Department for Education

Revised Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions Guidance

Government consultation response

December 2025

Contents

Introduction

The government recognises that the misuse of reasonable force or restrictive practices can have a significant and long-lasting effect on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom, which can potentially hinder the creation of a calm, safe and supportive school environment.

The government is therefore committed to minimising the use of reasonable force, including restraint and other restrictive practices in all schools in England, including special schools and alternative provision.

The work programme to achieve this will be undertaken in two phases. The first phase includes the updating the ‘Use of reasonable force’ guidance (2013) along with introducing mandatory recording and reporting of incidents of force to parents. The second phase will include the consideration of developing and delivering additional targeted policy interventions.

The public consultation on the draft revised ‘Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions’ guidance (previously known as ‘Use of reasonable force’ guidance) was launched on 4 February 2025 and closed on 29 April 2025 as part of the first phase of work.

The draft revised ‘Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions’ guidance set out advice to schools on how they can proactively minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions through prevention, de-escalation and data analysis to support improvement planning. It included information to support staff to:

- meet the new requirement to record every significant incident of use of force and report these incidents to the parents of the pupils involved
- understand when and how to use force or other restrictive interventions safely and lawfully
- support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Feedback from the consultation has been considered and the draft has been revised for publication. The final updated guidance document (now titled ‘Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools’) has been published alongside this report.

Summary of responses received and the government's response

The consultation comprised of 43 questions, and 568 responses were made to the online consultation. There were 11 additional email responses; these have been analysed along with the other open text responses but not included in the quantitative analysis.

The analysis does not include issues raised which were outside the scope of the consultation and/or the guidance but will be considered as part of wider policy work.

Table 1 demonstrates the total responses from each of the stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Group	**No. of respondents in group**	**Proportion of group %**
Headteacher or multi-academy trust chief executive	153	27%
Parent	103	18%
Middle or senior school leader	102	18%
Non-teaching staff member	32	6%
Governor or multi-academy trust trustee	27	5%
Teacher	21	4%
Prefer not to say	16	3%
Question not answered	114	20%
Total	**568**	**-**

Not every respondent submitted an answer to every question, so the number of responses analysed below vary from question to question. Percentages shown as part of the quantitative analysis are expressed as a proportion of those answering each question, rather than a percentage of the total responses. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Main findings from the consultation

Overall, there was broad support for most of the guidance updates alongside useful recommendations for consideration. The responses have been important in strengthening the guidance, especially to clarify definitions for key terms including reasonable force, restrictive intervention and seclusion.

Based on feedback, we are also introducing new legislation that mandates schools to record and report the use of seclusion to parents (along with new advice on this in the guidance), ensuring alignment with existing plans to commence legislation which mandates the recording and reporting of each significant incident involving the use of force by members of staff.

Some responses included views on behaviour management policies. These have been noted and will be addressed in the next update of the 'Behaviour in schools' guidance.

There were also strong calls for mandatory training standards alongside practical examples and scenarios to help stakeholders understand and apply the guidance effectively. We are considering this as part of the next phase of the work programme.

Question analysis

Questions 1 to 7 of the consultation related to respondent details and therefore no analysis has been provided for these questions.

Terminology (Questions 8 and 9)

The guidance outlined what is meant by reasonable force, other restrictive interventions, and restraint.

Respondents were asked: To what extent are these definitions helpful?

As shown in table 2, over three-quarters (80%) of 557 respondents said that they found the definition either ‘very helpful’ or ‘fairly helpful’, while 20% said they found the definitions ‘not very helpful’ or ‘not helpful at all’.

Table 2

Response	Count of responses
Very helpful	183
Fairly helpful	260
Not very helpful	81
Not helpful at all	33

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

The most common responses stated that to avoid ambiguity and inconsistency in application, the guidance needed clear and consistent definitions for key terms like reasonable force, restraint, restrictive intervention, and seclusion, supported by practical examples to illustrate, for example, when staff would use each intervention.

Government response

We are pleased that the majority of respondents found the ‘Terminology’ section helpful. We have amended the definitions to provide more clarity on specific terms.

We have noted the calls for more practical examples and case studies to better illustrate when staff would use each intervention. We are considering developing and delivering additional targeted policy interventions during phase two of our policy programme.

Who can use reasonable force? (Questions 10 and11)

The guidance outlined that all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances and that certain staff should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use as well as in preventative strategies. It set out that school leaders should choose the training, ensuring that it reflects the principles of the guidance.

Respondents were asked: Thinking about this section, to what extent do you agree with the approach taken regarding training?

As shown in table 3, 60% of 556 respondents said that they agreed or strongly agreed with the approach taken regarding training, while 32% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the approach taken.

Table 3

Response	**Count of responses**
Strongly agree	177
Agree	159
Neither agree not disagree	44
Disagree	92
Strongly disagree	84

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Most respondents agreed that effective guidance relies on high-quality, consistent staff training. Many respondents commented that physical intervention should be a last resort, and poorly designed training could inadvertently increase restraint use. Preferred training methods included scenario-based learning with real-world examples.
Respondents commented that training for staff should cover how to use reasonable force, alongside de-escalation techniques. There was strong support for mandatory national training standards, regularly updated and tailored to different school roles, while allowing flexibility for local adaptation.

Government response

We are pleased that respondents agreed with the approach taken regarding training. We have noted calls for national training standards, practical examples and scenarios on how to use reasonable force, alongside de-escalation techniques. We are considering developing and delivering additional targeted policy interventions during phase two of our policy programme.

Understanding when to use force and/or other restrictive interventions (Questions 12 to 19)

The guidance listed factors for staff to consider to support their assessment of whether use of force or restrictive interventions is reasonable.

This section also defined seclusion (a type of restrictive intervention) as the supervised confinement and isolation of a pupil, away from other pupils, in an area from which they are prevented from leaving of their free will. It stated that the circumstances which may warrant the need to use restrictive interventions may vary but it is never to be used as punishment.

This section also provided a distinction between seclusion and removal. In the ‘Behaviour in schools’ (2024) guidance, removal is defined as a serious disciplinary measure requiring a pupil to spend limited time out of the classroom at the instruction of a staff member in a setting where they can continue their education.

Respondents were asked: Thinking about this section, does it support school staff to assess whether the use of force is reasonable?

As shown in table 4, just over half (54%) of 558 respondents said ‘yes, this section does support school staff to assess whether the use of force is reasonable’, while 28% said ‘no’ and 18% said they were unsure.

Table 4

Response	Count of responses
Yes	299
Not sure	100
No	159

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

The advice on determining when the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions is appropriate was generally well received, as was the advice clarifying principles like necessity, proportionality, pupil welfare, and the encouragement for professional reflection. Concerns were raised about the vagueness of terms like “reasonable” and “professional judgment”, and how they can be applied in practice. Respondents called for clearer definitions and more staff training – particularly scenario-based learning – about when to use force and other restrictive interventions.

Respondents were asked: Seclusion is covered in this section as a type of restrictive intervention. Considering this, do you think the guidance on seclusion is clear?

As shown in table 5, over half (58%) of 553 respondents said ‘no, they do not think the guidance on seclusion is clear’, while 27% said ‘yes’, and 15% said they were unsure.

Table 5

Response	Count of responses
Yes	151
Not sure	82
No	320

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

The guidance on seclusion received mixed responses. While some found it helpful, many highlighted issues with ambiguity and inconsistent interpretation, especially in distinguishing seclusion from similar practices like removal or isolation, particularly in SEND contexts. There was strong support for staff training on the appropriate use of seclusion, including practical examples and scenario-based guidance on its use.

Respondents were asked: Do you think this section should include further advice on when and in what circumstances the use of seclusion is appropriate?

As shown in table 6, 83% of 559 respondents said ‘yes, this section should include further advice on when and in what circumstances the use of seclusion is appropriate’, while 11% said ‘no’ and 7% were ‘not sure’.

Table 6

Response	Count of responses
Yes	463
Not sure	37
No	59

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Respondents raised concerns about the clarity and adequacy of the guidance on seclusion. A key issue was the absence of a distinct definition of seclusion, leading to confusion with related practices like removal from the classroom and isolation. Respondents called for case studies and scenario-based guidance for the appropriate use of seclusion.

