



Oakgrove School

Reasonable Force and Restrictive Intervention Policy

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS TO REASONABLE FORCE AND RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION POLICY

Written January 2026

Replaces Physical Restraint Policy

Section	Governors' Meeting
Whole document	12 March 2026

Reasonable Force and Restrictive Intervention Policy

Objectives:

This policy seeks to:

- Ensure the safety and dignity of pupils and staff
- Minimise the need for restrictive intervention through prevention and de-escalation
- Prevent serious breaches of school discipline
- Prevent serious injury to staff and/or pupils
- Provide guidelines to staff on the lawful, proportionate and safe use of restrictive interventions
- Ensure statutory recording, reporting and review of significant incidents

Statutory Framework:

The DFE has published statutory guidance **Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools**. Guidance for Schools in England April 2026 which this policy is directly informed by.

The principal legislation to which this policy relates are:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006, especially sections 93 and 93A
- the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations
- the Human Rights Act 1998
- the Equality Act 2010

Use of Reasonable force or other restrictive interventions:

The use of *reasonable force* should always be a last resort for teachers and support staff, but where necessary, reasonable force can be used to control or restrain pupils.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use “such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do”, any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order

This act also defines to whom the power applies as follows:

- Any teacher who works at the school
- Any other person whom the Headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils (Learning Advisors, support staff)

The power to use reasonable force applies whether pupils are on school premises or elsewhere, as long as they are in the lawful control or charge of a staff member. This includes school visits.

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.

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Risk assessments will be completed to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside pupils where the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions may be required can do so as safely as possible.

Terminology:

For clarity, this policy will use the following definitions:

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides.

Determining when use of restrictive interventions is Appropriate:

There will be times when school staff may need to use restrictive interventions. The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, the member of staff should consider the following:

Is it necessary?

- Staff should consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
- Staff should assess whether a restrictive intervention is likely to successfully reduce the relevant risks, or whether its use would escalate the situation further or cause more harm than the behaviour itself.
- Where possible, staff should communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.

Is it proportionate?

- Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff should reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.
- Staff should consider the personal circumstances of the pupil such as medical conditions, special educational needs or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics such as age and size, and must consider relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

Have you considered the pupil's welfare?

- Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. For example, pupils who have experienced an adverse life event, with diagnosed or undiagnosed medical conditions or sensory impairments, past trauma or neglect, communication difficulties, or other needs, may find the use of restrictive interventions particularly distressing.
- Staff should seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity. This may include, where possible, considering the location and environment where any intervention is used, such as in front of their peers.
- Where possible, staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

This list of factors is not exhaustive, and staff should also consider other relevant considerations.

Pupils who are likely to need restrictive interventions:

At Oakgrove we are aware that we might have individuals who are likely to behave in a way that may require restrictive interventions, so a risk assessment and a plan of how to respond should be drawn-up and circulated to the relevant staff. The plan would include how best to manage that pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary and ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate. In such a case, specific training would be given on the use of physical control or restraint for that individual.

Recording the use of force:

Every significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil, must be recorded. Incidents must be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It should be recorded by the staff member(s) involved and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day.

The following details will be recorded as a minimum:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved.
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code.
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained.
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts Schools may also wish to record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

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Any use of force must also be reported to the parent of the pupil involved as soon as practicable after the incident, and they should endeavour to do this no later than the same day. Parents will receive written communication (usually via email) The only exception is where it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The following details will be included as a minimum:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention.
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force.
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable.

Governing Bodies Responsibilities:

The governing body must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's procedures for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion and restraint are complied with. The Governing body will regularly review and interrogate data on restrictive interventions to ensure school leaders:

- identify and implement improvements to policies and practices, particularly where approaches have been used for some time but have not been effective.
- identify areas of learning and development for school staff, supporting specific departments and teachers to improve understanding and practice.
- understand pupils' repeat patterns and triggers to interrogate the effectiveness of pupil support measures, share this information with teachers who work with those pupils to better support them and, where appropriate, their parents, to establish a behaviour support plan or revise an existing plan.
- identify any disproportionate use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEN, or other types of vulnerability.

Dealing with complaints and allegations:

All complaints made relating to the use of force will be dealt with according to the school's complaints procedure.