



Rainford High School Policy on 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	September 2026
Next review due	September 2027
Summary of key changes	New policy written in line with April 2026 guidance..

1. Introduction and Purpose

Rainford High School is committed to providing a safe, calm, nurturing and inclusive learning environment where all pupils are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. We recognise that the use of restrictive interventions carries significant safeguarding, legal and ethical implications and must therefore be approached with caution, transparency and accountability.

This policy sets out the school's approach in accordance with the **DfE Guidance: Restrictive Interventions, including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (April 2026)** and reflects the school's safeguarding duties under statutory law.

Our aims are to:

- Minimise the need for restrictive interventions through prevention, early intervention and de-escalation;
- Ensure that any restrictive intervention is lawful, necessary, proportionate, and used only as a last resort;
- Protect the safety, welfare, dignity and human rights of pupils and staff;
- Provide clarity to staff about when and how restrictive interventions may be used;
- Ensure robust recording, reporting, monitoring and governance oversight;
- Promote openness and confidence among pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.

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

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All teaching and support staff (including agency and temporary staff);
- Senior leaders and governors;
- Volunteers and other authorised adults working on behalf of the school;
- All pupils on roll at Rainford High School.

It applies:

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

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Equality & Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy

It covers all forms of restrictive intervention, including:

- Use of reasonable force;
- Physical restraint;
- Restrictive physical interventions;
- Non-physical restrictions (e.g., blocking exits where appropriate);
- Seclusion (where used for safety reasons only).

3. Definitions

Restrictive Intervention

Any action that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act. This may be physical or non-physical. It includes interventions that prevent a pupil from leaving a room, moving freely, or accessing parts of the environment.

Reasonable Force

A type of restrictive intervention involving physical contact that is lawful under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Force must be:

- Reasonable in the circumstances;
- Proportionate to the risk presented;
- Used for the shortest possible duration;
- The minimum necessary to prevent harm.

Significant Incident

Any incident where:

- Force is used beyond ordinary guiding or supportive touch;
- A pupil is restrained;
- A pupil is secluded;
- An intervention results in injury, distress, or complaint.

Seclusion

A protective measure where a pupil is placed alone in a room or space 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 and time-limited;
- Must be recorded and reported in line with statutory regulations.

4. Legal and Policy Context

This policy is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) Regulations 2025
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- DfE Guidance (April 2026) on Restrictive Interventions and Use of Reasonable Force

5. Core Principles

Any restrictive intervention must be:

Lawful

Within statutory powers and consistent with safeguarding duties.

Necessary

Used only where there is a real and immediate risk of harm.

Proportionate

No more intrusive than required to address the risk.

Time-Limited

Ceased immediately once the risk reduces.

Safeguarding-Focused

Prioritising welfare, dignity, trauma-awareness and relational repair.

Restrictive interventions must never be used:

- As punishment;
- To enforce compliance;
- To manage low-level disruption;
- As a substitute for appropriate staffing or planning.

6. When Restrictive Interventions May Be Used

Staff may use reasonable force only to prevent:

- Injury to a pupil or others;
- Serious damage to property;
- The commission of a criminal offence;
- Significant and serious disruption where safety is compromised.

Before intervening, staff must consider:

- Whether the risk is immediate;
- Whether de-escalation has been attempted (unless unsafe to do so);
- The pupil's age, size, developmental stage and SEND needs;
- Known trauma history;
- Whether the intervention is the least restrictive option available.

Planned interventions (e.g., within a Positive Handling Plan) must be clearly documented and agreed with parents/carers wherever possible.

7. Prevention, De-escalation and Behaviour Support

The school prioritises prevention through:

- A whole-school culture of calm and relational practice;
- Clear expectations and consistent routines;
- Trauma-informed approaches;
- Early identification of unmet needs;
- Graduated SEND support;
- Risk assessments and personalised behaviour plans.

De-escalation strategies include:

- Verbal reassurance;
- Distraction or redirection;
- Space and time to regulate;
- Environmental adjustments;
- Support from trusted adults.

Restrictive intervention should only occur when preventative measures have failed or are not safe to implement.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Staff

Staff must:

- Act in the best interests of pupils;
- Follow training and policy guidance;
- Use minimum force for minimum time;
- Stop immediately once risk subsides;
- Record incidents accurately and promptly.

Only staff who are trained should use planned physical restraint techniques. In emergencies, any member of staff may act within lawful powers to prevent harm.

8.2 Senior Leaders

Senior leaders must:

- Ensure staff receive appropriate training;
- Monitor incident data for patterns or disproportionality;
- Ensure safeguarding oversight;

- Report to governors as required;
- Review practice where concerns arise.

8.3 Governors

Governors will:

- Scrutinise data on restrictive interventions;
- Monitor equality impact;
- Ensure compliance with statutory recording and reporting duties;

9. Recording and Reporting

9.1 Recording Requirements

In line with the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No.2) Regulations 2025, every significant incident must be recorded promptly.

Records must include:

- Date, time and location;
- Pupil(s) involved;
- Staff involved;
- Description of events leading up to the incident;
- De-escalation strategies attempted;
- Type and duration of intervention;
- Any injuries or medical checks;
- Pupil voice following the incident;
- Follow-up actions taken.

Records must be factual, objective and stored securely.

9.2 Informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable following any significant incident. Communication should:

- Be transparent and factual;
- Outline why intervention was necessary;
- Explain next steps and support offered.

10. Support Following Incidents

After any restrictive intervention:

- A pupil debrief must be offered once regulated;
- Staff involved must have opportunity for reflection;
- Safeguarding concerns must be considered;
- Behaviour or risk plans must be reviewed;
- Emotional and pastoral support must be provided.

If injury occurs, appropriate first aid and medical review must take place.

11. SEND, Vulnerable Pupils and Equality

The school recognises that pupils with SEND, neurodivergence, SEMH needs, or trauma histories may be disproportionately affected.

Staff must:

- Make reasonable adjustments;
- Ensure EHCP provisions are implemented;
- Use individual risk assessments;
- Avoid blanket approaches;
- Monitor for disproportionality by disability, race, gender or other protected characteristics.

Equality impact monitoring will form part of termly review.

12. Complaints, Concerns and Allegations

Concerns about the use of restrictive interventions will be handled under the school's Complaints Policy.

Allegations of misuse, excessive force or abuse will be treated as safeguarding concerns.

13. Monitoring, Governance and Review

Senior leaders will review incident data at least termly to:

- Identify patterns or repeated use;
- Review impact on vulnerable groups;
- Inform training needs;
- Improve preventative practice.

Governors will receive anonymised reports and challenge trends where necessary.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.