



Document Control	
Document Title:	Positive Touch and use of restrictive physical intervention
Date of Last Review:	February 2026
Next Review Due:	February 2027
Person Responsible:	DSL/Headmistress

Positive Touch and Use of Restrictive Intervention

Contents

Policy Statement	Page 2
Prevention	Page 3
Acceptable forms of contact and physical intervention	Page 3-4
Definition of reasonable force / restrictive physical intervention	Page 4-5
Seclusion	Page 5
Responsibilities	Page 5
Staff Authorised to Use Force	Page 5-6
Guiding Principles	Page 7
SEND -Specific Considerations	Page 8
Recording and Reporting incidents	Page 8
Post-incident support (for staff and pupils)	Page 8-9
Developing a Positive Plan	Page 9
Staff Training	Page 9
Complaints Procedure	Page 10
Governance, Oversight and Data Monitoring	Page 10

1. Policy Statement



At Rowan Preparatory School we believe that in order to learn, children need to feel safe, secure and valued. Through the implementation of our behaviour and anti-bullying policies and our PHSE policy, we aim to create a safe, calm, orderly and supportive school environment that minimises the risk of violence of any kind.

Through this policy, Rowan Preparatory School endeavours to ensure that all children are safe and all staff, parents and children are aware of the procedures and practice that will be carried out to ensure this happens.

Where a difficulty arises, we will always try to de-escalate the incident first, only using 'reasonable' force where a child is placing themselves or others at risk or where the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using reasonable force. It is intended to ensure that it will prevent serious breaches of school discipline and prevent injury to individuals or very serious damage to property.

Any incident involving the use of restraint is recorded on CPOMs and notified to the Senior Leadership team.

Rowan Preparatory School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy document.

This policy applies to all members of our community, including those in our EYFS setting. This document is available on the school website and on request from the school office, in line with our Provision of Information Policy, and should be read in line with the following policy documents:

- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force (DfE April 2026)
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships, Health and Sex Education Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Complaints Policy
- PSHE Policy

2. Prevention



We are committed to the use of positive proactive behaviour management, preventative approaches and de-escalation techniques. In order to minimise the need to use force or restrain a child all staff will strive to:

- create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require the use of force
- apply school behaviour policy consistently and fairly
- develop effective relationships with all children
- ensure the supervision of all children is carried out in a consistent manner so that children and staff are comfortable within the setting
- use relevant materials or approaches to teach children how to manage conflict and strong feelings / emotions
- use appropriate instructions and have appropriate training to enable them to be effective in their various roles – in and out of the classroom
- ensure that 'risk assessments or handling plans', when required, are put in place and training is given to ensure staff are equipped to deal with individual children who have been identified as experiencing challenging behaviour
- warn a child, whenever possible, that force may have to be used before using it
- make adjustments to the environment where reasonable, to support the emotional regulation of the child

3. Acceptable forms of contact and physical intervention

In school there are occasions, for a variety of reasons, when staff will have cause to make 'physical' contact with a child. With this in mind, this school does not operate a 'no touch' policy as it would not enable staff to effectively support the safety and emotional well-being of the children. Reasons for 'physical' contact include:

- communication
- administering first aid
- to comfort a pupil in distress (as long as this is appropriate to their age)
- to congratulate a child for something (e.g. use of 'hi five' or a handshake)
- to gently direct a pupil, (holding hands, hand on shoulder etc).
- curricular reasons, (e.g. making contact in PE to demonstrate techniques or exercises)
- to support young children and those with SEN who may need staff to provide physical prompts or help
- for life skills (changing for PE, toileting, using cutlery etc)
- in an emergency in order to avert danger to the pupil or pupils
- in rare circumstances where the use of reasonable force is required to ensure the safety and well-being of the child in question, to stop significant damage to property



or injury to others. (N.B –in these situations, successfully managing the situation using other means is low or has already failed.)

In all of these situations, staff will use their own professional judgement, will always respect the wishes of the individual and consider:

- the pupil's age and level of understanding
- the pupil's individual characteristics and history
- the location where the contact takes place, (it should not take place in private without others present). If a child requires physical support on a regular basis this information will be documented on an individual plan such as a 'handling plan', toileting plan or behaviour support plan/risk assessment.

Furthermore, physical contact is never undertaken as a punishment or to inflict pain. (All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited.) Physical contact will also not become common practice between a member of staff and a particular child or be made with a child's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area or any other sensitive part of the body.

4. Definition of reasonable force / restrictive physical intervention

For the purpose of this policy, reasonable force / restrictive physical intervention is defined as 'the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a pupil from causing harm to themselves or others or seriously damaging property.' Injury means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking of the lives of, or injury to themselves or others, and self-poisoning.

- *Reasonable force*: no more force than necessary, for the minimum time required.
- *Restrictive intervention*: any action limiting a pupil's movement, including physical restraint or seclusion.

It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other authorised adult has to, in specific circumstances, use 'reasonable force' to control or restrain pupils. Whilst there is no legal definition of 'reasonable force', staff use the following four considerations as guiding principles:

- the use of force can only be regarded as 'reasonable' if the circumstances of an incident warrant it and where the chances of achieving the desired result, by other means, is low or has failed.
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.



- the degree of force should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. It is important that staff effectively manage incidents by communicating calmly with non-threatening verbal and body language.
- the use of force will not be justified if used to prevent or manage 'trivial' misbehaviour.

5. Seclusion

Seclusion refers to isolating a pupil alone, where they can not leave freely. This may only be used as a safety measure, when a pupil poses an immediate risk due to severe dysregulation. It can never be used as a threat or punishment. Rooms used for seclusion must be safe, supervised by more than one adult, non-threatening, and appropriate for a primary school context. All incidents of seclusion will be recorded and reported in line with all other incidents of physical restraint.

6. Responsibilities

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Headmistress and the DSL. They have a duty to ensure that all staff are aware of their statutory powers to use force and or restrain a child. As part of the induction process into school the headteacher will ensure staff are informed if they have the powers to restrain a child, if necessary, as well as whom they can turn to if they are in a situation with a child that may be causing concern.

7. Staff authorised to use force

All school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force, if it is immediately necessary and for the minimum time only, to prevent a child from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school and that places themselves or others in danger or at risk

The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances that staff find themselves in. Time in these circumstances is often short with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, staff need to make the clearest possible judgements. Staff will need to decide the seriousness of the incident and the injury, disorder or damage that could occur if force is not used. They should also consider the chances of achieving a desired outcome by other means and the risks associated with physical intervention



compared with using other strategies. In school all staff will have been made aware of any 'significant' children. If a member of staff decides that the use of force is appropriate and an action of last resort then they should always:-

- Try to engage the pupil in a calm tone, making clear that their behaviour is unacceptable, warning to the child that a physical intervention may have to be used.
- Suggest how the child is to be handled ensuring that no form of restraint is used that could constrict breathing. (Appropriate means are passive physical contact such as standing between children or blocking a child's path, leading a child by the hand or arm, ushering a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or in more extreme circumstances using appropriate restrictive methods that a **member of staff has been trained to perform.**)
- Try to ensure that they do not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe or call for assistance. As the safety and wellbeing of all staff and pupils is paramount, staff should always first give consideration to both their own safety and that of others as well as remember that we only ever use the minimum level of force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.
- Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of this kind include:
 - A child attacks a member of staff or other child.
 - Children are fighting, causing risk or injury to themselves or others.
 - A child is causing or on the verge of committing deliberate damage to property.
 - A child is causing or is at risk of causing injury or damage by rough play or use of an object.
 - A child absconds from a class or leaves school at an unauthorised time, where this would entail serious risks to the pupil (or other pupils) safety.
 - A child persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave a classroom.
 - A child is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson, a school event or school visit.
 - A pupil putting themselves in a situation that places them or others in immediate danger.

In these examples use of force would be reasonable (and therefore lawful) if it is clear the behaviour is dangerous and the situation could not be resolved in any other way. Account must also be taken of the individual needs of the child and their understanding of the situation.

8. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles relating to the use of 'reasonable force' are as follows: -

- It is an act of care and control, not punishment.
- It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions.



- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and in the pupil's and/or other pupil's best interests.
- 'Reasonable force' will only be used where the potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify the use of force and where the chances of achieving the desired result, by other means, is low.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for the use of 'reasonable force' through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child or young person.
- To prevent severe distress, injury, or damage, only the minimum force necessary will be used.
- After an incident, staff will be able to show that the intervention used was in keeping with any 'plan' in place and / or the school's policy.
- Every effort would have been made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses.
- As soon as it is safe, the 'physical' intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control.
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention, which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the use of repeated intervention.
- Intervention and escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable.
- The age, understanding and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account, including any SEND.
- In developing individualised risk assessments/behaviour plans, consideration will always be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance.
- Procedures are in place for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all parties involved.

We do not advocate for the routine use of restrictive physical intervention however any staff likely to need to use force, should have adequate training and this is the responsibility of the school leadership team.

9. SEND – Specific Considerations

The school recognises its duty to ensure that any use of restrictive interventions takes full account of the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff must consider a pupil's communication style, known triggers, medical needs and any relevant plans when assessing risk and deciding how to respond to dysregulation. Restrictive interventions should be tailored and used only when necessary, with a strong emphasis on prevention, early support and de-escalation for pupils with SEND. Some pupils



with SEND will have needs which may increase the likelihood of distress or dysregulation and this will be given due regard by staff and where appropriate identified on their Individual Support Plan, which is developed in conjunction with parents.

10. Recording and reporting incidents

The school will comply with statutory recording and reporting duties as detailed below:

- A record sheet will be completed by all staff engaged in any incident where handling has taken place, even if they did not handle the child. They must be completed as soon as the situation has been dealt with to ensure accuracy and a true record of events. Once completed, they must be passed to the Headteacher and filed in the child's records on CPOMS.
- The record sheet will include the following details: date, time, incident description, staff involved, pupil voice, injury report, de-escalation attempts.
- The Headmistress or DSL will inform the parents of the child by phone, followed by an email which will also invite them to come in and discuss the incident. When contacted, parents should be told when and where the incident took place, what strategies were used to avoid the use of force, what force was used, whether any injuries occurred and what follow-up actions were taken.
- All accident, incident or near miss reports must be recorded.

11. Post-incident support (for staff and pupils)

Following any incidents where force has been appropriate the Headmistress or DSL will:

- De-brief all parties involved to identify what happened and why, looking closely at the record sheets that have been completed by all.
- Make arrangements to provide emotional support for staff and children as these can be upsetting times. Children will be supported with their understanding of what happened, why they had to be stopped / restrained, what will happen next and what the school will do to support them. Particular support will be considered for those with SEND.
- First aid will be administered by a trained first aider and emotional support will be provided as required.
- Staff will also discuss the situation within 2 days with the Headmistress or DSL to make sure all procedures were followed and consider how we could try to avoid further recurrence; learning from the experience and ensuring safeguarding practice has been followed.

12. Developing a positive plan



Where it is felt that a child is likely to require the use of 'reasonable force' a risk assessment or handling plan will be created. To ensure everyone is clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why, the 'plan' will be developed in consolidation with parents/carers, the pupil, staff working with the child and the SENCO. This plan is aimed at helping the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence challenging behaviour and by identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours may be developing. A 'plan' will include:

- A completed risk assessment to ensure staff and others understand and consider the risks, act reasonably and learn from what happens.
- A record of risk reduction options considered, already tried and discounted.
- Information on how to manage the pupil, strategies to use to de-escalate a conflict and information about the point at which the need to use reasonable force will be taken.
- The identification of key staff who know exactly what is expected. (It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil)
- The system used to summon additional support, if and when required.
- The identification of any current and future training needs.

13. Staff Training

The focus of staff training will continue to be preventative, deescalation strategies, including an understanding of pupils' individual needs and any SEND considerations. All staff will be made aware of this policy and will complete an accredited training programme (content will align with updated DfE expectations and evolving 2026 guidance), as required, which is delivered by appropriately trained staff. This training will be revisited where a specific pupil or group of pupils increase the likelihood of this form of intervention being required. Regular training on safe, lawful restraint, will be provided for staff 'likely to use force'. The Headmistress and DSL will monitor the application of this policy and provide additional training where appropriate.

14. Complaints procedure

The school has a clear complaints procedure, and any complaints would be received in the first instance by the Headmistress. If matters are not resolved, then the complainant would take the matter to the Governing Body. Parents wishing to make a complaint can be provided with a copy of procedures on request or obtain a copy from the school's website. Specific allegations against a member of staff will be investigated and reported to the Local Authority's



Designated Officer (LADO) and, after discussion and advice, will be processed using the guidance and procedures outlined in the most appropriate school policy.

How will pupils raise concerns?

When pupils are calm and regulated, at least 24 hours after the event, pupils will be given the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about the incident with a member of staff who was not involved in the incident. This will be recorded on our record of restrictive intervention record sheet and followed up on by the DSL and Headmistress.

How will staff be protected from unfounded allegations?

We protect staff through our strong compliant policy, which makes clear that physical interventions are a last resort and makes explicit what is and isn't acceptable. We use consistent, clearly defined language across the school and our focus is on inclusive measures which de-escalate situations as well as thorough training. We have robust and transparent recording systems and parents are informed on the day of the incident.

15. Governance, Oversight and Data Monitoring

The Headmistress and DSL will use data on CPOMS to analyse patterns, prevent escalation and improve practice, relating to physical intervention. This will be discussed in Safeguarding governor meetings when regular anonymised data trends will be shared to support improvement. Any serious incidents will be escalated through safeguarding procedures as detailed in our policy.

This policy will be monitored by the school and governors and will be reviewed on a regular basis. The Headmistress and DSL and will review the schools use of force strategy following any incidents and make any relevant changes to the policy.