Respondents were asked: Thinking about this section, alongside the ‘Behaviour in schools’ guidance, is the difference between seclusion and removal clear?

As shown in table 7, 36% of 557 respondents said ‘yes, the difference between seclusion and removal is clear’, while 44% said ‘no’, and 20% said they were ‘not sure’.

Table 7

Response	Count of responses
Yes	200
Not sure	110
No	247

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Respondents felt the distinction between seclusion and removal was unclear, with vague definitions risking inconsistent application across schools. Respondents called for case studies on the appropriate use of seclusion and removal from the classroom.

Government response

There was strong support for providing additional guidance on seclusion. In response, we have added a clear definition to the main terminology section, along with a dedicated section offering further detail to help schools better understand this form of restrictive intervention.

We have noted calls for national training standards, practical examples and scenarios on the appropriate use of seclusion. We plan to use the feedback provided to consider developing and delivering additional targeted policy interventions during phase two of our policy programme.

Pupil and staff support (Questions 20 and 21)

The guidance advised schools on how to follow up on each significant incident of use of force or other restrictive intervention.

Respondents were asked: To what extent is this section helpful?

As shown in table 8, just over three-quarters (76%) of 558 respondents said this section was either ‘very helpful’ or ‘fairly helpful’, while 24% said it was ‘not very helpful’ or ‘not helpful at all’.

Table 8

Response	Count of responses
Very helpful	187
Fairly helpful	236
Not very helpful	91
Not helpful at all	44

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Most respondents agreed with the guidance on how to follow up on each significant incident of use of force or other restrictive intervention.

A few respondents called for clearer, consistent language and practical tools to support guidance implementation and national training standards to ensure consistency. This included calls for examples to illustrate what would be deemed a significant incident along with examples of effective post-incident support.

Government response

We are pleased that the majority of respondents thought this section was helpful in supporting schools to understand how to follow up on each significant incident of use of force or other restrictive intervention.

We have noted calls for national training standards and practical resources to ensure the guidance is effective. We plan to use the feedback provided to consider developing and delivering additional targeted policy interventions during phase two of our policy programme.

Developing a school policy on the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions (Questions 22 to 25)

The guidance outlined that schools should develop policies on the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions, emphasising that school cultures should aim to minimise the use of these interventions through prevention and de-escalation. Some short practical examples of how this could be implemented by schools were provided.

Respondents were asked: Thinking about this section, does it support schools to develop a policy on reasonable force and other restrictive interventions?

As shown in table 9, 64% of 559 respondents said ‘yes, this section of the guidance does support schools to develop a policy on reasonable force and other restrictive interventions’, while 20% said ‘no’ and 16% said they were ‘not sure’.

Table 9

Response	Count of responses
Yes	355
Not sure	92
No	112

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Most respondents supported the guidance for offering a clear framework to develop policies on the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. Some respondents suggested the guidance should include the co-production of policies with pupils, parents and professionals, emphasising that this would build trust and transparency.

Respondents were asked: Is it clear how school staff can apply the information in this section in practice?

As shown in table 10, half of 554 respondents (50%) said ‘yes, the guidance is clear how school staff can apply the information in this section in practice’, while 28% said ‘no’, and 22% said they were ‘not sure’.

Table 10

Response	Count of responses
Yes	276
Not sure	122
No	156

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Respondents had mixed views on the clarity and usability of the guidance, with some finding it clear and others calling for more detail on terminology and examples. This included calls for examples of how strategies can be implemented in practice, alongside examples of behaviour support plans and risk assessments.

Government response

We are pleased that the majority of respondents thought this section was helpful in supporting schools to develop a policy on reasonable force and restrictive interventions. We have amended the terminology section of the updated guidance to provide more clarity around specific terms and restructured the 'Policy and practice' section to make the advice on practice clearer and more coherent.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) (Questions 26 to 28)

The guidance provided advice for staff working with pupils with SEND, including specific strategies to proactively support those pupils and reduce the likelihood of needing to use reasonable force or other restrictive interventions.

Respondents were asked: Thinking about this section, to what extent does it successfully support staff to work with pupils with SEND?

