

E02581 Illuminate You

Reasonable Force & Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) Behaviour Support Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how *Illuminate You* supports all learners, including those with complex emotional, behavioural and social needs, by:

- Promoting a safe, trauma-informed, positive environment;
- Preventing and de-escalating crisis behaviour using therapeutic strategies;
- Ensuring any necessary physical intervention is *reasonable, appropriate and safe*; and
- Complying with UK statutory guidance on restrictive interventions (including reasonable force) that comes into effect from **1 April 2026**.

TCI-informed practice underpins behaviour support throughout this policy.

2. Definitions

Restrictive Interventions

Any action that limits a learner's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently (physical or non-physical).

Reasonable Force

The minimum force necessary, for the shortest period of time, to prevent harm or danger. All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances when necessary to keep learners and others safe.

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)

A *trauma-informed crisis prevention and intervention model* designed to:

- prevent crises from occurring;
- de-escalate emotional and behavioural crises;
- safely manage acute behaviour; and
- provide therapeutic learning after incidents.

The TCI approach emphasises understanding the child's stress, trauma histories, emotional needs and behaviours as forms of communication.

Related Laws and regulations

- **Government Guidance on Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions**

Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools: Guidance for schools in England

Department for Education (DfE) — This is the **new statutory guidance** replacing the older “Use of reasonable force in schools” guidance from **1 April 2026**. It sets out expectations on how schools should minimise and, where necessary, lawfully use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

Context:

- This guide extends the term from *reasonable force* to *restrictive interventions* (covering physical and non-physical restrictions).
- It includes new duties such as recording and reporting significant incidents to parents/carers.
- It replaces the earlier 2013 guidance and incorporates legal duties under *section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006*.

Existing Guidance (Until 31 March 2026)

- ***Use of reasonable force in schools***
Department for Education (DfE) — The current statutory guidance (originally published 2013, updated Dec 2025) remains in force until **1 April 2026**. It explains the legal power of school staff to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

Statutory Legislation Underpinning Reasonable Force

- ***Education and Inspections Act 2006 – Section 93A***

“The use of reasonable force in schools is statutory under *section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006*, supported by DfE guidance on restrictive interventions.”

(The statutory document itself is within the Government guidance PDF above.)

Safeguarding Context

Although not solely about reasonable force, the Keeping children safe in education 2025 statutory guidance is fundamental to any behaviour or safety policy because it outlines

safeguarding duties that intersect with behaviour management, risk assessment and staff training.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

- **Human Rights & Equality Legislation (Contextual Framework)**

Your policy should also reference the Equality Act 2010, especially where adjustments, discriminatory impact, and reasonable adjustments for learners with SEND are relevant. While not directly *about force*, it places duties on schools/settings to consider disabilities and protected characteristics. **Primary legislation:** *Equality Act 2010*

3. Guiding Principles

a. Trauma-Informed, Prevention-Focused Culture

Staff adopt a trauma-sensitive mindset where behaviour is understood as communication. Early support, relationship-building and proactive de-escalation are prioritised. This aligns with the DfE's emphasis on *prevention and de-escalation* to minimise restrictive interventions.

b. Least Restrictive and Proportionate Response

Physical intervention is *always a last resort*. Before considering reasonable force, staff must attempt all appropriate TCI strategies including co-regulation, active listening, environment modification, guided choices, distraction/redirection and reflective dialogue.

c. Staff Training & Competency

All staff who may need to support behaviour will be trained in TCI principles and skills. This includes understanding:

- trauma and its behavioural impact,
- crisis prevention skills,
- de-escalation techniques,
- safe physical intervention techniques (if trained),
- risk assessment and documentation; and
- post-incident support.

TCI competency is refreshed regularly.

4. Preventing and De-escalating Behaviour

Staff use TCI and other positive behaviour strategies to:

- build trusting relationships with learners;
- understand individual triggers and early warning signs;
- adjust environments and expectations to reduce stressors;
- use language and non-verbal communication that promotes safety and calm;
- support learners to develop self-regulation skills.

De-escalation is always attempted before any physical intervention.

5. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Reasonable force may be considered *only if all other alternatives have been attempted or are inappropriate and there is an imminent risk of harm*, such as:

- preventing injury to the learner, other learners or staff;
- preventing serious damage to property; or
- stopping an escalating crisis that puts safety at risk.

Any physical intervention must:

- use the *minimum force necessary*;
- cease as soon as safety is restored;
- preserve dignity and avoid painful or harmful holds;
- not restrict airway, breathing or circulation.

Unacceptable uses of force include punitive purposes, threats or controlling behaviour beyond what is necessary.

6. TCI Physical Intervention Framework

Where necessary, physical intervention follows TCI-approved techniques taught during training. TCI emphasises:

- safe positioning,
- releases and protective stances,

- breaking away and safe holds (if trained and appropriate as assessed by the organisation),
- team approaches where needed.

Only staff who have successfully completed TCI training may apply physical safety interventions.

7. Recording, Reporting & Review

Following *any* incident involving restrictive intervention or reasonable force:

a. Immediate Recording

Staff involved must complete an incident record as soon as practicable, including:

- who was involved and witness names;
- context and triggers;
- de-escalation attempts used;
- description of the intervention (type, duration, force level);
- injuries or distress observed; and
- decision rationale for intervention.

b. Notification

Parents/carers must be informed *as soon as possible* after significant incidents.

c. Debriefing

A TCI-informed debrief is held with the learner and staff to reflect on:

- what happened and why,
- how the crisis resolved,
- what supports are needed going forward.

Debriefing supports learning and relationship repair.

d. Monitoring

Incident data and patterns are regularly reviewed by leadership to refine strategies and reduce future need for restrictive interventions.

8. Individual Risk & Support Planning

For learners with identified needs (e.g. SEMH, trauma histories):

- Individual Behaviour Support Plans integrate TCI strategies;
- risk assessments identify potential scenarios and tailored supports;
- preferences, triggers and calming strategies are recorded collaboratively with learners, families and professionals.

9. Roles & Responsibilities

Staff

- Implement trauma-informed practice and positive behaviour support.
- Use de-escalation skills consistently.
- Report and document incidents accurately.

Leadership

- Ensure training, supervision and review mechanisms.
- Provide oversight of incident data and improvement planning.
- Involve parents/carers and multidisciplinary partners in ongoing support.

10. Training & Compliance

All staff will receive:

- *Core TCI behaviour support training;*
- Refresher update and competency checks;
- Training on UK statutory guidance on restrictive interventions and reasonable force.”

Training records, refresher dates and competency outcomes will be audited regularly.

Appendices

- **Appendix A – Behaviour Support Plan (template)**
- **Appendix B – Incident Record Form**
- **Appendix C – TCI De-escalation & Intervention Skills Summary**