

Amplify Education

De-escalation and Restrictive Intervention Policy

Date created: May 2026

Author (role title): Director of Inclusion

Approved by: Quality and Standards of Education Committee

Implementation date: June 2026

Dated Adopted: June 2026

Review Date: June 2029

As part of the review process, this policy/procedure has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. This policy has associated templates recommended for school use. Please see the 'templates' section of your Amplify Connect.

Date	Page	Change	Purpose of Change
May 2026		New Policy	New over-arching policy for the Trust

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1. Statement of Intent

Amplify Education Trust is committed to creating calm, safe and inclusive learning environments where all pupils can thrive. The Trust recognises that behaviour is a form of communication and prioritises **early support, prevention and de-escalation** to minimise the need for restrictive interventions.

In exceptional circumstances, restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, may be necessary to protect pupils or others from harm. Where such interventions are used, they will always be **lawful, proportionate, necessary, time-limited, and in the best interests of the pupil**.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Amplify's Behaviour Policy which outlines the Trust's relational approach to managing behaviour.

2. Values, Principles and Standards

Amplify is **a bold voice for Bristol** - speaking with ambition and channelling the city's spirit into a shared journey of belief, opportunity and citizenship.

We **build belief** in every young person, shaping a future where every voice matters, every story is heard, and every learner moves forward with confidence.

We **expand opportunities** and nurture potential to enrich each learner's journey with a passport of inclusive, academic, creative and musical experiences.

We **strengthen citizenship** through connecting communities, educating to build unity and pride. This is Bristol, represented.

3. Objectives and Scope

3.1 The specific aims of this policy are to:

- help schools proactively minimise the need for restrictive interventions through effective implementation of de-escalation strategies;
- ensure the wellbeing and safety of all pupils and staff.

3.2 This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996, 2002, 2006 and 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2024)
- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, 2026).

3.3 This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions and Suspensions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy.

4. Responsibilities and accountabilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the Trust central team

- To ensure that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- To ensure the policy is well communicated to all Headteachers.
- To ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed.
- To ensure there is a procedure for supplying a written record of the seclusion or restraint incident to parents/carers.
- Regularly review data on restrictive interventions to ensure school leaders:
 - identify and implement improvements to policies and practices;
 - identify areas of learning and development for school staff;
 - analyse pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to understand the effectiveness of preventative strategies and pupil support measures;

- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- To ensure the implementation of and compliance with current policy and procedures at school level.
- To monitor systems, resources, impact and actions related to the policy.
- To ensure the policy is well communicated and staff understand their role in its implementation.
- To handle any complaints at school level which arise through this policy.

4.3 Responsibilities of school leadership

- To ensure staff are inducted into the procedures surrounding this policy and any updates.
- To provide training to ensure policy compliance.
- To hold sessions for parents/carers and pupils as required, to ensure the policy is understood.

4.4 Responsibilities of all staff

- To uphold the whole school approach to the policy through modelling expected standards and utilising appropriate procedures.
- To keep up to date with policy changes over time.
- To promote a collaborative and inclusive ethos where all pupils can thrive.
- To feed back to school leaders where concerns may arise in the implementation of the policy.

4.5 Responsibilities of parents/carers

- To support the implementation of the policy with their child, as appropriate.
- Where a parent/carer has feedback on the implementation of the policy, to raise this directly with the school while continuing to work in partnership with the school.

4.6 Responsibilities of pupils

- To uphold school rules and expectations and thereby comply with the implementation of the policy.
- To feed back on the implementation of the policy through appropriate means, such as school council or school staff.

5. Definitions

It is important to note that within the definitions below, terms are not mutually exclusive.

5.1 De-escalation

Spotting the often subtle signs that an individual is feeling distressed and taking action to prevent them from spiralling into a potential crisis.

5.2 Positive handling

Proactively managing challenging behaviours, using de-escalation techniques first and reasonable force only as a last resort to prevent harm.

5.3 Restrictive intervention

Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. This includes both physical and non-physical interventions and may or may not involve the use of reasonable force. Restrictive interventions may include use of equipment or seclusion.

5.4 Reasonable force

In the instance of physical intervention, using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Reasonable force should only be used to prevent harm, serious disruption or criminal activity. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.

5.5 Restraint

A non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

5.6 Safe space

An area that a pupil may use voluntarily to regulate their emotions, with appropriate supervision or support from staff. Use of a safe space is not a restrictive intervention.

5.7 Significant incident

Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

5.8 Seclusion

A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave. See 7.2 for further detail.

6. Principles of effective de-escalation

As a Trust we understand that behaviour is a form of communication. Some pupils will communicate distress through their behaviour. Pupils who are distressed will need support to regulate before they can rationally process and repair unacceptable behaviour. This means spotting the often subtle signs that an individual is feeling distressed and taking action to prevent them from spiralling into a potential crisis. This will help the pupil to regulate and reconnect the feelings driving the behaviour.

De-escalation principles can be summarised using three key words:

- **EARLY:** spot signs of distress at an early stage and implement appropriate de-escalation techniques

- **CALM:** use of calm body language, calm tone of voice and calm scripts will help pupils de-escalate
- **SAFE:** use of safe spaces and trusted adults will support effective de-escalation.

6.1 Early identification

It is important that signs of distress are spotted early and that de-escalation strategies are implemented quickly. This should happen as soon as possible after agitation is spotted and will reduce the likelihood of distress escalating to crisis point.

6.2 De-escalation techniques

There are many de-escalation techniques, some verbal and some non-verbal, and they should be used contextually, depending on the needs of the individual. Further procedural guidance on the use of de-escalation techniques can be found in De-escalation and Restrictive Intervention Policy – Techniques Document.

