LDST Positive Handling and Safe Support Policy

Rainford CE Primary School

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Introduction and Statement of Intent

LDST and Rainford CE believe that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this we recognises that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary.

The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm. The use of preventative and de-escalation strategies is at the forefront of our approach.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, to protect children and staff. We recognise that restrictive interventions can have a physical and psychological impact on children and staff and should only be used when necessary and when other methods have been attempted or assessed as inappropriate in the circumstances.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance. The policy sets out LDST's and Rainford CE approach to restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. In particular it describes:

- when restrictive interventions may be used
- how staff are expected to respond
- how incidents are recorded, reported and reviewed
- how children and staff are supported afterwards

We are committed to:

- safeguarding the welfare, dignity and human rights of children
- preventing and minimising the need for restrictive interventions through positive relationships, early help and positive de-escalation
- supporting staff to manage behaviour safely and confidently
- meeting statutory recording and reporting duties
- using data and reflection to continually improve practice

Key legislation and guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A)
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations
- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation'
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- HM Government 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'
- DfE 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools'

The DfE guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools', states:

- 'All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.
- To prevent or stop a pupil from:
    - causing injury to themselves or others
    - committing a criminal offence
    - damaging property
    - causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise'

The DfE is clear that it is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment.

In addition, it states:

'Head teachers and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only. Staff should refer to the DfE's Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance document for detailed advice on searching a pupil.'

It also states:

'Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. Additionally, schools should not grant any requests by parents or staff members not to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions. The adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school can leave staff unable to intervene where reasonable in the circumstances to fully protect pupils. School leaders should adopt sensible policies which allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact. There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils which does not give rise to any question over the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to self-regulate
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, the member of staff should use their judgement and have regard to:

- the school's child protection (or any other relevant) policy
- the applicable circumstances, such as whether there are other adults present
- the individual pupil's age
- any other material factors, including but not limited to whether:
    - the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities
    - any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used

This policy should be read alongside other school policies including:

- Behaviour Policy for children
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers policy and procedures
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Safer working practices code of conduct for adults (staff code of conduct)
- Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The local governing body is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy includes reference to the power to use reasonable force.
- Evaluating, termly, instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on a bi-annual basis.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the 'Managing allegations against staff and volunteers policy and procedures.'
- Ensuring that the school's complaints policy is followed when any complaints are received regarding the use of restrictive interventions and reasonable force.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether any members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of children.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.

- Maintaining any records of restrictive interventions including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion and evaluating on a termly basis how these interventions are used. Presenting an analysis of key data and information to the governing body as part of the 'termly safeguarding report to LGB.'
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion, completes the Physical Intervention Report Form and each report is fully considered by a member of the leadership team in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy for children sets out the circumstances in which reasonable force may need to be used.
- Carrying out risk assessments to ensure that staff who regularly work alongside children can use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions as safely as possible, if and when required.
- Ensuring that staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions are adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand and are able to act in accordance with this policy.
- Ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Lead supports the implementation and review of this policy and considers any incidents that arise.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with senior leaders, relevant staff and the local governing body.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the 'Managing allegations against staff and volunteers policy and procedures.'
- Ensuring that the school's complaints policy is followed when any complaints are received regarding the use of restrictive interventions and reasonable force.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to support the needs of pupils with SEND in relation to this policy.
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of children with SEND or medical conditions.

- Developing individual risk assessments, pupil profiles or behaviour support plans, as required, for children with SEND or medical conditions that are agreed with the child's parents, and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All staff members will be responsible for:

- Avoiding restrictive interventions wherever possible and only using reasonable force as and when it is deemed necessary.
- Only using reasonable force in certain circumstances, including to prevent or stop a pupil from:
  - Causing injury to themselves or others.
  - Committing a criminal offence.
  - Damaging property.
  - Causing disorder among pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.
- Understanding the unacceptable uses of force and the legal implications of using force in this way.

Definitions

Restrictive intervention: An action or measure used to prevent, limit, or control the movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body. Within this policy, *restrictive intervention* is used as an umbrella term encompassing both physical and non-physical interventions intended to restrict a pupil's movement or behaviour.

Reasonable force: A legal term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the statutory power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable force refers to the minimum level of force necessary, applied for the shortest possible duration, and proportionate to the specific circumstances of the incident.

Significant incident: Any incident in which the use of force exceeds appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as defined by the DfE guidance 'Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force.' This includes situations where physical force is used to carry out or support a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: A non-disciplinary intervention involving the confinement of a pupil to a space away from others, with their freedom to leave restricted. This may be achieved through physical obstruction, blocking exits, or actions that lead the pupil to believe they will face negative consequences or sanctions if they attempt to leave.

Restraint: A term used in legislation to describe a non-disciplinary intervention that immobilises a pupil or restricts their movement. Restraint may involve direct physical contact or indirect actions. Examples include holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing an item that enables mobility, such as crutches.

