# Briefing Paper: Statutory Duties on Recording & Reporting Use of Force

Audience: Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Senior Leaders, and Governors

Source: Use of Reasonable Force and Other Restrictive Interventions (DfE, 2025) – pages 14–15

## Overview

The updated statutory guidance introduces new legal duties for schools when force or restrictive interventions are used. These duties sit firmly within safeguarding practice and require robust systems, transparency with parents, and effective oversight from senior leaders and governors.

## Recording

Every significant incident must be recorded as soon as practicable. Records must include:

- Who was involved, including SEND status of the pupil.
- Date, time, place, and duration of the intervention.
- Events leading up to the incident and de-escalation strategies attempted.
- The type and degree of force used.
- Any injuries or adverse outcomes.
- The rationale for using force and the support provided afterwards.

## Reporting

Schools must notify each parent of the incident as soon as practicable, providing clear details of when, where, what type of force was used, its duration, any injuries, and the reasons for the intervention. Exceptions apply only if the pupil is aged 20+ or if informing parents would likely result in significant harm.

## Oversight

Governing bodies and proprietors must take all reasonable steps to ensure procedures are followed. Data should be reviewed regularly to:
- Identify patterns and adjust behaviour or support plans.
- Highlight staff training needs.
- Monitor for disproportionality, particularly for pupils with SEND or protected characteristics.
- Strengthen safeguarding and behaviour policies.

## Implications for DSLs & Senior Leaders

* Update policies to reflect statutory wording September 2025.
Ensure child protection recording systems capture all required details.
* Raise awareness of staff ensuring they understand the minimum requirements of reporting and recording
* Establish a clear process for parent notifications and ensure staff understand it.
* Review data with governors at least termly, with a safeguarding lens.
* Provide post-incident support for both pupils and staff, recognising emotional as well as physical impacts.

## Key Message

Ultimately, this statutory guidance strengthens safeguarding practice by requiring schools to be transparent, consistent, and accountable whenever force is used. For DSLs and senior leaders, the message is clear: restrictive interventions must remain rare, proportionate, and subject to rigorous oversight. Now is the time to review your practices, policies, and training programmes to ensure they fully reflect these statutory duties. Recording systems should be checked for compliance, policies must align with the new requirements, and all staff must understand their responsibilities. Taking proactive steps now will not only safeguard pupils and support staff but will also provide clear evidence to governors, parents, and inspectors that your school is meeting its statutory obligations and placing safeguarding at the heart of its culture.