

THE RICHARD PATE SCHOOL



Restrictive Interventions (Including the Use of Reasonable Force) Policy

Reviewed JMH April 26

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy outlines how RPS will use restrictive interventions, including reasonable force, in line with the updated *Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools* guidance (effective from 1 April 2026).

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect the rights, safety and dignity of all pupils and staff
- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early support and de-escalation
- Ensure that when restrictive interventions are necessary, they are lawful, proportionate, necessary and time-limited
- Meet new legal duties to record and report restrictive interventions and seclusion from April 2026

This policy applies to all school staff, including temporary staff, volunteers and peripatetic specialists.

2. Legislative Framework

This policy is based on:

- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, 2026)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including statutory duties under section 93A for recording/reporting incidents
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2025), effective April 2026
- Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998

3. Definitions

3.1 Restrictive Interventions - Any action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty, or independence, including physical and non-physical interventions.

3.2 Reasonable Force - A range of actions involving physical contact to prevent harm, injury, disorder, property damage or crime, used only when necessary and proportionate.

3.3 Restraint - Physical restriction that limits freedom of movement, including holding, guiding or blocking physical movement.

3.4 Seclusion - Supervision of a pupil alone where they are prevented from leaving. From April 2026, seclusion must be recorded and reported to parents as required by law.

4. Guiding Principles

1. **Prevention First** – The school will actively use behaviour support, emotional regulation strategies, positive relationships and high-quality teaching to reduce the likelihood of interventions being required.
2. **Last Resort** – Restrictive interventions will only be used when absolutely necessary.
3. **No Punitive Use** – Force must **never** be used as a punishment or for compliance.
4. **Least Restrictive Option** – Use the minimum force necessary for the shortest time.
5. **Safety and Welfare First** – Interventions must not compromise breathing, circulation or apply pressure to the neck, mouth, nose or abdomen. Staff must not intentionally hold pupils on the ground.
6. **Trauma-Informed Approach** – Staff must consider emotional wellbeing and minimise distress.

5. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing serious damage to property
- Causing significant disorder or disruption

6. Prevention, De-escalation and Early Intervention

The school will:

- Use early help, differentiated expectations and SEND-appropriate strategies
- Provide staff training in de-escalation and positive behaviour support
- Develop individual behaviour plans and risk assessments for pupils who may require intervention
- Use comforting, calm adult regulation, distraction, sensory tools and safe-spaces in early years

7. Unacceptable Practices

The following practices are prohibited:

- Using force to punish or enforce compliance
- Restraint that affects breathing/circulation or uses pressure on neck, abdomen, nose or mouth
- Prone (face-down) restraint or intentionally forcing a pupil onto the ground
- Pain-inducing techniques
- Seclusion used without recording/reporting
- Any use of restraint where risks outweigh potential safety benefits

8. Procedures Following an Incident

8.1 Immediate Actions

- Ensure safety of pupil and staff
- Provide comfort, reassurance and emotional regulation
- Check for injuries and arrange medical assessment if needed

8.2 Recording Requirements (Statutory from April 2026)

The school must record **every significant incident** involving the use of force or seclusion.

Records must include as a minimum:

- Time, date, location and duration
- Pupil(s) involved and SEND needs
- Reason for intervention
- Type and degree of force
- Steps taken to de-escalate prior to intervention
- Injuries, medical treatment and follow-up support

8.3 Reporting Requirements (Statutory)

Parents must be provided a written report on the same day, unless doing so would cause serious harm.

