



Rainford High School Policy on Safe Touch, Restrictive Interventions and Use of Force

Everyone Matters

We expect our community to be polite and respectful

Everyone Helps

We expect our community to make sensible choices

Everyone Succeeds

We expect our community to work hard

Policy Owner	Principal
Scope of the Policy	Rainford High
Written/last reviewed	April 2026
Next review due	September 2026
Summary of key changes	No changes.

Appropriate Touch, Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

1. Introduction and Purpose

Rainford High School is committed to providing a safe, calm, inclusive and relational learning environment where all pupils are treated with dignity and respect.

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Department for Education guidance: *Restrictive Interventions, including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* (April 2026)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) Regulations 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Restrictive interventions are **not part of ordinary behaviour management**. They are exceptional measures used only to prevent serious harm or significant risk.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All teaching and support staff (including agency and temporary staff)
- Senior leaders
- Governors
- Volunteers and authorised adults

It applies:

- During the school day
- During off-site visits and trips
- When staff are lawfully in charge of pupils

3. Definitions

3.1 Appropriate (Non-Restrictive) Touch

Appropriate touch is supportive, relational contact that:

- Comforts or reassures
- Congratulates or encourages
- Is not restrictive
- Respects pupil dignity and consent
- Is not invasive, humiliating or sexualised

Examples:

- Hand on shoulder
- Guiding touch on arm/back

- Handshake

Pupils have the right to refuse comforting touch.

3.2 Restrictive Intervention

Any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act.

This includes:

- Reasonable force
- Physical restraint
- Holding or blocking
- Preventing exit from a room
- Seclusion
- Non-physical restrictions where movement is intentionally prevented

3.3 Reasonable Force

Lawful physical contact under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Force must be:

- Necessary
- Proportionate
- The least restrictive option
- Used for the shortest possible time
- Reasonable in the circumstances

3.4 Seclusion

Seclusion is when a pupil is placed alone and prevented from leaving for safety reasons.

Seclusion:

- Must never be used as punishment
- Must only be used to prevent serious harm
- Must be actively supervised
- Must be time-limited
- Must be recorded and reported

Voluntary time-out is not seclusion.

3.5 Significant Incident

Any incident involving:

- Physical restraint
- Seclusion
- Use of force beyond ordinary guiding touch
- Injury, distress or complaint
- Planned restrictive intervention

All significant incidents must be formally recorded.

4. Core Principles

Any restrictive intervention must be:

Lawful – within statutory powers

Necessary – real and immediate risk of harm

Proportionate – no more force than required

Time-limited – cease immediately when risk reduces

Safeguarding-focused – trauma-aware and dignity-preserving

Restrictive interventions must never be used:

- As punishment
- To enforce compliance alone
- For low-level disruption
- As a substitute for staffing
- In a degrading or humiliating way

5. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force only to prevent:

- Injury to a pupil or others
- Serious damage to property
- A criminal offence
- Serious disorder where safety is compromised
- A pupil leaving when doing so would create risk

Examples include:

- Breaking up fights
- Preventing a pupil running into traffic
- Stopping a violent assault
- Preventing a child hurting themselves
- Removing a pupil disrupting a public exam where safety is affected

Staff must consider:

- Immediacy of risk
- Whether de-escalation has been attempted
- Age, size and SEND needs
- Trauma history
- Least restrictive alternative

6. Prevention and De-Escalation

Rainford High School prioritises prevention through:

- Calm, consistent routines
- Trauma-informed practice
- Graduated SEND support

- Behaviour support plans
- Risk assessments
- Relational practice

Strategies include:

- Verbal reassurance
- Distraction and redirection
- Space to regulate
- Removal of audience
- Calling for senior support

Restrictive intervention is always a last resort.

7. Positive Handling and Physical Intervention

Where unavoidable:

- Minimum force will be used
- Shortest duration applied
- Lightest safe hold used
- Dynamic risk assessment undertaken
- Assistance sought where possible

Staff should ask themselves:

- Is there real and imminent danger?
- Have alternatives been exhausted?
- Is this proportionate?
- Do I need support?

Only trained staff should use planned techniques.
In emergencies, any staff member may act within lawful powers.

8. Fights and Physical Altercations

When responding to fights:

- Issue clear verbal commands
- Instruct bystanders to leave
- Avoid placing self at unnecessary risk
- Use reasonable force only to prevent injury

Staff may separate pupils by guiding or holding arms where necessary.

The level of force must match the level of risk.

9. Searches

Reasonable force may be used to conduct a lawful search for prohibited items in accordance with statutory search guidance.

Refer to the School's Search and Confiscation Policy.

10. Recording and Reporting (Statutory Duty)

In line with Section 93A and the 2025 Regulations:

Every significant incident must be recorded promptly.

Records must include:

- Date, time and location
- Staff and pupils involved
- Events leading up to incident
- De-escalation attempted
- Type and duration of intervention
- Any injuries or first aid
- Pupil voice
- Follow-up actions

Records must be:

- Factual and objective
- Completed as soon as practicable
- Stored securely

10.1 Parental Notification

Parents/carers must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable after a significant incident.

Communication must:

- Be transparent
- Explain necessity
- Outline next steps
- Offer opportunity for discussion

11. Post-Incident Support

Following any restrictive intervention:

- Pupil debrief offered once regulated
- Staff reflection opportunity
- Safeguarding review conducted
- Behaviour/risk plan reviewed
- Emotional and pastoral support provided

If injury occurs, first aid and medical review must be undertaken.

12. SEND, Vulnerable Pupils and Equality

The school recognises increased vulnerability among pupils with:

- SEND
- Neurodivergence
- SEMH needs
- Trauma histories
- EHCPs

Staff must:

- Make reasonable adjustments
- Implement EHCP provision
- Avoid blanket approaches
- Monitor disproportionality
- Review individual risk plans

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

- Act in pupils' best interests
- Follow training and policy
- Record accurately
- Stop immediately when risk subsides

Senior Leaders

- Ensure training
- Monitor incident data
- Report to governors
- Review trends
- Ensure statutory compliance

Governors

- Scrutinise data termly
- Monitor equality impact
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties
- Challenge patterns of repeated use

14. Complaints and Allegations

- Concerns will be handled as a safeguarding concern and investigated in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy, complaints policy and other related policies.