6.3 De-escalation Plans

If reasonable force has been used to de-escalate a pupil, that pupil must have a de-escalation plan (please see a recommended template in the De-escalation and Restrictive Intervention Policy – De-escalation Plan Template document). There may also be pupils who would benefit from a de-escalation plan, even where reasonable force has not been previously used. For example, if school feels, in the future, it is likely that reasonable force may be necessary to support a pupil, or if a pupil often becomes agitated and requires de-escalation strategies to be used on a frequent basis.

De-escalation plans should always include pupil and family voice, and input from key staff who support the child. If the pupil has SEND, the SENCO should be involved in the development of the plan. De-escalation plans should be reviewed at least termly.

Pupils with SEND and other vulnerable learners, may require reasonable adjustments to de-escalation techniques used. For example, pupils with sensory processing needs may find physical interventions particularly distressing; pupils with communication and interaction needs may require staff to make reasonable adjustments to the communication whilst de-escalation techniques are being used.

If a pupil is pregnant reasonable adjustments will be required in line with the pupil's risk assessment.

7. Lawful use of restrictive interventions

In certain circumstances, all members of school staff have a legal power to use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force. There is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of reasonable force. However, where staff are likely to use reasonable force, it is important that they receive appropriate training in its safe and lawful use, and in preventative, de-escalation strategies.

Restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, may only be used where staff assess them to be **necessary, proportionate and time-limited**, and where no reasonable alternative is available. Restrictive interventions must never be used as a form of punishment.

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use restrictive interventions depends on each individual situation. In assessing whether the use of restrictive interventions is *necessary* and *proportionate*, the member of staff should use their professional judgement to consider:

1. Is it necessary?

- Are there reasonable alternative ways to manage a situation and achieve the desired outcome?
- Is the use of restrictive interventions likely to reduce the relevant risks, or will it escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the consequences of the behaviour it intends to address?

2. Is it proportionate?

- Use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- Consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and other relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

3. What is the impact on pupil welfare?

- Consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions, sensory processing needs, communication difficulties, or other additional needs, may

find the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

- Seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. For example, where possible, consider the location and environment where an intervention is used.
- Where possible, clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and what the pupil needs to do. For pupils with speech, language and communication needs, or with English as an additional language, strategies (sometimes non-verbal) should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening, can process the information and respond.
- Seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the use of restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be used.

Unacceptable use of force

- School staff will never use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.
- Pupils will not be deliberately restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation.
- The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff will release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

7.2 Use of seclusion

Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent.

Seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. There are disciplinary measures that are similar, such as removal from the classroom. Schools should refer to the DfE, 'Behaviour in schools' guidance for further information on these and other disciplinary measures.

Seclusion should not be used as a punishment, disciplinary measure, convenience or routine behaviour management strategy.

The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. During the period of seclusion, the pupil should be supervised at all times.

As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave.

An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 8, 'Reporting'.

7.3 Pupils with SEND and other vulnerable learners

Some pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which could be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments, feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This risks pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

In Amplify, schools seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support and create an inclusive environment that is supportive for pupils with SEND. Schools develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. Where necessary, schools produce a de-escalation plan for individual pupils which outlines potential triggers for distress and how the school will manage them, taking into consideration the pupils additional needs and vulnerabilities (please see the De-escalation and Restrictive Intervention Policy – De-escalation Plan Template).

7.4 Ensuring safety

As necessary, schools will carry out risk assessments so that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where restrictive interventions may be required, can do so as safely as possible.

After a significant incident of restrictive intervention, if required, the pupil and staff member involved will receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries. Any incidents must be reported following the school's health and safety procedures.

8. Reviewing and reporting restrictive interventions

8.1 Recording in school

Schools are legally required to record each significant incident where reasonable force is used, and each incident of seclusion or restraint. Incidents must be recorded by the staff member(s) involved as soon as practicable after the event. If more than one member of staff is involved, both members of staff should write individual reports.

The incident should be reported to the Headteacher/DSL as soon as practicable after the event. Schools should record the details, outlined below, in either a bound and numbered book or on CPOMS, under the category 'Restrictive Intervention Report'. Please see the De-escalation and Restrictive Intervention Policy – Restrictive Intervention Report Template for an example of this. The record must include:

- 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 (SEND) and their SEN status;
- time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used;
- 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, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable;
- 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.

Schools may include pupils' and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents/carers were notified, and what follow-up action has taken place.

If injuries have been sustained, these should be recorded in line with the Health and Safety Policy.

8.2 Reporting to parents/carers

For each significant use of force, and each incident of seclusion or restraint, parents/carers must be informed as soon as possible, unless it appears that doing so would likely result in significant harm to the pupil.

Parents/carers will receive the following information:

- time, date, location and approximate length of time the force was used;
- brief account of what type of restrictive intervention was used, and for incidents of reasonable force, the degree of force applied;
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable;
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance.

This information can be shared through an email or private message via an online learning platform. Please see the De-escalation and Restrictive Intervention Policy – Record of Significant Restrictive Intervention Template.

Schools should invite parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident. This will involve agreeing/reviewing a de-escalation plan.

8.3 Review of restrictive interventions

Schools must monitor patterns, trends and disproportionality in the use of restrictive interventions, including by pupils with SEND and with other protected characteristics. Schools must respond by taking action to reduce the use of restrictive interventions.

As outlined in 4.1, the Trust will review and analyse school's use of restrictive interventions, using this to inform policy, training and support.