Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

St Benedict
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Authors:	Director of Secondary Education
Effective Date:	01 April 2026
Last Review Date:	March 2026
Review Frequency:	Annually
Next Review Due:	Summer 2027 (for 01 September 2027 implementation)

This Policy has been approved and adopted by St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust for use in all its academies from 01 April 2026-31 August 2027 will be reviewed annually.

1. Rationale

To set clear guidelines and boundaries for the use of restrictive interventions and reasonable force, facilitating a safe and protected environment in St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust (SBCAT) Schools where students Achieve, Belong, and Thrive. This policy adheres to the DfE statutory guidance effective from 1st April 2026.

2. Aims

1. To identify circumstances requiring restrictive intervention
2. To prioritise de-escalation and prevention.
3. To set out mandatory statutory procedures for recording and reporting incidents.

3. Preamble and Legal Framework

From 1st April 2026, this policy is governed by the *Schools Regulations 2025*. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006) to prevent pupils from committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property.

Key Definitions from April 2026:

- **Restrictive Intervention:** Use of force to restrict a pupil's movement or liberty.
- **Restraint:** Physically holding or bringing a student under control to prevent harm.
- **Seclusion:** Supervised confinement where a pupil is prevented from leaving.

Note: Seclusion must only be used as a safety measure for dysregulated pupils and never as a punishment.

4. Circumstances for Use of Force

Reasonable force may be used in the following situations:

a) To remove a disruptive student from the classroom where they refuse to follow instructions and pose a risk to the safety/learning of others.
b) To prevent behaviour that disrupts school events, trips, or visits.
c) To prevent a student from leaving a room where doing so would risk their safety.
d) To stop a student attacking staff/peers or to break up a fight.
e) To restrain a student at risk of self-harm.

Note: Force can never be used as a punishment. The "Expected Standard" for intervention is that it must be: Necessary, Proportionate, and for Pupil Welfare.

5. Mandatory Recording and Reporting (Statutory Duty)

From 1st April 2026, it is a legal requirement to record and report all significant incidents of restrictive intervention.

All incidents must be recorded on CPOMS/My Concern using the **Restrictive Intervention Report headings** or on a **Restrictive Intervention Report Proforma** which is then uploaded to My Concern/CPOMS. This must take place on the same day where practicable, **but no later than the end of the next day.**

The report must include:

- Names of students/staff involved (including SEN status and any identified needs).
- The Necessity Test: Why force was required and why de-escalation failed.
- De-escalation details: Specific strategies used *before* physical intervention.
- Details of the technique used, duration, and degree of force.
- Injury Audit: Any injuries sustained by students or staff.
- Post-Incident Support: Details of medical checks or "wellbeing debriefs" provided to the student and staff.

Informing Parents/Carers: Schools have a statutory duty to inform parents/carers of any significant incident. A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) must call parents as soon as practicable on the same day and must follow up in writing on the same day where possible and no later than the end of the next day, providing details of the intervention and the reason it was necessary.

DSLs and Headteachers must be informed of any incidents **immediately** by school staff and will advise SLT before making any calls to parents/carers and **must check any reports before they are shared with parents.**

DSLs and Headteachers can also seek advice from the SBCAT Safeguarding lead.

SEE APPENDICES A and B for guidance on reporting, including a report template.

6. Acceptable and Unacceptable Actions

Acceptable Forms of Restraint:

1. Safe holding tactics designed to limit movement without causing injury.
2. Physical contact to guide a student to safety.
3. Removal of a student from one location to another for safety reasons.
4. Use of reasonable force to remove a weapon/dangerous objects

Unacceptable/Prohibited Actions:

- Techniques that obstruct breathing: Any pressure to the neck, chest, or abdomen.
- Seated Double Embrace: Forcing a student into a sitting position and leaning them forward.
- Double Basket-hold: Holding arms across the chest.
- Nose Distraction: Any sharp upward jabs.

- Ground Restraint: Staff must avoid holding students on the ground. If a student falls, they must be repositioned or released immediately.
- Corporal Punishment: Hitting, kicking, slapping, or shaking is strictly illegal.

The DfE makes it clear to all schools that staff should not put themselves at personal risk in a dangerous situation and they should call the police if a student is known to be armed and aggressive rather than attempting a physical intervention which poses a risk of injury. This is also the position of SBCAT and staff are expected to seek help immediately (including from the police) rather than attempting to restrain, restrict or confiscate if they have concerns that doing so would put their safety and/or the safety of others at risk.

