South East Essex Academy Trust

SEEAT Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy 2026

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1. Introduction

South East Essex Academy Trust (SEEAT) is committed to creating safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments where all pupils can thrive, achieve and feel valued. Guided by our Trust values and our commitment to ensuring every child is known, supported and respected, we promote positive relationships, high expectations and a culture of belonging across all our schools.

This policy sits alongside the SEEAT Behaviour Statement of Intent and Guiding Principles, each school's Behaviour Policy, the SEEAT Suspensions and Exclusions Policy, and relevant safeguarding and SEND policies. Together, these documents establish the Trust's commitment to promoting positive behaviour, safeguarding pupils' welfare, and ensuring that responses to behaviour are fair, proportionate and centred on the best interests of the child.

SEEAT recognises that behaviour is a form of communication and that some pupils may experience difficulties in regulating their emotions, behaviour or responses. Our approach is founded on prevention, positive relationships, early intervention and de-escalation. We are committed to understanding and addressing the underlying causes of distress and dysregulation and to providing appropriate support that reduces the likelihood of crisis situations arising.

Restrictive interventions are not behaviour management strategies and must never be used as a punishment, sanction or means of securing compliance. They are measures of last resort and will only be considered where it is lawful, necessary, reasonable, proportionate and the least restrictive option available.

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to the prevention, use, recording and review of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force. It is underpinned by relevant legislation and statutory guidance and reflects the Trust's statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

SEEAT is committed to ensuring that the welfare, dignity, rights and safety of pupils remain paramount at all times. Wherever restrictive interventions are used, this will be accompanied by appropriate oversight, recording, support and review, with the aim of reducing future reliance on restrictive practices and promoting positive outcomes for children and young people.

This policy applies to all trustees, local governing bodies, school leaders, employees, agency staff, volunteers and any other adults working within or on behalf of SEEAT schools.

2. Policy Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a clear and robust framework for the lawful, safe and appropriate use of restrictive interventions across all SEEAT schools
- Clarify the legal powers and responsibilities of staff regarding the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in specific and justifiable circumstances
- Ensure that the welfare, dignity, rights and safety of pupils are protected and always respected
- Establish a consistent Trust-wide approach that prioritises prevention, positive support and de-escalation as the primary means of supporting pupils
- Promote safe, ethical, relational and trauma-informed practice when responding to situations involving significant risk
- Ensure restrictive interventions are used only when necessary, as a measure of last resort, and in a manner that is reasonable, proportionate and in the best interests of the pupil and others
- Support staff in making lawful and defensible decisions in situations where immediate action is required to prevent harm
- Ensure all incidents involving restrictive interventions are appropriately recorded, reported, monitored and reviewed in line with statutory requirements and Trust expectations
- Foster a culture of reflection, accountability and continuous improvement, enabling schools to learn from incidents and reduce the future use of restrictive practices
- Promote effective partnership working with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies to support positive outcomes and strengthen preventative approaches.

Through these aims, SEEAT seeks to maintain safe learning environments while upholding the rights of children and young people and ensuring that all decisions and actions reflect the Trust's values and commitment to inclusion, safeguarding and educational excellence.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by current legislation, statutory guidance and established safeguarding principles. It provides the framework through which SEEAT schools ensure that any use of restrictive intervention is lawful, proportionate, necessary and focused on safeguarding the welfare, dignity and rights of children and young people.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that restrictive intervention is used only in circumstances permitted by law and in a manner consistent with our values of inclusion, safety, respect and positive relationships.

This policy is informed by the Department for Education guidance Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance. This guidance emphasises that restrictive intervention should be minimised through prevention, early intervention, positive behaviour support and effective de-escalation strategies.

This policy has been developed with reference to the following key legislation and regulations:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006, including sections 93 and 93A, which provide school staff with the legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, which establish statutory recording and reporting requirements.
- The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, which place duties on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which places duties on employers to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and others affected by their activities.
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which requires public bodies, including schools, to respect and protect the rights and freedoms of individuals.
- The Equality Act 2010, which requires schools to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

The statutory guidance issued under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 in relation to the recording and reporting of significant incidents involving the use of force must

be followed by all SEEAT schools. The remainder of the guidance is non-statutory; however, schools and staff should follow it unless there is a clear and justifiable reason not to do so.

The legal framework underpinning this policy reflects the Trust's commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and the promotion of positive outcomes for all pupils. All staff are expected to understand and apply the requirements of this policy alongside their professional responsibilities and relevant statutory guidance.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The effective implementation of this policy relies upon clear leadership, accountability and consistent practice at all levels of the Trust. All those working within SEEAT have a responsibility to safeguard pupils, uphold their dignity and rights, and ensure that any restrictive intervention is used lawfully, safely and only when necessary.

4.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Trust complies with its statutory duties and that appropriate arrangements are in place across all SEEAT schools for the safe, lawful and proportionate use of restrictive intervention.

