



Touch and Physical Intervention Policy

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage ('EYFS').

1. Objectives

- 1.1. Ripley Court School endeavours to ensure that all children are safe and that all aspects of the "Every Child Matters" agenda are addressed. The main objective of this policy is to ensure all staff, parents/guardians and pupils are aware of the procedures and practice that will be carried out to ensure that this is the case at the school. This policy has been developed to include advice and statutory guidance as per "Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in Schools" (DfE 2026).
- 1.2. The Law allows for teachers and other persons authorised by the Headmaster to use Restrictive Physical Intervention 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 any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the School.
- 1.3. "Restrictive Physical Intervention" is the term used by the DfE to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headmaster has to, in specific circumstances, use "reasonable force" to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'reasonable force' is not precisely defined in law but must always be proportionate, necessary, and the least restrictive means available to prevent harm.
- 1.4. **Restrictive intervention** is a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil.
- 1.5. **Reasonable force** is a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions.
- 1.6. **Restraint** is 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. This may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.
- 1.7. Abuse in any form must never be used as a punishment.

1.8. In order to minimise the need to use physical force or to restrain a pupil, Ripley Court staff will strive to:

- Create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force and apply school rules consistently and fairly.
- Develop the effective relationships between staff and children that are central to good order.
- Ensure all supervision is carried out in a consistent manner so pupils and staff are comfortable within the setting.
- Use the relevant materials and approaches to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
- Ensure all staff have appropriate instructions and training to enable them to be effective in their various roles in and out of the classroom.
- Ensure that handling plans, individual risk assessments and staffing allocations will be put in place and training given to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with individual pupils who have been identified.
- Whenever possible, warn a pupil that physical force may have to be used, before using it.

1.9. This policy links with the School's Behaviour & Exclusions Policy, EYFS Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Intimate Care Policy and SEND Policy. It is intended to ensure that it will prevent serious breaches of the school discipline and prevent injury to individuals or serious damage to property.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. It is the Headmaster's duty to ensure all staff are aware of their statutory powers to use physical force when restraining a pupil. As part of the induction process into the School the Headmaster will inform all staff if they have the powers to restrain, and to whom they can turn to if they are in a situation with a pupil that may be causing concern.
- 2.2. All staff at School may have the statutory powers to use force to restrain a pupil or remove them from an area if the pupil or others are in immediate danger. All incidents of restraint will be recorded on CPOMs.

3. When and where to use restraint

- 3.1. The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use, should always depend on the specific situation. 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, the chances of achieving a desired outcome by other means, and the risks associated with physical intervention

compared with using other strategies. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. Staff will have been made aware of any pupil who is recognised as having significant behavioural issues, as well as those on SEND/Child Protection Registers. In extreme cases there may be a need to engage with the Police to avoid there being a danger to the pupil itself or to others.

3.2. If a member of staff decides that the use of physical force is appropriate and that it is an action of last resort, then they should always:

- Give a warning to the pupil that a physical intervention may have to be used.
- Suggest how the pupil is to be handled ensuring that no form of restraint is used that could constrict breathing.
- Try to ensure that staff do not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

3.3. In the first instance passive physical contact should be used, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or leading a pupil by the hand or arm, or ushering the pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the pupil's back.

3.4. In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive methods that a member of staff has been trained to perform. Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of this kind include but are not limited to:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- Pupils are fighting, causing risk or injury to themselves or others
- A pupil is causing, or is on the verge of committing, an act which could cause injury either to themselves or others
- A pupil is deliberately damaging property
- A pupil absconds from a class or leaves school at an unauthorised time, and they are putting themselves at risk of harm by doing so
- A pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave a classroom and their presence may cause injury to themselves or others
- Where a pupil is causing physical damage to themselves and where there is the potential for serious injury, such as banging their head against a wall.

3.5. In these examples, use of force would be considered reasonable. If it is clear that the behaviour is dangerous and that the situation cannot be resolved in any other way, then the use of physical restraint is understood to be lawful. However, account must be taken of the individual needs of the pupil and their understanding of the situation.

4. Seclusion

4.1. The School does not use seclusion as a disciplinary response to unwanted behaviour. Seclusion will only be used as a safety measure to protect others from

harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation. In such circumstances, the pupil is not acting with intent.

- 4.2. Seclusion should not be implemented by staff through threat of punishment.
- 4.3. In the event that seclusion is necessary, the place to which a 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. (See also paragraph 10.3 below).

5. Recording of Incidents

- 5.1. A record will be completed by all staff engaged in any incident where handling has taken place even if they did not handle the pupil. The record will be completed on CPOMS and an ABCD1 chart will be included. As per the Behaviour & Exclusions Policy, a restorative follow-up will be completed with the pupil at an appropriate time.
- 5.2. Written records must be completed once the situation has been dealt with to ensure accuracy and that it is a true and honest report. The Headmaster or other appropriate member of staff will inform the parents/guardians of the child by phone on the same day. All accident, incident or near miss reports must be recorded in SchoolBase and shared with the Office Manager and Director of Operations/Ripley Court Bursar.
- 5.3. Following any incident where force has been considered appropriate, the Headmaster will undertake arrangements to support both the staff and pupil/pupils, as these can be upsetting episodes.
- 5.4. Where necessary, first aid will be administered by a trained first aider and emotional support will be provided. Where possible, this should not be the same person who has used physical intervention. Staff will discuss the situation within a minimum of 2 working days with the Headmaster to assess whether or not all the correct procedures were followed. Also, to ascertain if anything can be learnt from the experience and to discover if any repercussions can be avoided in the future. Staff are encouraged to discuss any incident with the Headmaster as soon as possible.
- 5.5. If staff are concerned that their actions are at risk of being misinterpreted, they should speak with the Headmaster/DSL. Further information about self-reporting can be found in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy or from the DSL.
- 5.6. Any incident involving the use of seclusion must be recorded on CPOMS 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 Headmaster will inform the child's parents in writing if the use of seclusion has been necessary, and will arrange any follow-up steps with them.

6. Caring Touch

¹ ABCD chart is a strategy used by the School to talk through behaviour so that the child understands what has occurred. See also Behaviour & Exclusions Policy.

6.1. There may be circumstances when physical contact is appropriate that is not classed as physical force as defined by Section 93 of the Education Inspection Act 2006. Examples of this are:

- Contact in PE demonstrating technique or exercises
- Contact in Music/Art/Food Technology demonstrating technique
- Administering first aid
- Congratulating a child or where a child is in distress and needs comforting
- Younger children and those with SEND may need staff to provide physical prompts or help.
- Providing intimate care in accordance with the Intimate Care Policy.

6.2. In all these cases staff must use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support, which should always respect the wishes of the individual.

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Pending approval by: Education & Pastoral Sub-Committee	Next Revision date: Autumn Term 2026

Revision History Table

Revision Number	Section/Paragraph number	Amendments
5 – Summer 2026	1.1	Final sentence added to include reference to updated legislation
	1.2- 1.6	New
	Section 4	New
	5.6	New