7. Identifying Risk

Risk assessments must be carried out in SBCAT schools by the DSL and/or Headteacher for any pupil whose behaviour makes restrictive intervention likely.

- If a pupil is displaying a pattern of behaviour that means you need to use reasonable force repeatedly to keep them and others safe, a safety and restrictive intervention plan must be written, agreed and implemented to manage this situation. This plan must include a simple log (date, time, member of staff, intervention used etc) which is updated to record incidents where agreed strategies are used each day instead of completing a use of restrictive interventions template.

  However, if restrictive interventions are used which are not part of a pupil's agreed risk assessment and intervention plan then a full restrictive interventions report must be completed/logged on My Concern/CPOMS
- The DSL should work with parents/carers to create a behaviour and safety plan which sets out the types of physical interventions that will be used in extreme circumstances.

- Reasonable force can be used on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and where a student has SEND the SENCO should also be involved in identifying students at risk and in creating risk assessments and safety plans with DSLs and parents/carers.

8. The Use of Seclusion

Definition: Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving the supervised confinement and isolation of a pupil, away from others, in an area from which the pupil is prevented from leaving**.**

A pupil is considered "prevented from leaving" if:

- The door is locked or held shut.
- The exit is physically blocked by a member of staff.
- The pupil believes they are not allowed to leave or will be punished if they try to do so.

Core Principles for Use of Seclusion

- Safety Only: Seclusion must only be used as a safety measure to protect the pupil or others from significant harm during periods of extreme emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

- Non-Disciplinary: It must never be used as a punishment, a disciplinary sanction (e.g., for "answering back"), or a way to enforce compliance with school rules.
- Continuous Supervision: Any pupil in seclusion must be continuously supervised by a staff member who can see and hear them at all times.
- Duration: Seclusion must end the moment the immediate risk of harm has passed.

Seclusion vs. Other Practices

It is vital to distinguish Seclusion from other forms of separation used in SBCAT Schools:

- Time-Out / Chill-Out: A voluntary or suggested break where a pupil goes to a quiet area or sensory room but is free to leave if they choose.
- Removal: Moving a pupil from the classroom to a supervised area (like an inclusion unit/internal alternative provision base to complete work. This is a disciplinary sanction and is only "seclusion" if the pupil is physically prevented from leaving the area.
- Sensory Breaks: A planned, therapeutic intervention in a sensory room to help a pupil regulate, where they are supported and not confined.

Statutory Recording Requirement for Seclusion

From 1 April 2026, every instance where a child is secluded—regardless of the name used for the room (e.g., "The Hub," "Reflection Room") must be logged as a restrictive intervention. The report must state:

1. The Trigger: What caused the dysregulation?
2. The Necessity: Why was seclusion the only way to maintain safety?
3. The Duration: Exactly how long was the pupil prevented from leaving?
4. The Outcome: How was the pupil supported to reintegrate after the risk passed?

9. Searching, Screening, and Confiscation in line with July 2022 DfE Guidance

Searching with Consent: Staff may search students for any item with their agreement. If a student refuses, appropriate disciplinary sanctions apply as per the school's Behaviour Policy.

Searching Without Consent (Prohibited Items): The Headteacher and authorised staff (Level 3 or above DSL trained) may search without consent for:

- Knives/weapons, Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, Stolen Items.
- Tobacco/Vapes, Fireworks, Pornographic images.
- Items likely to be used to commit an offence or cause injury.

Procedure for Searches:

- Must be conducted by a staff member of the same sex as the student.
- A witness (ideally of the same sex) must be present.
- **Exception:** If there is a risk of serious harm, a search may be conducted immediately without a witness or same-sex officer (must be reported to the Headteacher immediately after).
- In line with police guidance JOG (jacket, outer coat and gloves) can be removed/searched in public and MTS (more thorough searches) removal of shoes, use of electromagnetic

wand etc. must be done out of public view.

Electronic Devices: Staff may examine data/files on a device if there is a "good reason" (i.e., suspicion that the device is being used to cause harm or disrupt teaching). Files may be deleted if they undermine the safe environment of the school.

10. Police Liaison and Searches

When a school believes a student is in possession of an illegal item (such as drugs or a weapon), they may involve the police. Once the police are on the premises, the procedure shifts from the school's statutory powers to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

The following details the strict procedures that must be followed during a police-led search of a student.