The Board will:

- Ensure the Trust has an appropriate policy framework in place that reflects current legislation and statutory guidance
- Seek assurance that schools are implementing the policy consistently and effectively
- Receive appropriate reports and assurances regarding the use of restrictive intervention across the Trust
- Monitor trends, patterns and any evidence of disproportionate use, including in relation to pupils with SEND and those with protected characteristics
- Ensure that sufficient resources, training and support are available to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities safely and effectively
- Hold leaders to account for compliance with statutory recording, reporting and safeguarding requirements.

4.2 Local Governing Bodies

Local Governing Bodies will support and challenge school leaders in the effective implementation of this policy and ensure that restrictive intervention is subject to appropriate scrutiny at school level.

They will:

- Monitor the implementation of the policy within their school
- Seek assurance that restrictive intervention is being used appropriately and as a last resort
- Review relevant data and information provided by school leaders
- Challenge where patterns, trends or areas of concern are identified
- Support a culture of safeguarding, inclusion and continuous improvement.

4.3 Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and for ensuring that systems and practices within their school promote safe, consistent and compliant practice.

They will:

- Promote a culture that prioritises prevention, positive relationships, de-escalation and inclusion
- Ensure all staff are aware of and understand their responsibilities under this policy
- Ensure appropriate training is provided and refreshed in line with identified needs
- Ensure robust arrangements are in place for recording, reporting and reviewing restrictive interventions
- Monitor incidents and analyse data to identify patterns, emerging concerns and areas for development
- Ensure appropriate support is provided to pupils and staff following incidents
- Ensure that lessons learned from incidents inform future practice, risk assessment and support planning
- Report significant concerns and relevant information in accordance with Trust governance arrangements
- Ensure that this policy is communicated to staff, parents/carers and pupils and is published in accordance with Trust and statutory requirements.

4.4 Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will provide oversight where incidents involve safeguarding concerns, vulnerable pupils or circumstances that may require further investigation or support.

The DSL will:

- Review incidents where safeguarding concerns are identified

- Advise on reporting arrangements where informing parents may place a child at risk of harm
- Ensure appropriate referrals are made where required
- Work collaboratively with leaders, SEND teams and external agencies to safeguard and support pupils.

4.5 SENDCos and Inclusion Leaders

SENDCos and Inclusion Leaders play a key role in supporting pupils who may be at increased risk of restrictive intervention.

They will:

- Support the identification of triggers, needs and risk factors
- Contribute to individual risk assessments, behaviour support plans and reasonable adjustments
- Work in partnership with pupils, families and professionals
- Review incidents involving pupils with SEND to identify lessons learned and opportunities to strengthen support
- Support staff in implementing effective preventative and de-escalation strategies.

4.6 All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to safeguard pupils and to act in accordance with this policy, relevant legislation, statutory guidance and their professional duties.

Staff will:

- Read, understand and comply with this policy
- Prioritise prevention, positive behaviour support and de-escalation strategies
- Use restrictive intervention only when necessary, lawful and proportionate
- Treat all pupils with dignity, respect and compassion
- Follow agreed behaviour support plans, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments where applicable
- Record and report incidents accurately and within required timescales
- Participate in training, reflection and post-incident reviews as required
- Raise any concerns regarding practice, safety or compliance through appropriate channels.

4.7 Parents, Carers and Pupils

SEEAT values the importance of working in partnership with pupils and families to promote positive behaviour, emotional wellbeing and safety.

Where appropriate, pupils and parents/carers will be involved in:

- Developing and reviewing support plans and risk assessments
- Identifying triggers and effective strategies for reducing risk
- Reviewing incidents and contributing to future planning
- Supporting a consistent and collaborative approach between home and school

Through clear accountability, effective training and a commitment to reflective practice, SEEAT seeks to ensure that restrictive intervention remains exceptional measures that are used only when necessary to protect safety and wellbeing.

4.8 Professional Accountability

All restrictive intervention must be capable of being justified, recorded and reviewed. Staff are expected to act transparently, reflect on practice, and participate in post-incident review processes to identify learning, improve support for pupils and reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

By adhering to these principles, SEEAT seeks to maintain safe learning environments while promoting inclusion, safeguarding, emotional wellbeing and the rights and dignity of every child and young person

5. Definitions

Precise and shared definitions are essential to the consistent, lawful and safe implementation of this policy. A common understanding of the terminology used within the Department for Education's Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools guidance helps ensure that staff act confidently, proportionately and in the best interests of pupils when responding to situations involving risk.

5.1 Restrictive Intervention

A restrictive intervention is any action that prevents, restricts, or subdues movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. Restrictive intervention may be physical or non-physical and include actions that limit a pupil's ability to move freely or make choices about their immediate actions. Restrictive intervention should only be used where necessary, proportionate and lawful, and where less restrictive alternatives have been unsuccessful, are inappropriate, or would not adequately reduce the risk of harm.

5.2 Reasonable Force

Reasonable force is a legal term that refers to the degree of force that is necessary, proportionate and appropriate in the circumstances to prevent harm, damage or serious disruption. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain limited circumstances. The force used must be no more than is necessary and applied for the shortest time required. Reasonable force must never be used as a punishment or disciplinary sanction.

