Physical Intervention and Restrictive Interventions Policy

This policy is effective for all schools within The Mead Educational Trust, the Teaching School, the SCITT and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board.

Version:	1.1
Ratified by:	Executive Team
Date ratified:	
Next review:	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. The version above reflects the most recent assurance check.

Revision History:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
1.0	Dec 2025	MOL/CJO/MPA	New policy
1.1	Mar 2026	MPA	10.3 confirmed seclusion should be a last resort and reported to Executive Team

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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out TMET's approach to restrictive interventions, including the lawful use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion, and TMET's commitment to minimising their use through prevention, de-escalation and inclusive practice. It aligns with statutory and non-statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). For further information, see: Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK. Schools must follow the 2013 guidance until 31st March 20206, the updated guidance applies from 1st April 2026.

1.2 Statutory elements include duties to record and report each significant incident involving the use of force and to record/report any use of seclusion. Schools must comply with these requirements from April 2026

1.3 Where this policy uses the word '**must'**, this indicates a legal requirement. Where it uses '**should'**, this indicates expected practice unless there is good reason not to follow it.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all TMET staff and volunteers working with pupils across TMET schools, DSPs, SCITT and Teaching School activities under the control of the Trust.

2.2 This policy should be read alongside school's Behaviour, Safeguarding (Child Protection), SEND, Health and Safety, and Searching, Screening & Confiscation Policies.

3. Definitions

- **Restrictive intervention**: Action to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of a pupil's body or part of the body (physical or non-physical).
- **Reasonable force**: a term used in legislation which includes physical restraint by staff to prevent injury, damage, criminal behaviour or serious disorder, it must be the minimum necessary for the shortest time required.
- **Restraint**: Non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises or limits movement (may or may not involve direct physical contact).-disciplinary intervention that immobilises or limits movement (may or may not involve direct physical contact).
- **Seclusion**: A non-disciplinary intervention involving confining a pupil away from others and preventing them from leaving. Used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.-disciplinary intervention involving confining a pupil away from others and preventing them from leaving.
- **Significant incident**: Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate everyday physical contact and requires recording and reporting.

4. Principles

4.1 TMET schools will:

- Prioritise safety — interventions protect pupils, staff and the public from harm.
- Use the least restrictive option for the shortest time.
- Prevent and de-escalate wherever possible through environment, routines, relationships and communication.
- Safeguard dignity and welfare, considering age, size, SEND, vulnerabilities, language and communication needs.
- Maintain transparency — mandatory recording/reporting and routine data review.
- Prohibit use of restrictive interventions as punishment; avoid any practice that could cause pain, humiliation or degradation.
- Maintain transparency through mandatory recording, reporting and routine data review

5. Minimising the need for restrictive interventions

5.1 TMET is committed to minimising the need for restrictive interventions through a strong focus on prevention, early intervention and de-escalation.

5.2 TMET Schools are expected to implement consistent, whole-school behaviour approaches, as set out in their Behaviour Policy, which promote the following:

- Foster calm, orderly, supportive environments; deploy consistent routines and relational practice.
- Train staff in de-escalation, positive behaviour support, communication strategies (tone, pacing, active listening).
- Develop behaviour support plans for pupils who may experience dysregulation; co-produce strategies and personalised support plans with parents/carers.
- Record and analyse incident data to inform improvement planning (curriculum, environment, unstructured times).

5.3 When deciding whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention, staff should consider whether the intervention is:

- Necessary - to manage an immediate risk of harm
- Proportionate - matched to the level of risk and seriousness of the situation
- Reasonable - taking full account of the pupil's age, size, SEND, medical needs, communication needs, emotional state and understanding
- Time-limited - applied for the shortest possible duration and reduced or stopped as soon as the risk has passed

6. Staff authorisation and training

6.1 All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force where necessary in limited circumstances.

6.2 TMET recognises that some roles and settings carry a higher likelihood of requiring restrictive interventions. TMET therefore expects that staff who are more likely to need to use restrictive interventions receive appropriate, accredited training focused on prevention, de-escalation and the safe, lawful use of reasonable force and restrictive intervention.

