Equality and Accessibility Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Haneef Sandhar

Approved by: Haneef Sandhar, Headteacher

Updated by: S. Ahmed, Deputy Headteacher · August 2026

Next review due: August 2027

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