The DfE also states:

Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

Minimising the need to use restrictive interventions and reducing risk, including the use of prevention and de-escalation strategies

Our school will ensure that it adopts the following whole school strategies:

- Continuing to review how the school and classroom environment can support all children to achieve and thrive.
- Sharing best practice for whole class behaviour management, and for managing communal spaces such as corridors and playgrounds.
- Training staff in effective communication strategies, such as using appropriate tone of voice and empathy to aid de-escalation.
- Promoting positive staff-pupil relationships.
- Promoting effective relationships with parents/carers.
- Seeking guidance from other schools and professionals when needed.
- Recording and analysing data on the use of restrictive interventions to inform improvement planning.

The school will ensure that it adopts the following individual approaches:

- Working closely with parents/carers to support individual children.

- Seeking guidance from external professionals when required.
- Developing, when needed, risk assessments, behaviour support plans and pupil profiles which outline strategies to support children with identified needs.
- Giving pupils time and space and strategies to calm down before their behaviour escalates. This could include the use of the school's 'calm corners' or 'nurture bases.'

We expect staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention.

Where possible, we implement an approach of prevention, where staff will be trained in recognising warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour, communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli.

Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs.

Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first questioning whether there is a need to use physical intervention. Staff will question whether:

- **It is necessary:**
    - Staff will consider whether there are other more effective, less restrictive ways to manage a situation.
    - Staff will 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 will communicate with other staff members to understand any broader risks in the environment.
- **It is proportionate:**
    - Staff will use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce relevant risks.
    - If the intervention itself is escalating the situation, staff will reconsider their approach and attempt an alternative strategy.

- Staff will consider the personal circumstances of the pupil, e.g. medical conditions, SEND or other vulnerabilities, their characteristics, e.g. age and size, and relevant equality implications under the Equality Act 2010.

- **The pupil's welfare:**

  - Staff will consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken.

  - Staff will maintain respect for a pupil's dignity.

  - Where possible, staff will clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening, why, and explain what the pupil needs to do.

  - For pupils with communication difficulties or EAL, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies will be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.

  - Staff will seek to understand the pupil's feelings and use this information to determine whether the restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Reasonable force will only be used in situations where it is needed to stop a pupil from causing harm to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or causing disorder among pupils. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating.

The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are required to intervene. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.

Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline – only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

Seclusion

The school recognises seclusion is a non-disciplinary measure that may be used, in exceptional circumstances, to reduce risk and avoid the need for physical intervention when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation and is not acting with intent.

The school will ensure that seclusion is used only as a safety measure to protect the pupil or others from harm and will not use seclusion as a consequence or through the threat of punishment.

Where seclusion is used, the school will ensure that:

- The space used will be safe, suitable, and not intimidating or threatening to the pupil.
- The pupil will be appropriately supervised at all times.
- The restriction will last only for as long as the immediate risk of harm remains.
- The pupil will be allowed to leave as soon as it is safe to do so.

The school will record and report any incident involving seclusion in accordance with the procedures set out in the recording and reporting incidents section of this policy.

Seclusion will not be used as a disciplinary response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. The school will use appropriate disciplinary measures, such as removal from the classroom, in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Pupils with SEND

Our school will have due consideration to how pupils with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Staff members will be trained on understanding triggers and how pupils that find communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This includes Trauma Informed training, Team teach training where appropriate and add here anything school specific.

We seek to minimise the potential disproportionate use of restrictive interventions used on pupils with SEND by understanding underlying triggers of challenging behaviour and providing proactive support.

The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

The school will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. The school will also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies.

De-escalation strategies may include:

- Removing stimuli that may be causing distress.
- Changing body language, facial expression, or tone of voice.
- Supporting the pupil to express their emotions before they become overwhelmed.
- Engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety.
- Distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention.

Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil with SEND will be applicable to other pupils with SEND.

Where appropriate, staff will work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of behaviour support plans. These plans will outline any adjustments and methods to communicate their needs effectively. Behaviour support plans will also detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. Any behaviour support plan will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident.

Where there is an identified risk, e.g. an increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and other physical interventions, the school will put risk assessments in place and mitigate these risks through training and prevention strategies.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

Post-incident support

The school will evaluate all incidents involving the use of restrictive intervention as soon as practicable after the event to understand why it was used, the impact on pupils and staff, any patterns and trends, and how the use of restrictive interventions might be avoided in the future.

If appropriate, the pupil and staff member involved will receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible.

Follow-up conversations will be used to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing. Such conversations will be framed as part of the overall debriefing process and seek to understand what happened during the incident and why, based on separate reflections from both the staff and pupils involved. This process will be facilitated by a staff member who was not involved in the incident, with input from an additional person to ensure impartiality and support.

The school will continue to monitor pupil and staff wellbeing and provide additional support if needed. Additionally, any pupil who witnesses an incident of restrictive intervention will also be provided with appropriate support where necessary.

Recording and reporting incidents

The Headteacher and local governing body will ensure that procedures are in place for recording and reporting restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion. All incidents should be recorded on the relevant forms and uploaded to CPOMS with the relevant sub-categories selected. Within CPOMS staff should also record the details of when parents were notified, and what follow-up actions have taken place.