6.3 Training will reflect the principles of this guidance and will support staff to assess necessity and proportionality, understand risk to physical and psychological wellbeing, recognise the impact of trauma and SEND and make defensible professional judgements, including in situations where the decision must be taken quickly.

6.4 TMET's preferred provider of positive handling training is Team Teach, aligned to DfE guidance.

6.4.1 In mainstream schools, this will normally include senior leaders and identified pastoral or inclusion staff, alongside wider staff training in de-escalation and behaviour support.

6.4.2 In special school settings and Designated Special Provisions (DSPs), where pupils may present with more complex needs, all staff are expected to receive appropriate positive handling training, with additional or advanced training provided where positive handling plans indicate a need.

6.5 Principals are responsible for ensuring that staff are not expected to use restrictive interventions beyond their training or competence, and that training, deployment and support arrangements are reviewed annually.

7. Using reasonable force

7.1 The use of reasonable force is a restrictive intervention and must be regarded as a last resort, used only where necessary to prevent harm and where other strategies have been unsuccessful or are not appropriate in the circumstances.

7.2 A staff member may only use reasonable force to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others.
- Committing a criminal offence.
- Damaging property.
- Causing disorder among pupils at school (during teaching or otherwise).

7.3 As far as reasonably practicable, staff should not use reasonable force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and summon assistance if required. However, staff must not delay intervention where doing so would increase the risk of harm. Staff that can be called if a situation arises include:

Any member of the leadership team
Any member from the DSP
Pastoral team: Behaviour mentor, attendance lead

7.4 Before using reasonable force, staff should, wherever practicable:

- communicate clearly and calmly with the pupil about the behaviour of concern
- give the pupil an opportunity to comply or de-escalate
- warn the pupil that physical intervention may be used if the risk continues

7.5 Throughout the incident, staff must continue to communicate in a calm, measured and reassuring manner. Physical intervention must stop immediately once it is no longer required to maintain safety.

7.6 In situations where there is a high and immediate risk of serious injury or death, any member of staff may take necessary action to prevent harm, provided this is consistent with the principle of using the minimum force required.

7.7 The following staff must be informed if/when restraint takes place:

Principal- Hannah Sandy-Sharpe

7.8 Staff must make every reasonable effort to avoid causing injury. However, TMET recognises that in extreme circumstances, some minor injury may be unavoidable. Any injury or adverse impact must be recorded and followed up in line with this policy.

7.9 Staff must always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could reasonably be interpreted as sexually inappropriate, degrading or unsafe, and must ensure that the pupil's dignity is preserved at all times.

8. Unacceptable uses of force

8.1 TMET prohibits:

- Any use of force as punishment.
- Holds or positions that affect airway, breathing or circulation (e.g., pressure to neck/abdomen, covering mouth/nose).
- Humiliating / degrading practice; pain- compliance techniques
- Prolonged ground holds: if a pupil is unintentionally on the ground, release/re-position to a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible and request medical assessment if appropriate.

9. Searching and use of force

9.1 Principals and authorised staff may search for prohibited items where there are reasonable grounds to suspect possession. Reasonable force may be used to search only for legally prohibited items; not for items banned solely under school rules. Staff must follow their school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

10. Seclusion

10.1 Seclusion must only be used when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and poses an immediate risk of harm to others. It must not be implemented through threat of punishment or used as a disciplinary response to wilful misbehaviour.

10.2 Requirements of seclusion are:

- The environment is safe and not intimidating.
- The pupil is continuously supervised.
- As soon as the immediate risk reduces, the pupil is allowed to leave.
- Record and report in line with Section 11 of this policy including sharing the written records with parents, subject to safeguarding expectations.

10.3 Seclusion must be a last resort escalation. The Executive Team and Head of Safeguarding must be notified if seclusion is used.

11. Recording, reporting and parental communication

11.1 All restrictive interventions, including non-physical restraint and seclusions, must be recorded by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable reasonable and no later than the same day. The record must capture at least:

<u>For use of force:</u>

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- 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, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- 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

<u>For seclusion and use of restraint (with or without direct physical contact)</u>

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

11.2 Parents/carers will be notified as soon as practically possible, normally on the same day, and provided with the following information in writing (e.g. email or school messaging system):

For use of force:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

For seclusion and use of restraint (with or without direct physical contact)
A copy of the written record of the seclusion and use of restraint will be shared with parents/carers.