The Deciding Factor: Necessity and Safeguarding

Before the police are even called for a search, school leaders (typically the Headteacher or DSL) must perform a risk assessment.

- **Safeguarding First:** Staff must balance the risk of the suspected item against the potential trauma of a police search on the student's mental health.
- **Exhausting Alternatives:** Schools should ensure that less invasive approaches such as asking the student to voluntarily turn out their pockets or a staff-led search of outer clothing have been exhausted first.

Police Powers of Entry and Search

- **Weapons:** Under Section 139B of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, the police have the power to enter school premises and search anyone they "reasonably believe" is carrying a weapon.
- **Other Illegal Items:** For drugs or stolen goods, police usually enter by invitation of the headteacher or with a warrant. Once lawfully on the property, they can use PACE Code A powers to conduct a search if they have reasonable grounds for suspicion.

Levels of Intrusiveness (PACE Code A)

Police searches are categorized by how much clothing is removed:

1. JOG (Jacket, Outer coat, and Gloves)**:** Can be removed in public view.
2. MTS (More Thorough Search)**:** Removal of more than JOG but not exposing intimate parts (e.g., shoes, socks, or a t-shirt over a vest). This must be done out of public view by an officer of the same sex.
3. EIP (Exposure of Intimate Parts / "Strip Search")**:** A highly intrusive search that requires a higher threshold of "necessity" and specific oversight.

Mandatory Procedures for Strip Searches (EIP)

If the police decide a strip search is required on school premises, the following statutory safeguards are non-negotiable:

- **Supervisor Consultation:** The searching officer must consult with a police supervisor before the search begins.
- **Same-Sex Requirement:** The search must be conducted by an officer of the same sex as the student and in the presence of a same-sex witness.
- **Privacy:** The search must be conducted in a private room (e.g., a locked office) where the student cannot be seen by anyone not required for the search.

In SBCAT Schools the Headteacher or DSL must contact the SBCAT CEO or SBCAT Safeguarding lead to inform them as soon as possible that the police are consulting with a police supervisor with a view to carrying out an EIP search.

The Role of the "Appropriate Adult" (AA)

For any student under 18, a police strip search **cannot** take place without an Appropriate Adult present.

- Who can be an AA? Usually a parent or guardian. If they are unavailable, a DSL, social worker, or senior school leader may act as the AA.
- Duties of the AA: * Advocate**:** They must safeguard the child's rights and welfare.
    - Challenge: They should ask the police if the search is truly "necessary and proportionate".
    - Support: They help the child understand what is happening and ensure they are treated fairly.
- Exception: A search can only proceed without an AA if there is a "risk of serious harm" that is immediate (e.g., the student is believed to be about to use a weapon).

School's Duty of Care

Even though the police are in charge of the search, the school retains a duty of care to the student:

- **Parental Notification:** Schools must attempt to contact parents before a police search occurs, especially if a strip search is proposed.
- **Aftercare:** Regardless of whether an illegal item is found, the school must provide immediate emotional support to the student and follow up with a safeguarding review.
- **Recording:** The school must create its own detailed record on **CPOMS/My Concern** of why the police were called, what the police did, and the support provided afterward.

Signed: **Date:**

Name:

Chair of St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust Board

Updated for Statutory Compliance: 1st April 2026

Review Date: Summer term 2027

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Staff Guide - How to Record A Restrictive Intervention

Staff Guide: How to record a restrictive intervention from April 26 – staff guide

Use this guide to support you with recording and writing a report if you've used a restrictive intervention on a pupil such as force, seclusion or restraint.

What you must do

Log the incident on CPOMS using the the restrictive intervention report form headings or complete a restrictive interventions report and upload onto CPOMS, where possible on the same day and no later than the next day. The reporting form can be found on CPOMS.

Share it with the Headteacher/ DSL or in their absence, a member of the SLT.

Make sure this report is shared with the pupil's parents, on the same day where possible and no later than the next day. Reports must be checked by Headteachers/DSLs before they are sent out in line with this policy (Catherine McLoughlin- HT / Sophie Drury – DSL). The name of the pupil must be left in but you will need to redact the names of other students involved e.g. change them to student A, student B etc.

How many reports?