Senior leaders should utilise the reporting function within CPOMS to create and analyse a log of incidents. This should be done regularly and in advance of any safeguarding team meeting/supervision meeting.

The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider carefully each incident of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, restraint and seclusion to determine the facts and whether there is any learning from the incident.

Records should be retained and analysed by the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead on a termly basis to ensure that such interventions are being used appropriately, and to identify patterns of behaviour and responses to that behaviour that may require changes to school practice, e.g. increased staff training or further behavioural or emotional support. This should include the SENCO where physical intervention was used on a pupil with SEND. The termly safeguarding report to the governing body should include an analysis of any incidents and any subsequent learning.

Where reasonable force or physical restraint or other restrictive intervention, including seclusion, has been used, the pupil's parents/carers will be informed as soon as practicable, and no later than the same day, unless it appears that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. If the decision is made that the parents cannot be informed as this would place the child at risk of harm, the incident will be reported to the Local Authority Children's Services Department following the school's child protection policy and procedures.

Recording and reporting the use of reasonable force

The local governing body will ensure that a procedure is also in place for recording and reporting any incident involving the use of reasonable force.

Incidents will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event. It will be recorded by the staff members involved and they will aim to do this no later than the same day. The

requirement to record will apply even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

The school will record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of pupils and staff directly involved.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has SEND, and their SEN status code.
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- A 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 what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained.
- A brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Any post-incident support, e.g. details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts.

A written report of the incident will be provided to the parents/carers, as a follow up to any telephone conversation. This will include the following details as a minimum:

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

Parents/carers will also be invited to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This may include a discussion about:

- Behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident.
- Whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed.
- What de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were.
- What might be done differently in the future.

Recording and reporting the use of seclusion and non-force related restraint

The local governing body will ensure that a procedure is also in place for recording and reporting any incident involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention, whether or not physical force has been used. This duty applies even where such interventions are agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Incidents involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention will be recorded as soon as practicable after the event by the staff members involved and, wherever possible, no later than the same day.

For the purposes of this policy, non-physical restrictive interventions include actions that restrict a pupil's movement without direct physical contact, such as preventing a pupil from leaving a space or removing an item that enables mobility.

The school will record the following details as a minimum:

- Names of the pupil and staff directly involved.
- The time, date, location, and approximate duration of the intervention.
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including SEND where applicable.
- A brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance.
- Any post-incident support provided, including medical or emotional support where relevant.

Where an incident involving seclusion or non-physical restrictive intervention also constitutes a significant use of force, the school will follow the reporting procedure for significant use of force only, and information will not be duplicated.

Records of seclusion and non-physical restrictive interventions will be retained, monitored, and reviewed alongside records of physical intervention to support oversight, identify patterns or trends, and inform any necessary changes to school practice or pupil support.

Complaints

Any complaints regarding the use of restrictive interventions will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

If an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force or other restrictive interventions is made against a staff member or volunteer, the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's policy for managing any allegations will be followed.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the Headteacher, DSL, SENCO and local governing body, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

Physical Intervention/Use of Reasonable Force - Report Form

We believe that reasonable force should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded. This form will e uploaded onto CPOMs

Name of staff member(s)	
Name of pupil(s)	
Date	
Time	
Location	
Approximate duration of intervention	
Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified SEND and SEND status code	
Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident	
Informed parties (parents, social workers, police, etc.)	

Circumstances prior to the incident
Brief account of the incident including - **identified or potential triggers, if known** - **Any preventative or de-escalation strategies used** - **Where relevant, what type of reasonable force was applied** - **The degree of force**
Details of any negative impact on other pupils

Reason(s) for physical intervention (please tick)	
To prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others.	☐
To prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence.	☐
To prevent a pupil from damaging property.	☐

To prevent a pupil from causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.	☐
Was it a planned intervention, e.g. in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils? (Please circle)	Yes/No
Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary	
Any post-incident support required, including any medical assessment	
Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils	
Damage (if any) to property	
Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents	
Headteacher's signature:	**Date:**

Signature of staff member who has completed the form:	**Date:**

Use of Seclusion and Non-Force Related Restraint Report Form

Name of staff member(s)	
Name of pupil	
Date	
Time	
Location	
Approximate duration of intervention	
Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified SEND and SEND status code	
Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident	
Informed parties (parents, social workers, police, etc.)	

Brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary	
Details of any negative impact on other pupils	
Was it a planned intervention, e.g. in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils? (Please circle)	Yes/No
Any post-incident support required, including any medical assessment	
Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils	
Damage (if any) to property	

Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents	
Headteacher's signature:	**Date:**
Signature of staff member who has completed the form:	**Date:**

Review Schedule

Policy Author	Headteacher, DSL and SENDCO
Policy Approver	Headteacher and LGB
Current Policy Version	1.0
Policy Effective From	March 2026
Policy Review Date	September 2027

Revision Schedule

Version	**Revisions**	**By whom**
1.0	Original policy document.	HT/DSL/SENDCO