



Restrictive Interventions including use of reasonable force

THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION 2026
THESE CAN BE FOUND ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE HERE:
<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

1. Introduction

St Edmund's School is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and supportive environment in which pupils and staff can work and learn without fear or disruption. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for staff to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from causing harm to themselves, others, or property, or from seriously disrupting the good order and discipline of the school.

This policy should be read alongside the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Search Policy, and Complaints Policy. It has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the Department for Education guidance Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026), including the statutory recording and reporting requirements applicable from 1 April 2026.

The policy applies to all staff authorised to have control or charge of pupils, including teaching and support staff, lunchtime supervisors, and, where applicable, boarding staff. It provides clarity on when and how reasonable force may be used, emphasising that it is always a last resort, proportionate to the circumstances, and applied with the minimum force necessary for the least amount of time. It also outlines recording and reporting procedures, parental communication, and staff training requirements to ensure transparency and accountability.

The Governing Body will assure themselves that this policy is implemented effectively and consistently across the School. They will receive regular anonymised reports on the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions to monitor patterns, frequency and outcomes, identify any recurring themes or emerging risks, evaluate the effectiveness of staff training and support, and ensure that interventions are not used disproportionately in relation to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), pupils with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or other vulnerable groups. Where trends or areas of concern are identified, the Governing

Body will ensure that appropriate action is taken, including reviewing policies, risk assessments, behaviour support plans, staff training and safeguarding arrangements, to promote the welfare, safety and dignity of all pupils.

Our approach seeks to protect the rights and dignity of all pupils, uphold the school's ethos, and ensure that any use of reasonable force is consistent with both safeguarding principles and the expectations of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

2. Legal Context

Relevant Legislation:

Education and Inspections Act 2006 – Sections 93–95

Education Act 1996

School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Children Act 1989 & Children Act 2004

Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (ISSRs)

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998 – Especially Article 3 (freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life).

Relevant Statutory Guidance:

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools, April 2026

Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No 2) (England) Regulations 2025

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026)

Working Together to Safeguard Children

Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (DfE)

Searching, Screening and Confiscation – Advice for Schools (DfE)

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 – Duty of care for staff and pupil safety during interventions.

3. Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is never used at St Edmund's School, nor is it threatened.

Various actions involving physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate and should be avoided. These include all forms of manhandling or physical force directed at the pupil:

- pushing
- grabbing
- pulling
- striking

and include the imposition of physical discomfort or distress, and the threatening of the same.

4. Reasonable Force

Definition of Reasonable Force

Restrictive intervention means any intentional act that restricts a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently and includes physical restraint, restrictive physical intervention, mechanical restriction (where lawful), seclusion and enforced withdrawal.

Reasonable force refers to the minimum degree of physical intervention necessary for the least amount of time to prevent harm, damage, or serious disruption. It is always proportionate to the circumstances, used only as a last resort, and never employed as a form of punishment.

The School does not use seclusion. Any supervised withdrawal from a classroom is for safeguarding, regulation or educational purposes and pupils remain appropriately supervised.

Circumstances where Reasonable Force may be used

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (s93) allows staff to use reasonable force in order to prevent a pupil from:

- To prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others
- To prevent serious damage to property
- To prevent behaviour that seriously disrupts the good order and discipline of the school
- To prevent a pupil from committing an offence

Corporal punishment is prohibited and will never be used or threatened.

Physical contact must never be used as a punishment or to inflict pain, humiliation or distress.

This does not prevent lawful use of reasonable force in accordance with this policy where necessary to prevent harm, serious disorder or damage.

All members of staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in the specified circumstances.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) states:

“There are limited circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use ‘reasonable force’ to safeguard children. The term ‘reasonable force’ covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. ‘Reasonable’ in these circumstances means ‘using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time’, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.” (KCSIE 2026, Para 203)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Staff should also read:

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

The following sets out how to support children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties who are at risk of restrictive intervention in special education settings, however all schools and colleges may find the information helpful:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention>

5. Deciding whether to use force

Staff should only use force when:

- the potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force;
- the chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low;
- the risk associated with not using force outweighs that of using force.

6. Using force

It is important for staff to use the **minimum force** necessary for the least amount of time to achieve the desired result.

In practice, staff must

- give a clear oral warning to the pupil that force may have to be used where it is practicable and safe to do so;
- ensure that pupils are not restrained in a way that affects the airway, breathing or circulation, including covering the mouth or nose or applying pressure to the neck or abdomen. Staff must avoid any position that creates an elevated risk of positional asphyxia.
- where possible not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.
- Consider the particular vulnerabilities of individual students (see “Vulnerable Groups” below)

Staff receive training in de-escalation strategies and safe handling techniques.

7. Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Where the use of reasonable force is associated with the searching, screening or confiscation of prohibited or prohibited items, staff will act in accordance with the School’s Search Policy and the current Department for Education guidance, *Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools*. Any use of reasonable force during a search must be lawful, necessary, proportionate to the circumstances, and limited to the minimum force required for the shortest time necessary to achieve a legitimate aim. Any such incident will be recorded, reported and reviewed in accordance with this policy and the School’s safeguarding procedures.

8. Reporting and Monitoring

1. The incident must be reported immediately to the Head and DSL.
2. A written record is made including date, time, names, circumstances, and outcome – no later than the same day as the incident.
3. Parents are informed immediately where practicable and always no later than the end of the school day, or where that is not reasonably possible, at the earliest opportunity on the next working day.

Follow-up support is offered to both pupil and staff involved.

Following any incident involving the use of reasonable force, the School will undertake a timely and proportionate post-incident review. Wherever appropriate, the pupil and the member of staff involved will each be given a separate opportunity to provide their account of the incident. Medical assessment and treatment will be sought without delay where any injury or concern for physical or emotional wellbeing is identified. A restorative discussion or debrief, wherever appropriate, should be facilitated as soon as practicable and, where possible, led by a member of staff who was not directly involved in the incident. The School will review any relevant risk assessments, behaviour support plans, individual healthcare plans or other support strategies to determine whether amendments are required to reduce the likelihood of future incidents. Appropriate support will also be offered to any pupils or staff who witnessed the incident and who may have been distressed by it.

Detailed and up to date records (see Appendix 1) should also be kept of any incidents where force is used and a copy of these records lodged with the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Parents of the pupil in question will always be informed by the school immediately where practicable and always no later than the end of the school day, or where that is not reasonably possible, at the earliest opportunity on the next working day.

9. Vulnerable Groups

The school recognises that certain pupils may be more vulnerable to the potential impact of the use of reasonable force. This includes, but is not limited to, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with social, emotional, or mental health needs, children in care, young carers, and those who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences. Staff are expected to exercise heightened professional judgment and sensitivity when considering the use of reasonable force with vulnerable pupils, taking into account any specific risk assessments, individual behaviour support plans, and advice from the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Wherever possible, de-escalation strategies and alternative interventions must be prioritised to minimise the need for physical intervention. Any incident involving reasonable force with a vulnerable pupil will be reviewed promptly to ensure that support strategies are updated and communicated to all relevant staff.

Staff must be mindful the following passage in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)*:

“When using ‘reasonable force’ in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND, mental health problems or with medical conditions, schools should, in considering the risks carefully, recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 (see paragraphs 90-94), for example in relation to making reasonable adjustments and their Public Sector Equality Duty. By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents, schools can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use ‘reasonable force’.” (KCSIE 2026, Para 205)

10. Complaints, Allegations and Low-Level Concerns

Any complaint arising from the use of reasonable force will be managed in accordance with the School's **Complaints Policy**. Allegations or low-level concerns relating to the conduct of staff will be managed in accordance with the School's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, the procedures set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**, and the School's Staff Code of Conduct where applicable. Where the circumstances meet the relevant threshold, the School will make a referral to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** and will cooperate fully with any subsequent enquiries or investigations. The welfare of the pupil will remain paramount throughout the process, and appropriate support will be provided to all those involved.

EOC

September 2026

Reviewed:

1. June 2018
2. September 2018
3. September 2019
4. September 2020
5. September 2021
6. September 2022
7. September 2023
8. September 2024
9. September 2025
10. September 2026

Review Date:

September 2027

Appendix 1

USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS: INCIDENT RECORD

Details of pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff (name, class)
Date, time and location of incident
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used
Duration of the incident
SEN and/or medical status of the child (if applicable)
Reason for using force and description of force used (including degree of force)
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention required
Reasons for making a record of the incident
Follow up, including post incident support and any disciplinary action against pupils
Was an existing behaviour support plan being followed?
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies

Was Police involvement required?	
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed*	
Has any complaint been lodged? (Details should not be recorded here) Y / N	
Report compiled by:	Report countersigned by:
Name and role:	Name and role:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

*Parents should be informed immediately where practicable and always no later than the end of the school day, or where that is not reasonably possible, at the earliest opportunity on the next working day.