As shown in table 11, 69% of 555 respondents said that this section of the guidance either 'very successfully' or 'fairly successfully' supported staff to work with pupils with SEND, while 31% said that it was not very successful or not successful at all in supporting staff to work with pupils with SEND.

Table 11

Response	Count of responses
Very successfully	138
Fairly successfully	244
Not very successfully	111
Not successfully at all	62

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Feedback on the advice for staff working with pupils with SEND was mixed. Some respondents appreciated its clarity and inclusive focus, especially around understanding triggers and co-producing support plans. Others felt it lacked practical detail including about how to implement strategies (including preventative strategies).

Respondents were asked: How does the revised guidance impact on children with SEND?

Summary of comments

The guidance was seen as a positive step in supporting children with SEND, particularly for its focus on proactive strategies, co-produced support plans, and the importance of adhering to legal and ethical standards. Respondents highlighted the need for mandatory training and resources on supporting staff to work with pupils with SEND.

Government response

We are pleased that the majority of respondents thought this section was helpful. We have noted calls for national training standards, practical examples and scenarios supporting staff to work with pupils with SEND. We plan to use the feedback provided to consider developing and delivering additional targeted policy interventions during phase two of our policy programme.

Recording and reporting the use of force by members of staff and Other physical contact with pupils (Questions 29 to 32)

The guidance outlined the new legal requirement to record and report each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil. Significant incident was defined as “any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff”.

The guidance provided advice on appropriate physical contact between staff and pupils which would not be considered significant incidents of force.

Respondents were asked: Thinking about this section of the guidance and the new legislation, is it clear when schools must record the use of reasonable force?

As shown in table 12, just over two-thirds (70%) of 556 respondents said ‘yes, the guidance is clear when schools must record the use of reasonable force’, while 19% said ‘no’ and 12% said ‘not sure’.

Table 12

Response	Count of responses
Yes	388
Not sure	65
No	103

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Most respondents agreed that the guidance is clear on when schools must record the use of reasonable force. Concerns were raised about vague terminology, such as "significant incident". Some respondents expressed that although the guidance outlines what should be recorded, it does not adequately define when recording is necessary. Suggestions included standardised recording methods and thorough staff training on data recording. Respondents agreed that effective communication with parents and authorities is essential.

Respondents were asked: Is it clear from the guidance when schools must report to parents the use of reasonable force?

As shown in table 13, almost three-quarters (74%) of 552 respondents said ‘yes, the guidance is clear when schools must report to parents the use of reasonable force’, while 18% said ‘no’, and 9% said ‘not sure’.

Table 13

Response	Count of responses
Yes	407
Not sure	48
No	97

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Most respondents agreed the guidance clearly states schools must report the use of reasonable force to parents. Some concerns were raised about vague terms like “as soon as practicable” and “significant incident”, which could lead to inconsistent reporting. Suggestions included clearer definitions, mandatory reporting timeframes, and standardised procedures to ensure transparency.

Government response

We are pleased that the majority of respondents thought this section was helpful in supporting schools to know when to record incidents or reasonable force and when to report these incidents to parents. We are introducing secondary legislation that mandates the recording and reporting of the use of seclusion in schools to parents.

We have provided more detail around the timing of recording and reporting incidents. Schools must do this as soon as practicable and should also endeavour to do this no later than the same day. We have amended the terminology section of the updated guidance to provide more clarity around specific terms raised.

Guidance for governing bodies and proprietors on using data on reasonable force and other restrictive interventions (Questions 33 to 34)

The guidance described how governing bodies and proprietors should use data on reasonable force and other restrictive interventions to identify patterns and implement improvements.

Respondents were asked: Thinking about this section, to what extent do you think the suggested data analysis will support schools to minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions?

As shown in table 14, just over two-thirds (68%) of 552 respondents said that the data analysis was very or fairly successful at supporting schools to minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions, while 32% said it was not very successful or not successful at all.

Table 14

Response	Count of responses
Very successfully	142
Fairly successfully	232
Not very successfully	116
Not successful at all	62

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Respondents agreed that the suggested data analysis in the guidance will be valuable for identifying patterns and implementing improvement support for pupils, especially those with SEND. Clear definitions and standardised templates on data collection, and advice on what constitutes effective data analysis, were requested. Training for staff and governors in data interpretation was seen as essential, with suggestions for mandatory training and external support. While governing bodies' involvement was supported, concerns were raised about their capacity without specialist knowledge.