5.3 Restraint

Restraint is a non-disciplinary restrictive intervention that immobilises a pupil or limits their freedom of movement. Restraint may involve direct physical contact or actions that prevent movement without it. Examples include holding a pupil's arms to prevent injury or positioning in a way that restricts movement where there is an immediate risk of harm. Any use of restraint must be necessary, proportionate and for the shortest duration possible.

5.4 Seclusion

Seclusion is a restrictive intervention involving the supervised confinement of a pupil in a place away from others from which they are prevented from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or through actions that lead the pupil to reasonably believe they are not permitted to leave.

It will only be used where it is necessary to manage an immediate and significant risk of harm to the pupil or others and where less restrictive measures are insufficient to reduce that risk. Seclusion must never be used as a disciplinary measure, punishment, sanction or means of securing compliance.

5.5 Significant Incidents

A significant incident is any incident where the use of force goes beyond the ordinary physical contact that occurs between staff and pupils in everyday school life. This includes incidents where force is used as part of a restrictive intervention, including where physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention. Significant incidents are subject to statutory recording and reporting requirements.

5.6 General Appropriate Physical Contact

Generally appropriate physical contact refers to the everyday, appropriate and non-restrictive contact that may occur between staff and pupils as part of normal school life. Examples may include guiding a pupil, providing comfort, administering first aid, supporting a pupil in practical

activities or ensuring their immediate safety. Such contact does not constitute a restrictive intervention unless it is used to prevent, restrict or subdue a pupil's movement.

5.7 De-escalation

De-escalation refers to the strategies and approaches used to reduce a pupil's level of distress, anxiety, agitation or dysregulation and thereby minimise the risk of harm. De-escalation includes relational approaches, verbal and non-verbal communication, environmental adaptations, offering choices, providing space and utilising individual support strategies. De-escalation should always be considered and, wherever possible, used before any restrictive intervention is contemplated.

5.8 Last Resort

For the purposes of this policy, last resort means that a restrictive intervention is only used when all appropriate preventative, supportive and de-escalation strategies have either been unsuccessful, are impracticable in the circumstances, or would not adequately address the risk presented. Restrictive intervention should never form part of a planned behaviour management approach except where specifically identified within lawful risk management arrangements.

5.9 Pupil Welfare and Dignity

Pupil welfare and dignity refers to the Trust's duty to safeguard and promote the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of every pupil. All decisions regarding restrictive intervention must place the pupil's welfare at the centre of any action taken and must respect their rights, dignity, individual needs and protected characteristics.

6. Guiding Principles

SEEAT adopts a preventative, child-centred and values-led approach to behaviour support. Restrictive interventions are not behaviour management strategies and must never be used as a punishment, sanction, to secure compliance, or as a substitute for effective behaviour support, relational practice or reasonable adjustments. The Trust is committed to creating environments in which positive relationships, early intervention, co-regulation and de-escalation reduce the need for restrictive practices wherever possible.

Any decision to use a restrictive intervention must be based on an assessment of the circumstances, informed by the principles of necessity, proportionality and welfare. Staff are expected to exercise professional judgement, act in the best interests of the pupil and others, and ensure that any intervention is lawful, reasonable and proportionate to the risks presented.

6.1 Necessity
A restrictive intervention should only be used where it is necessary.

When determining necessity, staff should:

- consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- where possible, communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations.

Restrictive interventions should only be used as a measure of last resort.

6.2 Proportionality
Any intervention must be proportionate to the level of risk presented.

Staff should:

- use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- if the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- 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 must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations.

6.3 Welfare, Dignity and Respect
The welfare, dignity and rights of the pupil must remain central to all decision-making.

Staff should:

- 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 or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.

- seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- where possible, clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- for pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, use verbal and/or non-verbal strategies to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also take into account other relevant considerations.

7. Prevention and De-escalation

The Trust's preferred approach is always prevention and de-escalation. Staff should seek to understand the underlying causes of distress, anxiety or dysregulation and respond using supportive, relational and restorative approaches wherever possible.

Schools will undertake risk assessments where pupils present identified risks and where staff may reasonably be expected to use restrictive intervention.

Before considering a restrictive intervention, staff should, where it is safe and appropriate to do so:

- Use agreed de-escalation strategies and individual support plans
- Consider whether there are more effective and less restrictive ways of managing the situation
- Reduce environmental triggers and sources of distress
- Offer appropriate choices, support and opportunities for self-regulation
- Draw upon the knowledge of colleagues, parents/carers and relevant professionals regarding the pupil's needs and known strategies.

8. Equality, Inclusion and Individual Need

SEEAT is committed to creating inclusive schools where all pupils are known, valued, supported and able to thrive. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Trust's SEND Policy, schools must take account of pupils' individual needs and circumstances and make reasonable adjustments where required.

The Trust recognises that pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities may be disproportionately affected by restrictive intervention. Staff should recognise that behaviour may communicate an underlying need and seek to understand the factors contributing to a pupil's distress, dysregulation or behaviour before considering any restrictive intervention.