11.3 Parents/carers may not be informed in the following circumstances:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over; or
- informing them would likely place the child at risk of significant harm. In such cases, the local authority in which the pupil ordinarily resides will be notified.

11.4 Records are maintained on the school's confidential system (e.g., Bromcom or CPOMS) and retained per TMET's retention schedule and UK GDPR requirements.

12. Post-incident support and review

12.1 Following any restrictive intervention, the school will ensure that appropriate and timely actions are taken to safeguard the physical and emotional wellbeing of all those involved, to understand what happened and why, and to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

12.2 As soon as practicable after the incident, staff will check the pupil and any staff involved for signs of injury, distress or illness. Where appropriate, first aid will be administered and medical assessment or treatment sought. Any injuries or health concerns will be recorded in line with the school's health and safety procedures and reported to the Health and Safety Executive where required

12.3 TMET recognises that restrictive interventions can be distressing. Consideration will therefore be given to the emotional wellbeing needs of the pupil, any staff involved, and any pupils who may have witnessed the incident. Support may include access to pastoral staff, counselling services, trusted adults or other appropriate support mechanisms.

12.4 Where possible the school will hold reflective debrief, conversations following incidents involving restrictive interventions. These discussions are intended to support wellbeing, enable learning and improvement, and reduce future risk. Where appropriate, debriefs will include:

- a factual review of what happened and why
- reflection on early warning signs and triggers
- consideration of what preventative and de-escalation strategies were used and their effectiveness
- identification of any alternative approaches that may reduce the likelihood of recurrence

Where possible, debriefs should be facilitated by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident, and may include the pupil and their parent where appropriate.

12.5 Following any restrictive intervention, relevant behaviour support plans, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments will be reviewed. Changes will be made where necessary to better support the pupil, address underlying needs, and strengthen preventative measures.

12.6 Leaders will monitor incidents and post-incident actions to identify patterns, emerging risks or training needs. Where restrictive interventions occur repeatedly or where concerns arise, this will trigger further review, multi-agency engagement where appropriate, and escalation through safeguarding or SEND processes.

13. Governance

13.1 The Academy Council recognises that the use of restrictive interventions is a significant safeguarding matter and will provide appropriate oversight to ensure that practice is lawful, proportionate and focused on prevention.

13.2 In line with statutory duties and the April 2026 Department for Education guidance, the Academy Council will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to support the effective implementation of this policy and the associated recording and reporting requirements.

13.3 In fulfilling this responsibility, the Academy Council will:

- ensure that this policy is implemented and reviewed regularly
- assure itself that statutory recording and reporting duties are being met
- receive and consider information about the use of restrictive interventions, including emerging patterns or trends
- be mindful of any disproportionate impact on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities or other identified vulnerabilities
- use information from incidents to inform discussion about prevention, training and support
- ensure that staff are appropriately supported and trained
- ensure that learning from incidents contributes to the ongoing development of practice

13.4 Oversight of restrictive interventions will form part of the Academy Council's wider safeguarding and pupil wellbeing responsibilities.

14. Complaints

14.1 Any complaints raised in relation to the use of restrictive interventions will be managed in accordance with TMET's Complaints Procedure.

14.2 Where an allegation is made that a member of staff has used restrictive interventions inappropriately, unlawfully or in a way that may have placed a pupil at risk, the matter will be managed in line with **Keeping Children Safe in Education** and TMET safeguarding and allegations management procedures.

14.3 Where appropriate, the school will work with external agencies to ensure concerns are managed in accordance with statutory guidance. This includes consideration of whether the concern meets the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and whether any immediate safeguarding or risk management actions are required.

14.4 All school leaders will ensure that allegations are considered objectively, based on the available evidence, and that appropriate support is provided to all parties involved.

14.5 Learning arising from complaints and allegations will be used to inform training, policy review and preventative practice.