Government response

We are pleased that the majority of respondents thought data analysis would be a useful tool for identifying patterns, triggers and trends.

We note calls for standardised reporting including templates and clear definitions to ensure quality and consistency. We have updated the terminology section of the guidance to provider clearer definitions of key terms and plan to address the call for standardised templates as part of phase two of our policy programme.

General (Questions 35 to 38)

The following questions were asked to aim to understand how successfully the revised guidance met its stated aims and supports schools to uphold their legal duties.

Respondents were asked: To what extent does the guidance successfully support schools to:

a) proactively minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions through prevention, de-escalation and data analysis

As shown in table 15, just under two-thirds (63%) of 553 respondents said that the guidance either ‘very successfully’ or ‘fairly successfully’ supports schools to proactively minimise the need for reasonable force and other restrictive interventions through prevention, de-escalation and data analysis. More than a third of respondents (37%) said it was not very successful or not successful at all at achieving this.

Table 15

Response	Count of responses
Very successfully	87
Fairly successfully	259
Not very successfully	134
Not successfully at all	73

b) meet the new statutory requirement to record every significant incident of use of force and report these incidents to parents of the pupils involved

As shown in table 16, three-quarters (75%) of 553 respondents said that the guidance either ‘very successfully’ or ‘fairly successfully’ supported schools to meet new statutory requirements to record all significant incidents of the use of force and report these incidents to parents of pupils involved. One quarter (25%) said it was either not very successful or not successful at all in achieving this.

Table 16

Response	Count of responses
Very successfully	211
Fairly successfully	206
Not very successfully	82
Not successfully at all	54

c) support staff to understand when and how to use force or other restrictive interventions safely, reasonably and lawfully, including consideration of pupils with SEND

As shown in table 17, 60% of 552 respondents said that the guidance either ‘very successfully’ or ‘fairly successfully’ supported schools to understand when and how to use reasonable force or restrictive interventions safely, reasonably and lawfully, including consideration of pupils with SEND. Two fifths (40%) said it either was not very successful or not successful at all in achieving this.

Table 17

Response	Count of responses
Very successfully	109
Fairly successfully	219
Not very successfully	140
Not successfully at all	84

d) meet their safeguarding duties towards staff and pupils

As shown in table 18, around two-thirds (67%) of 545 respondents said that the guidance either ‘very successfully’ or ‘fairly successfully’ supported schools to meet their safeguarding duties towards staff and pupils, while 33% said that it was either not very successful or not at all successful in achieving this.

Table 18

Response	Count of responses
Very successfully	142
Fairly successfully	223
Not very successfully	95
Not successfully at all	85

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

The majority of respondents felt the revised guidance met its stated aims and supports schools to uphold their legal duties. Concerns were raised over vague terminology (such as “reasonable force” and “significant incident”) which could lead to inconsistent interpretation. There was strong support for mandatory, comprehensive staff training, especially in de-escalation, trauma-informed approaches, and SEND strategies.

Respondents were asked: Does the guidance support schools to meet their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty?

As shown in table 19, half (51%) of 550 respondents said ‘yes, the guidance does support schools to meet their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty’, while 21% said ‘no’, and 29% were ‘not sure’.

Table 19

Response	Count of responses
Yes	278
Not sure	159
No	113

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Respondents welcomed the guidance’s alignment with the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010, particularly its focus on safeguarding, non-discrimination, and reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND. However, concerns were raised about the lack of mandatory training, especially for staff who work with pupils with SEND. Respondents agreed with the importance of involving parents to ensure a collaborative and inclusive approach to pupil welfare.

Government response

We are pleased that many respondents thought that the guidance demonstrates a clear intention to support schools in meeting their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. We have noted the calls for training and will consider within phase two of our policy programme.

Further Questions (Questions 39 to 43)

The following questions were not about the draft guidance, but about the wider statutory framework to support the Department to keep the wider issue of the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions under review.