Restrictive intervention must never be used as a substitute for:

- High-quality teaching and ordinarily available provision.
- Appropriate SEND support and intervention.
- Effective behaviour support and de-escalation strategies.
- Reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010.
- Appropriate pastoral, therapeutic or specialist support.

When considering the use of a restrictive intervention, staff must take account of the pupil's age, developmental stage, communication needs, medical conditions, disabilities, sensory needs, vulnerabilities and any relevant risk assessments, behaviour support plans or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Staff must also consider whether additional reasonable adjustments could safely reduce the identified risk.

The Trust recognises that restrictive intervention can be particularly distressing for pupils who have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences, anxiety, communication difficulties or other vulnerabilities. These factors must be carefully considered before, during and after any intervention.

Following any restrictive intervention involving a pupil with SEND or other identified vulnerability, schools should review the circumstances of the incident to determine whether changes to provision, support strategies, reasonable adjustments or risk assessments are required to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

8.1 Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

SEEAT is committed to creating inclusive school communities in which every pupil is valued, respected and supported to achieve their full potential. In accordance with the Equality Act

2010, schools must take account of individual needs and circumstances, make reasonable adjustments where required, and ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged because of a disability or other protected characteristic.
Duties under the Equality Act 2010, include:

- Requirement to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils
- Recognition that responses to behaviour must take account of individual needs and protected characteristics
- Restrictive intervention must never be used soley because reasonable adjustments have not been made.

8.2 Understanding Behaviour as Communication

Schools recognise that behaviour can communicate an underlying need, and that understanding the reasons behind a pupil's behaviour is essential to providing appropriate support and reducing the likelihood of restrictive intervention. Staff should seek to understand the factors contributing to a pupil's behaviour and respond in a way that promotes safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes.
Factors for consideration may include:

- Communication difficulties
- Sensory needs
- Anxiety and emotional distress
- Trauma and adverse childhood experiences
- Physical discomfort or pain; or
- Social and environmental factors.

8.3 Pupils with SEND and Additional Vulnerabilities

Pupils with SEND and additional vulnerabilities may be disproportionately affected by restrictive intervention. There should be consideration for pupils with the following vulnerabilities:

- SEND
- Medical needs
- Disabilities
- Mental health needs
- Children who are Looked After, or have previously been Looked After
- Pupils who have experienced trauma; and
- Pupils with communication difficulties

- Requirement for staff to consider individual circumstances before intervening.

8.4 Restrictive Intervention and Appropriate Support

Consistent with the Trust's commitment to inclusion, early intervention and personalised support, restrictive intervention must never replace the provision, support and reasonable adjustments that pupils require to access education safely and successfully, to include the availability of:

- High-quality teaching
- Ordinarily Available Provision
- Effective SEND support
- Reasonable adjustments
- Behaviour support and de-escalation
- Pastoral, therapeutic or specialist interventions
- Appropriate staffing or supervision arrangements.

8.5 Individual Planning and Decision Making

The Trust is committed to a person-centred approach. Where relevant, decisions regarding restrictive intervention should be informed by existing plans and assessments, including Behaviour Support Plans, Risk Assessments, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and One Plans, Individual Support Plans or Pupil Passports. Staff should take account of known triggers, communication needs, sensory profiles, agreed support strategies, reasonable adjustments and protective factors when determining whether intervention is necessary and how risks can be managed safely and proportionately.

Behaviour support plans should detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. This should be discussed in conjunction with the relevant people, such as teachers, parents, the pupil, pastoral staff or health professionals, and parameters around its use stated clearly in the plan. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, a risk assessment will be in place and where possible, risks will be mitigated through for example training and prevention strategies. Whether the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan.

8.6 Review Following an Incident

Following any restrictive intervention involving a pupil with SEND or another identified vulnerability, schools should review the circumstances of the incident to determine whether current provision and support remain appropriate. Consideration should be given to whether further assessment, additional reasonable adjustments, amendments to existing plans, including behaviour plans, or specialist support may be required. This review should inform future planning, strengthen preventative approaches and reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

9. Situations Where Restrictive Intervention May Be Considered

SEEAT is committed to ensuring that restrictive intervention is used only in exceptional circumstances and as a measure of last resort. The use of any restrictive intervention must be lawful, necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the risk presented.

In particular, reasonable force may only be used where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves
- Causing injury to another person
- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school

9.1 Factors to Consider Before Intervention

When deciding whether restrictive intervention is appropriate, staff must take account of all relevant circumstances, including:

- The nature and seriousness of the risk presented
- The likelihood of harm occurring if no action is taken
- The age, developmental stage and understanding of the pupil
- Any known medical conditions, disabilities or vulnerabilities
- The pupil's SEND, communication needs and any reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010
- Relevant behaviour support plans, risk assessments or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs); and
- The potential physical and emotional impact of the intervention on the pupil and others involved.

