

Rokeby School

Restrictive Intervention Policy (including Use of Reasonable Force)

Member of Staff Responsible	DSL/Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Date of Policy	May 2026
Date for Review	May 2027
Approved by Governors	May 2027
Distribution	Whole School including EYFS

I. Introduction and Aims

All staff are professionally accountable for any use of restrictive intervention, which must be justifiable, recorded, and open to review. Restrictive intervention may include measures such as reasonable force or seclusion (see Section 3: Definitions).

The term *reasonable force* covers a broad range of actions involving a degree of physical contact to control or restrain a pupil. In this context, *reasonable* means using no more force than is necessary and for the shortest time possible, with actions proportionate to the circumstances, in line with current Department for Education guidance.

All members of staff at Rokeby School have the legal power to use reasonable force in certain situations, including to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or others;
- committing a criminal offence;
- damaging property; or
- causing disorder that presents a risk of harm.

This authority applies to all staff and may also extend to adults temporarily responsible for pupils, such as volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on school visits.

The use of restrictive intervention applies both on school premises and in other settings where pupils are under the lawful control or supervision of Rokeby staff, including educational visits.

Aims of this Policy

- To promote a calm, safe, and supportive environment that is conducive to learning;
- To support the school's safeguarding and behaviour systems, in line with **KCSIE**;
- To protect all members of the school community from harm;
- To ensure that any use of physical intervention is necessary, proportionate, and appropriate;

- To provide clear guidance and training for staff in managing potentially unsafe or high-risk situations.
-

2. Scope and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all pupils and staff across EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 at Rokeby School.

All staff are responsible for adhering to this policy. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), led by the Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), has oversight of its implementation, monitoring, and review.

3. Definitions

In line with DfE guidance:

- **Restrictive intervention:** Any action that prevents, restricts, or controls a pupil's movement to reduce an immediate risk of harm. This includes both physical and non-physical measures.
 - **Reasonable force:** Physical intervention using no more force than is necessary and for the minimum time required, dependent on the situation.
 - **Restraint:** A non-disciplinary intervention that restricts a pupil's movement; this may or may not involve physical contact.
 - **Seclusion:** A time-limited, supervised safety measure in which a pupil is kept away from others to reduce an immediate risk of harm. It must never be used or threatened as punishment.
-

4. Preventing the Need for Restrictive Intervention

At Rokeby School, restrictive intervention is always a last resort. Staff are trained in preventative, child-centred approaches that prioritise de-escalation and early support.

This policy should be read alongside the schools:

- Behaviour, Conduct and Discipline Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Staff are expected to:

- Use calm, respectful communication, including tone and body language;
- Acknowledge pupils' emotions and promote the child's voice;
- Remove potential triggers or sources of distress where possible;

- Use distraction, diversion, and supportive redirection;
- Help pupils regulate their emotions before escalation occurs.

Staff must carefully assess whether intervention is likely to reduce risk or potentially escalate the situation.

Where appropriate, a pupil should be clearly and calmly warned before any physical intervention is used.

5. Use of Restrictive Intervention

5a. Seclusion

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention which involves keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and preventing them from leaving. This should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing elevated levels of emotional or behavioral dysregulation. The pupil is not acting with intent, and seclusion is not a disciplinary response to deliberate misbehaviour. It will never be threatened or used as punishment.

- Pupils will always be supervised;
- The environment must be safe and non-threatening;
- The intervention will only last if the risk remains;
- It will never be used as punishment. (NB: Disciplinary internal exclusions as outlined in the Behaviour Conduct and Discipline policy are not seclusion).

5b. Reasonable Force

Reasonable force will only be used when all other strategies have been exhausted.

Staff must consider:

- **Necessity:** Is intervention required to prevent harm?
- **Proportionality:** Is the level of force appropriate to the situation?
- **Individual context:** Including age, size, SEND, medical and communication needs.

5c. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Examples include:

- A pupil posing a risk of injury to themselves or others;

- Physical fights between pupils;
 - Dangerous misuse of equipment or materials;
 - Unsafe behaviour such as running in high-risk areas;
 - Persistent refusal to follow safety instructions.
-

5d. Forms of Intervention

Intervention may include:

Passive:

- Standing between pupils;
- Blocking movement.

Active:

- Guiding a pupil away by the arm;
- Shepherding a pupil;
- In exceptional circumstances, the use of more restrictive holds.

Staff must **never**:

- Restrict breathing or apply pressure to the neck, chest, or abdomen;
- Use prone or ground restraint unless unavoidable, and only for the shortest possible time;
- Use any method intended to cause pain.

All interventions must preserve the dignity of the pupil and be accompanied by calm, clear communication.

5e. Individual Needs

Staff must consider:

- SEND and additional needs;
- Mental health;
- Communication and language;
- Medical factors.

Where appropriate, proactive behaviour support plans will be developed in partnership with parents.

5f. Post-Incident Support

Following an incident:

- Immediate wellbeing and safety of all involved is prioritised;
- Medical support is provided where necessary;
- A structured debrief will take place;
- Ongoing support will be offered to pupils, staff, and witnesses.

Incidents will be reviewed to identify patterns and reduce future risk.

5g. EYFS Considerations

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), staff recognise that younger children may have limited awareness of risk and may not yet respond consistently to verbal instructions. As a result, there may be occasions where proportionate physical guidance is necessary to ensure a child's immediate safety.

Examples may include:

- Gently guiding or moving a child away from danger (e.g. climbing, unsafe use of equipment);
- Preventing a child from leaving a supervised area;
- Supporting a distressed or dysregulated child to move to a safe space.

In all cases:

- Intervention must be minimal, proportionate, and for the shortest possible time;
- The child's age, size, stage of development, and understanding must be central to decision-making;
- Staff should use reassuring language and a calm approach throughout;
- Physical intervention must never be used as a punishment.

Where patterns of behaviour emerge, staff will work with parents to implement appropriate support strategies consistent with EYFS statutory guidance and the school's safeguarding approach.

Reporting and Recording

All incidents must:

- Be reported to SLT as soon as possible;
- Be recorded promptly and accurately (including rationale, actions, and outcomes);
- Be logged on My Concern.

Records must include:

- Names of those involved;
- Date, time, location, and duration;
- Description of the incident;
- De-escalation strategies used;
- Type and level of intervention;
- Justification of necessity and proportionality;
- Any injuries and follow-up support.

Parents will normally be informed on the same day, unless safeguarding considerations advise otherwise.

7. Complaints

If concerns or complaints arise:

- The school will review whether this policy was followed;
- All actions must be demonstrably reasonable and proportionate.

Staff should remain mindful that physical contact may be misinterpreted and should always exercise professional judgement.

8. Record Keeping

All records will be managed in line with the school's data protection and record retention policies and relevant legislation.

9. Monitoring and Review

The use of restrictive intervention will be monitored through:

- Termly audit of incident records by the Head and DSL.

- Review of patterns, trends, and consistency of practice.

Findings will be reported to the Governing Body to support oversight, staff training, and policy development.

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where required in response to changes in statutory guidance or school practice.