



Reedley Primary School

Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy – April 2026

Legal Framework and Definitions

This policy complies with the DfE statutory guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026), the Equality Act 2010, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Furthermore, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) expectations, the governing body ensures that the school behaviour policy includes the power to use reasonable force.

In line with the 2026 DfE framework, all staff must understand the following definitions:

Restrictive Intervention (including non-physical restraint)

The umbrella term for any planned or reactive action that immobilises a pupil, limits their movement, liberty, or freedom to act independently. This includes physical force and non-physical restraint (e.g., removing a pupil's walking aid or crutches).

Reasonable Force

The minimum degree of force necessary, applied for the shortest possible duration, to maintain safety and prevent harm.

Significant Incident

Any incident where force goes beyond appropriate physical contact (such as guiding or comforting a pupil) and includes instances when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

All significant incidents trigger statutory recording and reporting duties.

Seclusion vs. Safe Space

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary safety measure involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others where they are prevented from leaving. It is only permitted in extreme safety emergencies to protect others from harm.

During seclusion, a pupil must be supervised at all times and allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced. It must never be used as a punishment.

This is distinctly different from a pupil voluntarily using a **safe space** to self-regulate. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil.

Preventative Strategies and De-escalation

Consistent behaviour management is a tool for equity. Disruption disproportionately harms disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. Before any restrictive intervention is considered, where possible and safe to do so, staff should attempt de-escalation using our behaviour policy principles:

- Applying consistent, whole-class behaviour management and actively managing communal spaces (such as corridors and playgrounds) to ensure they remain calm and safe environments.
- Using calm, predictable authority, appropriate tone of voice, empathy, and consistent routines.
- Providing clear visual aids and structured choices for pupils with SEND.
- Tactical ignoring of secondary behaviours and defusing potential conflict.
- Giving pupils strategies to process instructions and calm down before their behaviour escalates.

The Lawful Use of Restrictive Interventions

Teachers and authorised staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent or stop a pupil from:

- Causing personal injury to themselves or others.
- Committing a criminal offence.
- Causing significant damage to property.
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school.

Before applying any restrictive intervention, staff should rapidly assess:

- Is it necessary? Are there less restrictive ways to manage the risk?
- Is it proportionate? Are you using the least amount of force for the shortest time?
- Have you considered the pupil's welfare? Balancing the intervention against the pupil's personal circumstances, SEND, or trauma history

The Headteacher and staff they authorise may also use reasonable force to conduct a search for legally prohibited items (such as weapons or illegal drugs), but force may not be used to search for items that are merely banned under school rules.

Staff must always refer to the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance for detailed procedures on conducting lawful searches.

The school does not operate a 'no contact' policy and cannot grant requests from parents, carers, or staff to exempt a pupil from the use of reasonable force where it is necessary to keep them or others safe. Staff should feel confident in making appropriate, supportive physical contact with pupils where necessary. This does not constitute a restrictive intervention. Examples of appropriate contact include giving first aid, holding a younger pupil's hand to guide them safely, comforting a distressed pupil, or offering a pat on the back to congratulate them.

In accordance with the 2026 guidance, staff must never:

- Use any restraint that impacts a pupil's airway, breathing, or circulation.
- Use force or seclusion as a disciplinary penalty or punishment.

Furthermore, the use of force on the ground carries significant risks and should be avoided where possible. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground during a dynamic incident, staff must release their holds or reposition to a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Equity in Access

We recognise that pupils with SEND or a history of trauma may be disproportionately affected by restrictive interventions. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school has a legal obligation to support pupils with disabilities by making reasonable adjustments, ensuring they can fully benefit from the school's offer without being disproportionately subjected to restrictive interventions.

For pupils identified as likely to experience high levels of dysregulation, staff will work closely with the pupil, their parents, and any relevant health or pastoral professionals to co-produce any necessary Behaviour Support Plans and Risk Assessments based on their identified needs.

These plans will detail:

- Specific known triggers and warning signs.
- Preventative primary strategies and safe, agreed secondary interventions.
- Environmental adjustments to address aspects of the school the pupil finds challenging.
- Strategies to help the pupil communicate their needs effectively.
- Clear parameters and circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with the pupil.

Statutory Recording, Reporting, and Monitoring

To comply with Department for Education statutory duties, the school requires the strict recording and reporting of all restrictive interventions.

Staff must be aware that recording duties now fall under two distinct pieces of legislation:

- Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which states that every “significant incident” involving the use of physical force must be recorded.
- The schools (Recording and reporting of Seclusion and restraint (No.2) England Regulations 2025, which states that all incidents of seclusion, as well as incidents of restraint that do not involve direct physical force must be recorded.

If an incident involves both restraint and a significant use of physical force, it only needs to be recorded once under the Section 93A procedure to avoid duplication.