Staff should continually assess the situation throughout the incident and adjust, reduce or cease any intervention as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

9.2 Legal Authority to Use Reasonable Force

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder. This authority applies to all staff working within SEEAT schools, whether they have received specific restrictive intervention training, or not. However, any decision to use force carries significant professional responsibility and must be exercised in accordance with the law, this policy, statutory guidance, professional judgement, and the Trust's values.

Reasonable force must only be used when it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to the risk presented. Any intervention must be the least restrictive option available, use the minimum force necessary, and be maintained for the shortest time required to reduce the risk. The welfare, dignity, safety, human rights and best interests of the pupil must always be central to decision-making.

Before using any restrictive intervention, including reasonable force, staff should consider whether the risk can be effectively managed through preventative, supportive or de-escalation strategies. Restrictive interventions should only be used when these approaches are insufficient to maintain safety. Any intervention must cease immediately once the risk has reduced sufficiently for less restrictive measures to be effective

When determining whether the use of force is necessary, staff must take account of the individual circumstances of the pupil, including their age, stage of development, medical needs, communication needs, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), known vulnerabilities, and any relevant risk assessments, behaviour support plans or individual support plans.

Where authorised under legislation and school procedures, reasonable force may also be used when carrying out a lawful search for legally prohibited items in accordance with the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance (July 2022).

9.3 Specific Interventions and Forms of Contact

The Trust recognises that a range of physical interactions occur within schools as part of normal professional practice. To ensure consistency and clarity, it is important to distinguish between restrictive interventions and appropriate physical contact that forms part of everyday care, support and safeguarding.

9.4 Seclusion

Seclusion involves a pupil being confined to a place away from others and being prevented from leaving. This may occur through physical obstruction of an exit, securing a space so that the pupil cannot leave, or through actions that lead the pupil to reasonably believe they are not permitted to leave. Where seclusion is used, schools must comply with all relevant recording, reporting, safeguarding and review requirements.

Seclusion:

- Must never be used as a punishment, sanction or consequence for behaviour
- Must not be used to secure compliance with instructions
- Must only be used where other preventative and de-escalation strategies are ineffective inappropriate or insufficient to manage the immediate risk
- Must be used for the shortest possible time
- Must end as soon as the risk of harm is reduced.

Where seclusion is used:

- The environment must be safe, suitable and free from unnecessary hazards
- The pupil must be continuously supervised and monitored by an appropriate member of staff
- The pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing must be actively considered throughout
- Staff must continue to use calm communication and de-escalation strategies wherever possible
- The incident must be recorded, reported and reviewed in line with this policy and statutory requirements.

The Trust distinguishes seclusion from other arrangements, such as a pupil choosing to access a quiet space, sensory area or pastoral provision, where the pupil remains free to leave and is not being prevented from doing so.

Similarly, disciplinary measures such as removal from a classroom are governed by the school's Behaviour Policy and do not constitute seclusion unless the pupil is prevented from leaving.

10. Minimising the need for Restrictive Intervention

SEEAT is committed to minimising the need for restrictive intervention through a culture of understanding, prevention and support. The Trust seeks to foster safe, nurturing and inclusive environments where positive relationships, proactive support and early intervention reduce risk and promote positive outcomes for all pupils. Staff should use proactive, supportive and individualised approaches to identify and respond to emerging concerns at the earliest

opportunity, helping pupils remain safe, regulated and engaged. Where additional risks are identified, appropriate support strategies and plans should be implemented to reduce the likelihood of escalation.

10.1 Whole-School Approaches

Each school will promote positive behaviour, inclusion and pupil wellbeing through its local Behaviour Policy, using proactive, relational and individualised approaches to meet pupils' needs. Restrictive intervention should only be considered when other strategies have been unsuccessful or are insufficient to maintain safety.

Staff who are likely to need to use restrictive intervention including reasonable force should receive appropriate training in its safe and lawful use, and in prevention, de-escalation and the safe and lawful use of restrictive intervention.

The Trust will carry out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

Across all SEEAT schools, leaders will promote:

- Positive, respectful and trusting relationships between pupils and staff
- Consistent behaviour expectations supported by relational practice
- Inclusive environments that recognise and respond to individual needs
- Early identification of emerging concerns and proactive intervention
- High-quality staff training in behaviour support, communication, trauma-informed practice and de-escalation strategies
- Effective safeguarding and pastoral systems that promote pupil wellbeing
- Regular monitoring and analysis of restrictive intervention data to identify patterns, inform support and improve practice
- Collaboration between safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and SEND teams to ensure coordinated support for pupils.

10.2 Individualised Support

Some pupils may require more personalised support to meet their individual needs and reduce the likelihood of distress, dysregulation or crisis situations. Individualised support focuses on understanding each pupil's strengths, needs, triggers and preferred strategies, enabling staff to provide consistent, proactive support that promotes safety, inclusion and positive outcomes.

Schools will seek to minimise the need for restrictive intervention through the following approaches:

Schools will seek to minimise restrictive intervention through:

- Working in partnership with parents, carers and families
- Seeking and valuing the views of pupils wherever possible
- Developing individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans where appropriate
- Making reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- Identifying triggers, strengths, protective factors and preferred support strategies
- Providing access to appropriate pastoral, therapeutic and specialist support
- Supporting pupils to develop emotional literacy, self-regulation and coping strategies
- Ensuring staff understand and implement agreed approaches for pupils.

