



Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust

Approved by:	Chief Executive Officer	Date: April 2026
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Last reviewed on:	April 2026
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Next review due by:	September 2027
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1. Policy Statement

The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust (DLPT) is committed to the safety, dignity and wellbeing of every pupil, member of staff and visitor. This policy explains how DLPT schools will approach restrictive physical intervention (including the lawful use of reasonable force) and the standards that apply across the Trust.

Restrictive physical intervention is a last resort. It will only be used where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate, and where other strategies are not sufficient. Our first priority is always to:

- keep pupils, staff and others safe
- reduce the likelihood that physical intervention is needed
- use prevention and de-escalation wherever possible
- protect pupils' rights, dignity and welfare

Key Principle:

- **Prevent → De-escalate → Protect → Record → Reflect**

This policy applies in every DLPT school. It should be used alongside each school's behaviour policy, safeguarding arrangements and the relevant staff training guidance for managing children in school.

2. Legal Framework

This policy reflects the Department for Education (DfE) guidance: Restrictive interventions including the use of reasonable force in schools. DLPT schools recognise their statutory powers and responsibilities under education and safeguarding law, and the duty of care owed to pupils.

3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to:

- all staff employed by DLPT schools
- temporary, supply or agency staff working under the direction of the school

Staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in the circumstances described in this policy. In practice, staff are expected to use professional judgement, follow Trust and school procedures, and act in a way that is reasonable and defensible.

4. Key Definitions

Restrictive intervention

Any action (physical or non-physical) that limits a pupil's freedom of movement.

Reasonable force

The minimum force required, used for the shortest time possible, to prevent harm or serious disruption.

Restraint

Restricting a pupil's movement, with or without physical contact.

Seclusion

Keeping a pupil apart from others and preventing them from leaving, for safety reasons. Seclusion must never be used as a punishment.

Significant incident

An incident where force is used beyond everyday physical contact (for example, holding, restraining or physically removing a pupil).

5. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Reasonable force may only be used where it is necessary to:

- prevent injury to a pupil, member of staff or another person
- prevent a criminal offence
- prevent serious damage to property
- prevent serious disruption to learning or to good order

Physical intervention must not be used if a less intrusive option will keep people safe and restore calm.

6. Core Principles

Before any restrictive physical intervention, staff should quickly check:

- Is there an immediate risk of harm?
- What de-escalation strategies have been tried?
- Is intervention necessary and proportionate to the risk?
- Is this in the pupil's best interests?

If intervention cannot be avoided, staff should:

- choose the least restrictive option available
- use only the minimum force needed
- stop as soon as the risk reduces
- take account of SEND, trauma, health needs and known vulnerabilities
- maintain the pupil's dignity and wellbeing
- explain what is happening where this is possible and helpful

7. Unacceptable Practice

Force must **never** be used:

- As a punishment
- In ways that restrict breathing or circulation
- By covering the mouth or nose
- By applying pressure to the neck, chest or abdomen

Ground restraint should be avoided. If it happens, it should be ended as quickly and safely as possible.

8. Appropriate Physical Contact

Not all physical contact is a restrictive intervention. Everyday, appropriate contact may include:

- Administering first aid
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Guiding or escorting pupils
- Supporting participation in learning or physical education
- Appropriate praise (e.g. handshake)

Staff should always use professional judgement, taking account of the pupil's age and needs, the context, and the visibility of their actions to others.

9. Seclusion

Seclusion may be used only:

- As a safety measure
- Where a pupil presents a risk of harm to others
- When the pupil is not in control of their behaviour

If seclusion is used, the following must apply:

- The space must be safe and supervised
- The pupil must be released as soon as the risk reduces
- It must never be used as punishment
- The incident must be recorded and reported

10. Prevention and De-escalation

DLPT schools focus on approaches that lower the likelihood of restrictive intervention, including:

- Strong, positive relationships
- Calm, clear communication
- Consistent routines and expectations
- Allowing time and space for self-regulation
- Removing triggers where possible

Where a pupil has previously required physical intervention, schools should take practical steps to reduce the risk of it happening again, for example:

- Behaviour support or risk reduction plans
- Identification of triggers
- Personalised calming strategies
- Working closely with parents/carers and external professional

11. Pupils with SEND

Some pupils with SEND may be more likely to experience restrictive interventions, for example because of sensory overload, anxiety, communication differences, or a reduced understanding of risk.

In these situations, staff should:

- Understand individual triggers and early signs of distress
- Use personalised support strategies
- Work with parents/carers and specialists
- Follow any Risk Reduction Plans or equivalent, including agreed scripts where these are in place

12. After an Incident

After any restrictive physical intervention:

- Pupils and staff involved must be checked for injuries
- Medical support must be sought where needed
- The incident must be recorded promptly, ideally on the same day
- Parents/carers must be informed in line with this policy
- Reflection should take place to prevent recurrence
- Appropriate support must be offered to pupils and staff

Any debrief should focus on what led to the incident, how relationships can be repaired, what can be learned, and what support is needed for both the pupil and the staff involved.

13. Recording and Reporting (Mandatory from April 2026)

All significant incidents must be recorded in writing and include:

- Names of pupils and staff involved
- Date, time, location and duration
- Context and triggers
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type and level of force used
- Rationale for intervention
- Any injuries or support provided

Records must be completed in full on Arbor and should include a clear narrative account of what happened and why. These may be disclosed to parents so please ensure the details reported are appropriate. Schools must also notify the Trust of significant incidents using the Trust reporting form [here](#).

DLPT Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy Recording Form – Fill in form

14. Informing Parents and Carers

Parents/carers should be informed as soon as reasonably practicable, and where possible on the same day. This may be delayed only where contacting home would increase the risk of serious harm to the pupil. Any verbal update must be followed up in writing. This contact must be recorded on Arbor.

15. Roles and Responsibilities

Staff are expected to:

- Use preventative and de-escalation strategies first
- Act calmly and proportionately
- Maintain pupil dignity at all times
- Follow Trust and school policies and training
- Record and report incidents accurately

DLPT will support staff who act in line with this policy, training, and the expectations set by their school.

Schools

Each school will:

- Provide appropriate training
- Undertake relevant risk assessments
- Maintain clear local procedures
- Monitor patterns and trends in incidents
- Support pupils and staff following incidents

The Trust

The Trust will:

- Maintain and review this policy
- Monitor incident reporting and patterns
- Provide oversight and challenge
- Ensure alignment with safeguarding and SEND strategies

Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) will:

- Oversee policy application and review significant incidents
- Appoint link member for Safeguarding or Behavior reporting
- Monitor preventative strategies and procedures
- Support communication with parents and community

16. Review

The Trust will review this policy regularly and update it to reflect changes in statutory guidance and emerging best practice.