All incidents of force, seclusion or non-force restraint must be recorded on the positive handling form as soon as practicable after the event, and staff should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

All logs must explicitly include:

- the names of the pupil and staff directly involved
- recording of all force, restraint and seclusion incidents
- written notification to parents
- same-day recording wherever practicable

- the time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention
- detailed information including SEN status, triggers, de-escalation attempts, duration and injuries
- a brief account of what led up to the incident, including identified or potential triggers if known.
 - a brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
 - the specific type and degree of force applied (if applicable)
 - the de-escalation steps attempted
 - details of any physical injuries sustained
 - any post-incident support provided, including details of any medical treatment.
 - Parents/carers must be notified in writing of any significant incident of force, seclusion, or restraint.

A member of the SLT Team will contact the family as soon as practicable after the incident, and will endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

The written notification to parents must legally include the time, date, location, approximate duration of the intervention, a brief account of why it was necessary, the type and degree of force applied (if applicable), and details of any physical injuries sustained.

As best practice, parents will be invited to have a follow-up discussion about the incident to review triggers, de-escalation strategies, and whether the Behaviour Support Plan requires amending, if one is in place or whether.

Legal exemptions:

If reporting the incident to parents would likely result in serious harm to the pupil, the Local Authority will be notified instead.

The Senior Leadership Team will record and analyse intervention data on a frequent and routine basis. This data will be used proactively to inform improvement planning, identify individual pupil trends, trigger the review of a Behaviour Support Plan, and ensure interventions are used proportionately. This data will also be shared with school Governors. The Safeguarding/Chair of Governors will be notified of any critical incidents.

Pastoral Support, Repair, and Post-Incident Support

Following any restrictive intervention, the physical welfare of the pupil and staff involved must be checked. If there are any signs of physical injury, a qualified First Aider should be called upon to provide immediate first aid for minor injuries or, where appropriate, ensure that professional medical help is sought. Any injuries sustained must be recorded on Medical Tracker.

Support must also be provided to any pupil who witnesses an incident where a peer may have been injured or distressed.

To support the ongoing emotional welfare and wellbeing of the pupil and staff involved, a follow-up conversation and debriefing meeting will take place. This conversation is framed as an opportunity for reflection and learning, aiming to understand what happened and why.

This focus is to repair and rebuild relationships through dialogue, ensuring every incident is a chance for growth and allows the pupil to start afresh.

Staff Training, Risk Assessments, and Wellbeing

We recognise that supporting pupils in crisis can be highly stressful. The school is committed to the physical, mental, and emotional health of its staff.

To do this the school will:

- Complete risk assessments for staff who regularly work alongside pupils where restrictive interventions may be required to ensure their health and safety.
- Ensure staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in its safe and lawful use as well as preventative strategies so that staff may judge when it is appropriate to use restrictive interventions, including in situations where quick decisions are needed.
- All staff will receive ongoing CPD on effective communication strategies, adaptive teaching and de-escalation.
- Staff involved in significant incidents will be offered post-incident wellbeing support.

Key Principles for Staff

Dos and do nots of physical restraint

In order to avoid having to use physical restraint the following may be helpful:

- give the child the opportunity to remove him/herself to another room to regain control.
- move calmly and confidently
- make simple clear statements to the child
- keep your voice quiet, firm and assured
- lessen the threat of your presence by sitting down or allowing the child some space
- talk to the child all the time
- offer comfort, re-assurance and security
- maintain eye-contact
- when possible have help at hand
- allow the child to 'save face'
- move other children away from the situation

DO NOT

- DON'T make unnecessary physical contact with a child - this can sometimes be misrepresented.
- DON'T use physical restraint until an appropriate assessment of the situation has been made.
- DON'T use physical restraint in place of verbal persuasion.
- DON'T use physical restraint unless there is immediate risk to the child or other individuals.
- DON'T use physical restraint as a punishment.
- DON'T use physical restraint for longer than is absolutely necessary to make safe a situation.
- DON'T (where practicable) use physical restraint without another adult being present.
- DON'T speak quickly or loudly or give complex advice or instructions during an incident.
- DON'T use physical restraint without documenting the incident.

DOS

- DO make sure you are fully aware of school's policy and procedure on Restrictive Interventions and Reasonable Force
- DO remember that it is your responsibility to follow the procedure and document the incident carefully.
- DO (where practicable) try to secure the presence of another member of staff before applying restraint.
- DO seek to minimise movement as quickly and safely as possible.
- DO, if possible, hold the child's clothes instead of skin.
- DO focus upon helping the child regain control and behaving safely.
- DO be sensitive and alert to the child's verbal communication and body language during the restraint so that control can be given back to the young person as soon as possible.
- DO offer sensitive support to the young person following the restraint and ensure that someone explains to him/her why the restraint was necessary.

It is very important to acknowledge that managing challenging and unacceptable behaviour is difficult. In some situations, the use of physical restraint is necessary but only after verbal persuasion has failed.

SENSITIVITY AND SELF CONTROL ARE ESSENTIAL

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure.

Communicating the Policy

The policy is made readily available and accessible to all staff, pupils, and parents via the school's website.

Policy Date: April 2026

Review date: September 2027