Through these preventative approaches, SEEAT seeks to reduce reliance on restrictive practices and ensure that all pupils are supported to feel safe, successful and included within their school community.

11. Prohibited Practices

The safety, welfare and dignity of pupils must remain paramount at all times. Staff must not use any intervention that is intended to cause pain, humiliation, distress or punishment, or that creates an unacceptable risk of injury.

The following practices are prohibited and must not be used under any circumstances:

- Any intervention intended to inflict pain as a means of control, compliance or punishment
- Any action that restricts, obstructs or interferes with a pupil's breathing or circulation
- The application of pressure to the neck, throat, chest, lungs, sternum, abdomen, back or any other area that may compromise breathing, circulation or physical wellbeing
- The use of techniques that deliberately obstruct a pupil's airway, nose or mouth
- The use of restraint as a punishment, sanction or consequence for behaviour
- Any intervention that is degrading, humiliating or intended to cause emotional harm
- The use of mechanical restraints, except where required for a legitimate medical purpose and authorised through appropriate medical advice
- The withholding of basic rights, care, medical treatment, food, drink, access to toilets or communication as a behaviour management strategy.

The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.

Caution must be exercised regarding any intervention that may place a pupil in a vulnerable position. Staff must act in accordance with current statutory guidance, approved training and risk assessments, and must immediately cease any intervention that presents an increased risk to the pupil's safety or welfare.

12. Appropriate Physical Contact

SEEAT does not operate a "no-contact" approach. The Trust recognises that appropriate physical contact is often necessary to safeguard, support, care for and educate children and young people effectively. A blanket ban on physical contact could prevent staff from acting in the best interests of pupils and may compromise their safety, wellbeing or learning access.

Staff are expected to exercise professional judgement and act in accordance with safeguarding requirements, the staff code of conduct and the specific needs of the pupil when determining whether physical contact is appropriate.

Examples of appropriate physical contact, which do not constitute restrictive intervention, may include:

- Providing first aid, medical assistance or personal care in accordance with agreed procedures
- Guiding, escorting or supporting a pupil safely around the school site or during educational visits.
- Holding a young child's hand when necessary for safety
- Comforting, reassuring or supporting a distressed, upset or anxious pupil
- Offering age-appropriate gestures of encouragement, praise or congratulations, such as a handshake or high-five
- Demonstrating techniques, skills or movements as part of teaching and learning activities including physical education, music, drama or practical subjects
- Supporting pupils to access equipment, resources or learning activities safely.

Any physical contact should be appropriate to the age, understanding, needs and wishes of the pupil, respectful of their dignity, and proportionate to the circumstances. Staff should remain mindful of individual vulnerabilities, SEND, communication needs, cultural considerations and any known safeguarding concerns.

The Trust's priority is always to build positive relationships, promote emotional wellbeing and utilise proactive and preventative approaches that reduce the likelihood of pupils reaching crisis points and minimise the need for restrictive intervention.

13. Recording, Reporting and Review

Accurate, timely and transparent recording of restrictive intervention is essential to safeguarding, accountability and continuous improvement. In accordance with statutory requirements and Department for Education guidance, the staff member(s) involved must record all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention, including reasonable force, restraint or seclusion, as soon as practicable after the incident and they should endeavour to do this no later than the end of same school day. Effective recording supports reflective practice, informs future planning and helps schools identify patterns, trends and emerging needs requiring additional support or intervention.

13.1 Recording Expectations and Process

The member of staff leading or involved in the restrictive intervention is responsible for ensuring that a written record is completed as soon as practicable following the incident and they should endeavour to do this before the end of the same school day. Records must be completed using the Trust's approved Restrictive Intervention Record Form and uploaded to CPOMS under the category **Restrictive Intervention/Restraint Incident.**

All records must be factual, objective, accurate and sufficiently detailed to provide a clear account of the incident, the decision-making process and the actions taken. The record must include:

- The name of the pupil involved
- The date, time, location and duration of the incident
- The names of all staff involved and any witnesses and their statements
- A clear description of matters, including any behaviour, incident or risk that led to the incident of intervention
- The risks presented and the reason the intervention was considered necessary
- Any relevant pupil needs, vulnerabilities, SEND considerations, risk assessments or support plans
- The preventative and de-escalation strategies used or considered prior to the intervention.
- The nature of the restrictive intervention used, including the type and degree of force where applicable

- The outcome of the intervention and how the incident was resolved
- Details of any injury, physical effects, emotional distress or welfare concerns affecting the pupil or others
- Details of any medical assessment, treatment or first aid provided
- Post-incident support, debriefing and follow-up actions for the pupil and staff involved
- Confirmation of parental communication and any actions arising
- Any recommendations for future planning, risk management, support or review.