You should complete 1 report per pupil, per incident

- If restrictive interventions were used on more than 1 pupil, you should complete a separate report for each pupil
- If more than 1 intervention was used during the same incident (e.g. force and seclusion) you don't need to complete separate reports for each intervention: you should cover everything in 1 report
- If more than 1 member of staff was involved, each member of staff should complete a report

What to include

- If you complete all the necessary boxes in the restrictive intervention report form (or have a response for each of the report sections on CPOMS/My Concern), you've covered everything you need to include
- If there's anything you're not sure about or don't know how to complete, talk to your DSL or Headteacher. If you are the DSL or Headteacher you can seek support from the SBCAT safeguarding lead.

How to write an account of the incident

This should be a brief account of:

- **What** happened
- **Why** you assessed that it was necessary to use the intervention you used

Your account should be:

- **Honest:** write what you remember, exactly as you remember it
- **Factual:** describe what happened, in plain language
- **Neutral**: try to avoid blame, judgement or emotive language
- **Clear and specific**: use clear actions (e.g. *punched, pushed, held, guided)*

You should include:

- What led up to the incident (e.g. anything relevant that happened beforehand)
- Any potential or identified triggers (if known)
- Any preventative or de-escalation strategies you, or any other members of staff used (e.g. what you said/did to de-escalate the situation or prevent harm)
- You should also include why you assessed that the intervention was necessary. In most cases this might include:
- The immediate risk of harm to the pupil themselves and/or others (e.g. the pupil was dysregulated and had already hurt another pupil)
- What you tried first, to de-escalate the situation (e.g. verbal instructions, sanctions or giving space)
- Why you judged that the intervention you used was:

  Necessary (e.g. the situation was escalating or not resolving)

  Proportionate (e.g. it was the least restrictive option available to you, used for the shortest time required, and you stopped once the risk of harm reduced)

Further support and sources

We understand that incidents involving restrictive interventions can often be distressing and have an impact on all involved. We aim to always have a follow-up conversation with all staff involved in these incidents, to reflect on what happened and see how you're doing

We're here to support you. If you're feeling upset, worried or unsure about anything, school staff should talk to their DSL or Headteacher. DSLs and Headteacher should contact the SBCAT safeguarding lead for support

This guide is based on recording and reporting requirements set out in the DfE's guidance for the Use of reasonable force in schools effective from 1 April 2026

Appendix B: Restrictive Intervention Report Template

DSLs and Headteachers must be informed of any incidents immediately by school staff and will advise SLT before making any calls to parents/carers and DSLs and Headteachers **must check any reports before they are shared with parents.**

Incidents **must** be recorded by staff by filling out this form/or logging answers to these questions on My Concern/CPOMS as soon as possible after the event, ideally on the same day and no later than the next day.

Staff **must** read the restrictive intervention staff guide to support them with completing the form/ or logging the incident on My Concern/ CPOMS.

School staff **must** seek advice from their DSL and Headteacher before completing the form/reporting on My Concern/CPOMs. DSLs and Headteachers can also seek advice from the SBCAT Safeguarding Lead.

Staff, pupil and incident details

STAFF DETAILS	
Name of the member of staff who used a restrictive intervention, and who is writing this report	
Role of the member of staff who used a restrictive intervention, and who is writing this report	**E.g. teacher, LSA etc**
Names and roles of any other staff involved	

PUPIL DETAILS	
Name of pupil who a restrictive intervention was used on	
Names of any other pupils directly involved	
Any needs or circumstances of the pupil, e.g. if the pupil has SEND	**E.g. pupil has moderate learning difficulties**
The pupil's SEN code, if they have SEN **(ask your SENCO if you're not sure)**	**E.g. E – EHCP**

INCIDENT DETAILS	
Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Location of incident	**E.g. secluded in headteacher's office, force used in classroom**
Approximate duration of the intervention	**E.g. 5 minutes**
Restrictive intervention(s) used	**E.g. reasonable force, seclusion or restraint**

If reasonable force was used: • **What type of reasonable force was applied** • **The degree of force**	**E.g. lifted the pupil in a 'cradle hold', holding them firmly so they wouldn't kick or hit themselves or myself**
Were there any physical injuries to pupil and/or staff member(s)?	**YES/NO** **(If yes, make sure any injuries are also recorded as set out in your school's health and safety policy and reported to the Health and Safety Executive where required)**
Details of any physical injuries (if applicable)	**E.g. red mark on wrist, scratch on left cheek**
Any support provided after the incident, including any medical treatment for injuries to pupil and/or staff member(s)?	**E.g. pupil seen by first aider, ice pack applied**

Incident account

This should be a brief account of:

- What happened
- Why you assessed that it was necessary to use the intervention you used

You should include:

- What led up to the incident
- Any potential or identified triggers
- Any preventative or de-escalation strategies you used

If you are reporting an incident of seclusion you must include the following:

- What caused the dysregulation?
- Why was seclusion the only way to maintain safety?
- Exactly how long was the pupil prevented from leaving?
- How was the pupil supported to reintegrate after the risk passed?