Respondents were asked: Under what circumstances do you agree that members of school staff should have a legal power to use reasonable force to:

- **prevent a pupil from committing a crime**
- **prevent a pupil from harming themselves, or someone else**
- **prevent a pupil from damaging property**
- **ensure the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school**

Respondents were able to select multiple answers in response to this question. As such, the analysis shows the percentage of the total number of options selected.

As shown in table 20, the option respondents most commonly agreed with was that members of school staff should have a legal power to use reasonable force to 'prevent a pupil from harming themselves, or someone else' (39%). This was followed by 'to prevent a pupil from committing a crime' (26%), 'to prevent a pupil from damaging property' (24%), and 'to ensure the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school' (12%).

Table 20

Response	Count of responses
To prevent a pupil from harming themselves, or someone else	520
To prevent a pupil from committing a crime	347
To prevent a pupil from damaging property	318
To ensure the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school	162

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Respondents highlighted that preventing serious harm while maintaining pupil safety and dignity was the most commonly agreed circumstance that members of school staff should have a legal power to use reasonable force. A substantial number of responses referenced property damage and maintaining discipline, with many cautioning that these justifications are highly context-dependent and should not be used to legitimise force unless there is a direct link to safety and as a last resort.

Respondents called for clearer definitions, for example the level of harm that justifies the use of force, to avoid misuse and ensure consistent application of force-related policies. The term “good order and discipline” was criticised for being vague. Training and oversight on the appropriate use of force were seen as essential, with calls for staff to be well-versed in de-escalation and the legal and ethical boundaries of physical intervention.

Respondents were asked: Where a restrictive intervention does not use force, under what circumstances do you agree that members of school staff should be able to use restrictive interventions to:

- **prevent a pupil from committing a crime**
- **prevent a pupil from harming themselves, or someone else**
- **prevent a pupil from damaging property**
- **ensure the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school**

Respondents were able to select multiple answers in response to this question. As such, the analysis shows the percentage of the total number of options selected.

As shown in table 21, the option respondents most commonly agreed with was that where a restrictive intervention does not use force, members of staff should be able to use restrictive interventions to ‘prevent a pupil from harming themselves, or someone else’ (35%). This was followed by ‘to prevent a pupil from committing a crime’ (25%), ‘to prevent a pupil from damaging property’ (24%), and ‘to ensure the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school’ (16%).

Table 21

Response	Count of responses
To prevent a pupil from harming themselves, or someone else	494
To prevent a pupil from committing a crime	352
To prevent a pupil from damaging property	343
To ensure the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school	226

Respondents were asked to explain their answer, providing suggestions for improvement where applicable.

Summary of comments

Respondents generally supported the use of non-force related restrictive interventions to prevent immediate harm, citing safeguarding as the primary justification. They emphasised the need for case-by-case judgment, clearer definitions of key terms such as ‘restrictive intervention’, and practical examples to guide consistent use. While some respondents accepted the use of restrictive interventions for maintaining order or preventing property damage, others commented that further information is needed around the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school so that this is not open to interruption. There was strong support for preventative approaches like de-escalation, restorative practices, and trauma-informed care.

Respondents were asked: Please provide any further comments on the revised guidance you would like to share that have not been captured above.

Summary of comments

Respondents generally welcomed the revised guidance but identified areas for improvement, including reiterating the need for clearer definitions of key terms such as ‘reasonable force’ and strong support for mandatory national training standards and robust data recording. There were also calls for the guidance to be placed on a statutory footing.

Government response

We acknowledge calls for the guidance to be made statutory. Whilst the guidance itself will remain non-statutory, the legislation requiring schools to record and report significant uses of force and incidents of seclusion to parents will carry legal weight and will be enforceable. Schools will also be expected to make data on the use of any restrictive interventions available to Ofsted during inspections.

We have amended the terminology section of the updated guidance to provide more clarity around specific terms raised. We have also included advice for schools on the use of seclusion as a form of restrictive intervention.

We have noted calls for national training standards and practical examples including scenarios of when force is and isn't reasonable. We plan to use the feedback provided to consider developing and delivering additional targeted policy interventions during phase two of our policy programme.

Next steps

- Both guidance and legal duties to come into force on 1 April 2026.
- Guidance will be kept under review.

Department for Education

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