Records should clearly demonstrate that the intervention was lawful, necessary, proportionate, used for the shortest time required, and ceased as soon as the risk reduced sufficiently for less restrictive approaches to be effective. All records will be reviewed by an appropriate member of the school's leadership team to ensure compliance, identify learning and inform future support and planning.

13.2 Reporting to Parents and Carers

The Trust values strong and transparent relationships with parents and carers. In line with statutory requirements, parents/carers must be informed of every significant incident involving the use of force, restraint or seclusion as soon as practicable and, wherever possible, on the same day as the incident.

Schools must ensure that written notification is provided and that a record of this communication is retained and uploaded to the associated CPOMS chronology.

As a minimum, the report to parents/carers should include:

- The date, time, location and approximate duration of the incident
- A brief factual account of the circumstances leading to the intervention
- The reason the intervention was assessed as necessary
- The type of intervention used, including the type and degree of force where applicable
- Details of any injuries sustained, and actions taken in response
- Information regarding any follow-up support, review or next steps.

The only exceptions to this reporting requirement are those permitted by law, including circumstances where informing a parent would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In such cases, schools must seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and determine appropriate alternative reporting arrangements, which may include informing another person with parental responsibility, children's social care or the relevant local authority.

13.3 Post-Incident Review

Following any restrictive intervention, schools should undertake a proportionate review of the incident to support safeguarding, pupil wellbeing and continuous improvement. Effective post-incident procedures help identify learning, inform future support and reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring in the future.

The review should consider:

- Whether the intervention was necessary, reasonable and proportionate
- The effectiveness of preventative and de-escalation strategies used before and during the incident
- Any safeguarding, wellbeing, medical or welfare concerns arising from the incident
- The pupil's views, experiences, identified triggers, early warning signs and support needs
- Whether additional support, reasonable adjustments, pastoral, therapeutic or specialist interventions are required
- Whether behaviour support plans, risk assessments, SEND provision, de-escalation strategies or other support arrangements require review or amendment
- Any actions to be taken in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to reduce future risk
- Any lessons learned for staff members, teams or the wider school to improve future practice.

Through a reflective and restorative approach, SEEAT seeks to ensure that restrictive intervention not only address immediate risks but also contribute to improved understanding, stronger relationships and better outcomes for pupils over time

Where appropriate, the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals should be involved in the review process in line with SEEAT's commitment to partnership working and person-centred practice.

13.4 Immediate Welfare Considerations

Following any restrictive intervention, the immediate physical and emotional wellbeing of all those involved must be prioritised.

Schools should ensure that:

- Any pupil or member of staff who has sustained, or may have sustained, an injury, or who is displaying signs of physical or emotional distress, receives appropriate medical attention, assessment and support as soon as practicable

- The pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing is monitored following the incident, with appropriate support provided where required
- Appropriate welfare, supervision and support are available to staff involved in or affected by the incident
- Consideration is given to the impact on any pupils who witnessed the incident, with reassurance, support and opportunities to discuss concerns provided as appropriate
- Any safeguarding, medical or welfare concerns arising from the incident are identified promptly and acted upon in accordance with relevant school policies and procedures
- Any injuries should be recorded in accordance with the school's procedures and reported as appropriate to the Health and Safety Executive.

Following any use of restraint, consideration will be given to whether a medical assessment is required for the pupil and/or staff involved, taking account of the nature of the intervention, any reported pain, injury, distress or other welfare concerns.

13.5 Pupil Debrief and Relationship Repair

Once the pupil is calm, regulated and able to engage, a proportionate post-incident discussion should take place.

Where practicable, the discussion should be facilitated by a member of staff who is not directly involved in the intervention. The timing, format and approach must be adapted to the pupil's age, stage of development, communication needs, SEND and individual circumstances, ensuring they are given an appropriate opportunity to express their views and contribute to future support planning.

The purpose of this discussion is to:

- Support the pupil to reflect on the incident
- Understand the pupil's views, experiences and feelings
- Identify factors or unmet needs which may have contributed to the incident
- Explore strategies that may help prevent future occurrences
- Support the repair of relationships and restore trust
- Reinforce the pupil's sense of safety, belonging and support within the school community.

Schools should continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed, for example through further follow-up conversations, counselling or other resources. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive

intervention where a peer may have been injured or become distressed should also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

14. Monitoring and Oversight

School and Trust leaders will monitor and review the use of restrictive intervention to ensure compliance with this policy, statutory requirements and Trust expectations. Restrictive intervention records and data will be subject to regular scrutiny to support safeguarding, promote accountability and inform continuous improvement.

Schools will regularly review incident data to:

- Identify patterns, trends, repeat incidents or any disproportionality
- Understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan
- Monitor the use of restrictive intervention involving vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND
- Evaluate the effectiveness of preventative, de-escalation and behaviour support strategies
- Identify any emerging safeguarding, welfare or training needs
- Inform staff training, professional development and school improvement activity
- Support the review of risk assessments, behaviour support plans and wider support provision
- Reduce reliance on restrictive intervention through effective prevention, early intervention and positive behaviour support.

The Trust expects all restrictive intervention to be subject to robust oversight, reflective practice and ongoing review to ensure that their use remains lawful, necessary, proportionate and in the best interests of pupils

15. Complaints and Allegations

SEEAT is committed to a transparent and fair process for addressing any concerns raised regarding the application of this policy. Any complaint from parents, pupils, or others regarding the use of restrictive intervention must be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's formal complaints procedure.

If an allegation of inappropriate or excessive use of force is made against a member of staff, the matter must be managed in strict accordance with the child protection procedures outlined in

the latest version of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. This policy operates within a wider framework of school and Trust policies designed to safeguard our community.

Appendix 1 - Links with other policies

The SEEAT Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy links to the policies listed below. Please follow the link for further information.

Policies	Link
School Behaviour Policy (local)	
SEEAT Statement of Intent and Guiding Principles for Behaviour	
SEEAT Complaints Procedure	
Equality and Diversity Policy 2023	
Health and Safety Policy 2025	
Staff Code of Conduct 2025	
SEEAT Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy 2026	
SEEAT Safeguarding and Child Protection 2026	
SEEAT Whistleblowing Policy 2025	

Appendix 2 Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is also informed by the Department for Education guidance Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools - Restrictive Interventions and the use of Reasonable Force DfE 2026

In addition, the policy is based on:

- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, which establish statutory recording and reporting requirements - The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, which place duties on schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children - The Children Act 1989
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which places duties on employers to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and others affected by their activities - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which requires public bodies, including schools, to respect and protect the rights and freedoms of individuals - The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (July 2022)

APPENDIX 3 - Use of Force, Seclusion and Non-force Restraint Reporting Form

Use of Force, Seclusion and Non-force Restraint Reporting Form

Item	**Details**
Name of child or young person:	
Member(s) of staff involved:	
Date of Incident:	
Start time of incident:	
End time of Incident:	
Location of the incident:	
Does the pupil have SEND?	
SEND Status Code:	
Any pupil need, vulnerability, SEND consideration, risk assessment or support plan	
Name(s) of additional staff witness(es):	**Name(s) of additional children/ young people witness(es):**

Type of Incident / Concern:	**Please Tick**
Use of Reasonable Force	
Seclusion	
Non restrictive intervention	

Events leading up to the restrictive intervention, including any behaviour, incident or risk:

Co-regulation prior to the decisions to use restrictive intervention:			
Verbal advice and support		Swapping of staff/ change of face	
Calm talking and reassurance		Distraction/ diversion	
Personalised co-regulation script		Offering choices and options	
Humour		Offering a safe/ quiet space	
Other (specify)			

Risks and reasons the intervention was necessary In the event of the use of reasonable force, only reasons marked * may be used.	To prevent or stop a pupil from causing harm to themselves*	
	To prevent or stop a pupil from causing harm to others *	
	To prevent or stop a pupil from committing a criminal offence *	
	To prevent or stop a pupil from damaging property*	
	To prevent or stop a pupil from causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise*	
	Other (provide details)	

Summary of Incident (attach additional sheets/ statements if necessary):

Include:

- Brief account
- Why intervention was necessary
- What led to the incident
- Identified or potential triggers (if known)

- Preventative and/or de-escalation strategies used
- What type of reasonable force was applied
- Outcome of the intervention and how the incident was resolved
- Degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries, physical effects, emotional distress or welfare concerns affecting the pupil or others
- What risks presented and why the use of force was necessary
- Post incident support (including medical assessment, treatment or first aid)

Detail of intervention:			
Time started	**Technique**	**Duration**	**Staff name**
Any physical mark or harm caused to the CYP by the use of the intervention	Yes/ No	Details:	
Any immediate response to harm caused to the CYP			

Signed off by staff involved:		
Staff name	**Staff signature**	**Date**

Action following the incident: **(attach any letter to parent/carers)**			
	Name	**Date/ Time**	**Detail - including actions arising:**
Incident reported to senior staff by:			

Verbal communication to parent/ carer by:			
Written communication to parents/ carers by:			
CYP wellbeing and medical check by:			
Staff wellbeing check by:			
Restorative conversation with CYP, including understanding the pupil's experience:			
Medical/ first aid record of injury completed by:			
Review of incident to identify learning by:			
CYPs personal plan/ RA updated:			
Incident recorded on CPOMS			

Other Information (previous history log, background information etc.)

SLT monitoring and quality assurance:		
	Yes/No	Detail – including actions arising:
Staff wellbeing checks undertaken:		
Witness accounts obtained and verified:		
The intervention was acceptable (and in accordance with statutory guidance):		

Report to LADO (if required):		
Any safeguarding or other response required:		
SLT Approval		
Name and Role:	**Date:**	**Signature**

Leadership Comments including: • **recommendations for future planning, risk management, support or review;** • **whether the above demonstrates that the intervention was lawful, necessary, proportionate, used for the shortest time required, and ceased as soon as the risk reduced sufficiently for less restrictive approaches to be effective;** • **if not, what action will be taken**