You can find more support on how to write an incident report in the staff guide

WHAT HAPPENED
Example report: ***At lunchtime, I was on duty in the canteen. At one point, I started to hear some loud shouting. I then saw Nathaniel punch Jake in the stomach quite hard. Nathaniel's friends, Jeremiah Santos and Nancy Jacobs, then started to hold him back to stop him, but he pushed them away. Jake then tried to retaliate and punch Nathaniel, but he missed and Nathaniel pushed him to the floor.*** ***At this point, Mr Lewis had already shouted 3 times for Nathaniel and Jake to stop, but they were ignoring him and kept fighting. Mr Lewis then approached Nathaniel and held him forcefully by the shoulders and pulled him off Jake. Mr Lewis then guided Nathaniel away by the arm and took him out into the corridor.*** ***Mr Lewis used reasonable force for around 4 minutes when he held Nathaniel to take him away from Jake and when he guided him away from the incident. I helped Jake up from the floor by the hand and guided him by the arm into the playground, using reasonable force for around 3 minutes. I gave Jake a few minutes to calm down and then we went to the school office to find a first aider. Jake was given an ice pack for his back.***

WHY I ASSESSED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO USE THE INTERVENTION I USED (IF NOT COVERED ABOVE)

Example:

I assessed that it was necessary to use the intervention because there was a risk of physical harm to pupils. Both pupils were highly dysregulated and were ignoring repeated verbal instructions to stop. I also felt the situation could quickly escalate and increase the risk of physical harm.

There was a clear risk of injury to Jake, Nathaniel, and other pupils nearby, and the situation was not resolving without physical intervention. The reasonable force used was necessary to separate the pupils, stop the fighting, and move them to a safer location so the incident could be brought under control.

I also feel that the force used was proportionate to the situation: it was only used while the pupils were dysregulated and there was an immediate risk of harm. Once the pupil had calmed down, I immediately stopped the use of force.

I confirm that the information above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: **Date:**

Appendix C: Examples of Seclusion in Practice

Example 1: Emergency Safety Measure

A student in a state of high distress begins to throw heavy furniture and swing a metal ruler at staff and peers in a small classroom. To prevent injury, staff guide the other students out and briefly hold the door closed while a lead teacher remains at the vision panel, talking to the student to calm them. The student is prevented from leaving because the corridor is not yet clear and they remain a danger to themselves.

- Status: Seclusion (Restrictive Intervention).
- Action: Must be recorded on CPOMS/My Concern and reported to parents the same day as a "Significant Incident."

Example 2: Physical Blocking

A student is highly dysregulated and attempts to run out of a secure school gate toward a busy main road. A staff member stands in the doorway of a small foyer, physically blocking the student's exit and telling them they must stay in the foyer until they are calm enough to be safe.

- Status: Seclusion (even though it is in an open foyer, the pupil is "prevented from leaving" for safety).
- Action: Must be recorded as Seclusion.

Example 3: Non-Example (Sensory Room)

A student with SEND feels overwhelmed by noise and asks to go to the "Sensory Room." They sit in the room with a weighted blanket. The door is closed for privacy, but the student knows they can open it and walk out whenever they feel ready.

- Status: NOT Seclusion. This is a voluntary sensory break and does not require the statutory "restrictive intervention" reporting.

Appendix D:

Template for reporting use of restrictive interventions to Local Governing Boards and the SBCAT Board

All SBCAT Schools must report any incidents of restrictive interventions to both their Local Governing Board and the SBCAT Trust Board on a termly basis using the following template/ Nil returns must also be recorded.

Incident Category	Total Number	% Change from Previous Term
Significant Force		
Seclusion		
Non-Force Restraint		

Appendix E:

Recording Search Incidents of Individual Students

All searches for prohibited items must be logged on CPOMS/My Concern including:

- Date, time, location, and reason for suspicion.
- The "searcher" and the witness.
- What was found and the resulting follow-up/sanction.
- Confirmation of parental notification.