This applies to:

- Reasonable force
- Restraint (including non-force restraint such as removing mobility aids)
- Seclusion

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Trustees Ensure the school complies with statutory duties

- Monitor patterns, frequency and impact of interventions through data review
- Ensure staff training and policy updates are robust and current

9.2 Headmaster

- Ensure staff receive training
- Oversee incident reporting systems
- Maintain communication with parents

9.3 Staff

- Exercise professional judgement
- Use de-escalation and positive behaviour support
- Follow recording/reporting procedures

10. Working with Parents and Pupils

- Parents will be involved in behaviour planning
- The school will provide transparent communication following incidents
- Pupil voice will be included during post-incident review

11. Support for Staff and Pupils After Incidents

- Staff will receive debriefing, supervision or support
- Pupils will receive emotional support and restorative practice where appropriate
- SEND pupils may require adjustments to behaviour plans

12. SEND Considerations

Pupils with SEND may require:

- Personalised behaviour plans
- Close liaison with external specialists
- Adjusted approaches that reduce triggers
- Additional safeguards around restraint due to increased vulnerability

13. Nursery & EYFS Appendix

Principles for Early Years

- Physical contact is often necessary for care, comfort and safety (e.g., guiding, hand-holding)
- Staff must differentiate between necessary, developmentally appropriate contact and restrictive intervention
- De-escalation includes distraction, sensory calming, co-regulation and removing environmental triggers
- EYFS behaviour expectations focus on emotional regulation, not compliance

Reasonable Force in EYFS

May only be used to:

- Prevent immediate harm (e.g., running into a road, hitting another child)
- Prevent serious damage to property

And must be:

- Minimal
- Developmentally appropriate
- Time-limited
- Recorded and reported in line with 2026 requirements

Separation and “Time Away”

- Must be supervised; seclusion must be recorded and reported under statutory duties
- Not used as punishment
- Must remain proportionate, supportive and brief

Touch for Care

- Non-restrictive physical contact (comforting, lifting younger children, hand-holding) is permitted and not considered “force” when it supports the child’s wellbeing

14. Training

All staff will receive updated training on:

- DfE 2026 guidance

15. Monitoring and Review

- The DSL and SENCo will review incidents termly
- Trends will be analysed to reduce risk and refine support
- Policy reviewed annually or sooner in response to DfE updates

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Restrictive Intervention Recording Form

1. Incident Details

- **Date:**
- **Time:**
- **Location of incident:**
- **Duration of incident:**

2. Pupil(s) Involved

- **Name(s):**
- **Year group/class:**
- **SEND needs / relevant vulnerabilities:** Yes/No

(Record SEND considerations clearly — DfE guidance emphasises heightened duties toward pupils with SEND.)

3. Reason for Intervention

(Staff may use a restrictive intervention only when necessary to prevent injury, serious property damage, or significant disruption.)

- Describe the behaviours or circumstances that led to the intervention:
- Identify the **immediate risk of harm** and why intervention was required:

4. De-escalation Attempts Prior to Intervention

(DfE guidance stresses prevention and de-escalation first.)

- Strategies used (e.g., verbal calming, distraction, time-out offer):
- Pupil response to de-escalation attempts:

5. Type and Degree of Force Used

(Must be reasonable, proportionate and for the minimum time necessary.)

- Type of restrictive intervention applied:
 - Guiding/moving pupil
 - Blocking/standing between
 - Physical restraint (describe technique)
 - Other (specify)

- Level/degree of force used (describe specifically):
- Duration of applied force:

6. Staff Involved

- **Lead staff member:**
- **Supporting staff:**

7. Injuries, Medical Treatment & Follow-Up

(Recording and reporting injuries is a statutory requirement under DfE guidance effective April 2026.)

- **Injuries to pupil(s):**

- **Injuries to staff:**

- **First aid/medical treatment provided:**

- **Follow-up pastoral/emotional support arranged:**

- **Parent/carer informed:** Yes / No
 - Who contacted parent/carer
 - Method and time of contact:

8. Witnesses

- **Staff witnesses:**

- **Pupil witnesses (if appropriate):**

9. Post-Incident Actions

- **Restorative conversation held:** Yes / No
- **Adjustments to pupil support/behaviour plan:**

- **Referral to safeguarding lead (if required):**

10. Reporting & Sign-off

- **Completed by:**
 - Name:
 - Role:
 - Signature:
 - Date:
- **Reviewed by Designated Safeguarding Lead / Senior Leader:**
 - Name:
 - Signature:
 - Date: