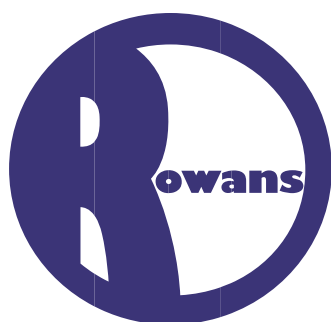


## **Restrictive Interventions and The Use of Reasonable Force Policy**

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| <b>Policy Written/Reviewed by</b> | Fiona May      |
| <b>Date of Review</b>             | September 2026 |
| <b>Date of Next Review</b>        | September 2027 |

## Rationale

This policy is based upon the government guidance – Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools, April 2026.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

The Rowans AP Academy is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents where restrictive intervention may become necessary when a child or young person behaves in an unexpected way. The response must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and use the minimum amount of force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the circumstances and with any training the staff may have received.

Staff will only use restrictive intervention as a last resort in line with DfE advice. If used at all, it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

Staff will view the use of restrictive interventions as a **last resort for the purposes of maintaining safety**. This policy outlines The Rowan's approach to restrictive interventions, including the lawful use of reasonable force to:

- Protect pupils and staff from harm
- Maintain a safe learning environment
- Ensure interventions are lawful, proportionate and used only as a last resort
- Promote preventative and de-escalation approaches

Restrictive physical intervention or reasonable force may be used only when absolutely necessary to:

- Prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others.
- Prevent serious damage to property.
- Prevent behaviour that compromises safety, serious good order, or discipline.
- Manage imminent or escalating risk where de-escalation has not been successful.

Use of force must never be used as a punishment and must always reflect the minimum degree of force needed for the shortest time possible.

Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm, supportive and trauma-informed, rooted in relational practice.

All staff will understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour as well as to the behaviour itself.

## Introduction

At The Rowans AP Academy and the Primary provisions there may be children who demonstrate challenging behaviour and dysregulation at certain times, who present behaviours that may necessitate the use of restrictive physical intervention to prevent injury to themselves, staff and pupils, damage to property, or the breakdown of a safe and enjoyable learning environment.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for restrictive interventions and the use of reasonable force. The policy is available to parents on request and is on the school's website;

<https://www.therowans-that.org.uk/policies>

Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for restrictive interventions. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all

other behaviour management/ de-escalation strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at serious risk.

### **Purpose and Guiding Principals**

The aim of this policy is to ensure a safe and happy environment, where everybody in the school community feels safe and respected.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a safe learning environment.
- To provide a framework in which all staff who come into contact with pupils are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of restrictive interventions and the use of reasonable force.
- To support the school's Child Protection, Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies

The Rowans AP Academy will ensure that:

- Restrictive interventions are used only when absolutely necessary
- Staff prioritise prevention and de-escalation
- Interventions are reasonable, proportionate and lawful
- The dignity, wellbeing and rights of pupils are respected
- Incidents are recorded and reviewed
- Staff receive appropriate training and support at induction and then annually

Many of the pupils at The Rowans have identified and unidentified special educational needs or disabilities that affect behaviour and emotional regulation. The Rowans will ensure:

- Individual risk assessments are in place for every pupil
- Behaviour support plans are developed, as needed, on an individual basis
- Adjustments are made where appropriate

Restrictive interventions will be consistent with the pupil's risk assessment and where appropriate, a pupil's individual support plan.

### **The Law**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory right for school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence or engaging in conduct that could be an offence
- causing injury to themselves or others
- damaging property
- prejudicing good order and discipline at the school

The power applies where the pupil is on school premises or any other place where s/he is in the lawful control or charge of the school staff member. This means that the power extends to school trips and visits.

### **Definitions**

Restrictive intervention refers to any act that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently.

Examples include:

- Physical restraint
- Reasonable force (Reasonable force means the minimum amount of force necessary for the shortest time needed to prevent harm)
- Seclusion
- Non-physical interventions that restrict freedom of movement

Restrictive intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself/ herself, others or property.

Staff within our provisions have all completed the de-escalation and restrictive intervention training with Team Teach.

### **De-escalation**

The following objectives have been adopted by all staff;

- to promote the least intrusive restrictive intervention strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before restrictive intervention strategies are used.
- to develop acceptable and authorised responses to disruptive, disturbing, angry and aggressive behaviours in a manner that maintains positive relationships and provides safety for all.
- to reduce the number of serious incidents involving physical controls in all settings and to emphasise the importance of exhausting behaviour management and relational practice strategies in the first instance.
- to increase the awareness of staff concerning the importance of recording and reporting, monitoring and evaluating, all incidents involving restrictive intervention; to provide a process of reflection, repair and restoration for both staff and pupils.
- When members of staff use restrictive intervention, they physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing.

Deciding on whether the use of force is justified will depend in part upon the context in which the behaviour takes place. The test is whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for restrictive intervention. Restrictive intervention will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management/ de-escalation strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk. The academy priorities strategies to reduce the need for restrictive interventions including; positive behaviour support, individual pupil risk assessments and behaviour plans, where appropriate, trauma-informed approaches, de-escalation techniques alongside relational practice, environmental adjustments and restorative practices.

De-escalation strategies can include but are not limited to:

- Verbal advice and support
- Choices/consequences
- Using diversion & diffusion e.g., engaging the child in a discussion about a favoured topic
- Using negotiation
- Time out offered
- Re-assurance
- Planned ignoring
- Humour

### **The Use of Reasonable Force**

Staff may use reasonable force to:

- Prevent a pupil from hurting themselves
- Prevent a pupil from hurting others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent serious disruption that risks safety

The level of force used must always be:

- Proportionate to the risk
- The minimum necessary
- Used for the shortest possible time

Staff will 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, 14 Equality Act 2010 10 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.

All staff in the school have the legal power to use reasonable force when necessary, however, The Rowans Academy expects that only staff who have received appropriate Team Teach training will use restrictive intervention, as a last resort, once all alternative strategies have failed.

Restrictive intervention is never used as a behaviour management strategy. Any use of force that is excessive or unreasonable may result in disciplinary action.

Staff have a duty to inform the leadership team of any physical injuries, medical issues or any other reasons which affect their ability to use restrictive intervention.

#### **Power to search pupils without consent**

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the Principal and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited" items

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

#### **Seclusion**

Seclusion involves placing a pupil alone in a room or space where they are prevented from leaving. It is used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In these circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent. The place to which the pupil is confined should be safe and not feel threatening or intimidating to the pupil. The pupil should be supervised at all times during the period of seclusion. As soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced, the pupil should be allowed to leave. An incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded and reported.

At The Rowans Academy:

- Seclusion is only used when necessary to manage serious risk
- Pupils will be continuously monitored and where possible, supported by staff in the space, where it is safe to do. There should always be a continuous line-of-sight supervision.
- The period of seclusion will be as short as possible with pupils being supported to leave as soon as they are safe.

- The seclusion must be recorded and justified

### **Training**

Training for all staff will be made available. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of restrictive intervention without appropriate training. This Restrictive Intervention Policy will be reviewed at least annually or when there are changes to law and or guidance. Training will be delivered on a needs-based approach and procedures are in place to monitor incidents.

### **Types of incidents**

Incidents fall into three broad categories: -

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations, which fall within these categories, are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by misusing dangerous materials or objects;

### **Recording and Actions**

All incidents involving restrictive interventions or the use of reasonable force must be recorded as soon as possible after the incident.

At Rowans AP Academy:

- Every incident of restrictive intervention will be recorded in a bound and numbered book kept by the school.
- The incident will also be uploaded to the pupil's individual record on Arbor.
- Records will include:
  - Date, time and location
  - Pupil(s) involved
  - Staff involved
  - Reason for the intervention
  - Description of the incident
  - Type of intervention used
  - Duration of the intervention
  - Any injuries sustained
  - Actions taken following the incident

All incidents are reviewed by the Principal to ensure that the intervention was appropriate, proportionate and in line with this policy.

Staff involved in the incident will always be provided with an opportunity to reflect and take part in a debrief. This may include discussion with senior leaders to support professional reflection and to identify any learning or preventative strategies.

Contact will be made with parents/carers to explain the use of restrictive intervention and offer them an opportunity to engage in a conversation about it and ask any questions they may have. Communication will include:

- A clear explanation of the incident
- The reason the intervention was necessary

- Any support or follow-up planned

Parents and carers will be offered the opportunity to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This could involve a discussion about any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident, whether any agreed behaviour support plans need updating, what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were and what might be done differently in the future.

A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form will be completed and returned to the Authority in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils. Any injuries to staff must be recorded on an accident form. There may be a management investigation carried out if deemed necessary.

Staff and pupils will be given basic first aid treatment for any injuries that require treatment. Where staff and pupils have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to emotional support.

The Principal/Vice Principal will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures:

- Review and update of pupil risk assessment and behaviour support plans
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and exclusions procedure, if appropriate
- In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

### **Support after an incident**

Following any incident involving restrictive intervention:

- Pupils will be supported to reflect and recover
- Staff involved will receive support if required
- The incident will be reviewed to identify learning

### **Monitoring and Review**

The leadership team will regularly review data relating to restrictive interventions in order to:

- Identify patterns or emerging concerns
- Improve practice and staff support
- Reduce the need for restrictive intervention

All incidents of restrictive intervention will be reported periodically to Governors through Local Academy Board meetings. This ensures appropriate oversight, accountability and monitoring of the use of restrictive interventions within the school.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

### **Complaints and Allegations**

Any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be investigated in line with the school's complaints and safeguarding procedures.