ACHIEVE BEYOND SCHOOLS

"We R.A.I.S.E. each other"

Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Independent School Standards: paragraphs 7, 9, 11, 16, 16A, 32A and 34

Latest review and update	September 2026
Next external review and update	September 2027

AIM

Achieve Beyond Schools recognises its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. Adults work positively and confidently with pupils, who sometimes display challenging behaviours, and adhere to a clear, positive pupil-centred behaviour policy. The policy focus on prevention and verbal intervention, and find the least intrusive way possible to support, empower and keep pupils safe.

The schools acknowledge that there may be rare and exceptional circumstances in which the use of reasonable force is necessary, and adults deem a restricted physical intervention (RPI) as reasonable, proportionate and/or necessary to prevent harm, protect property, or maintain good order and discipline. Where the wealth of strategies available to adults fail, physical handling of pupils is the absolute last resort and is used to keep pupils and adults safe. It is used safely and positively, drawing upon the formal training that all adults have received.

This policy explains the lawful, proportionate, and appropriate use of reasonable force, in line with statutory guidance (Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools, April 2026). Please also see our behaviour policy for greater detail of our holistic approach to behaviour management in our schools.

DEFINITION OF REASONABLE FORCE

- Reasonable force refers to the use of physical contact to manage a situation where it is necessary to prevent harm, avert danger, or maintain safety by removing a physical object, using no more force than is proportionate and necessary.
- The degree of force employed must be the minimum needed to achieve the intended safe outcome.
- Reasonable force does not include the use of corporal punishment and force must never be used to secure compliance where there is no immediate risk to safety or order. It is **never** used as a punishment or as part of a behaviour management strategy.

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH REASONABLE FORCE MAY BE USED

Our starting point is always the rights, needs and safety of the pupil (and other pupils and adults present). If possible, the pupil will be taken to a safe space and any physical intervention will aim to be replaced with the pupil's ability to express themselves in a safe and appropriate way.

Restricted physical intervention is only required where there is a risk of a pupil:

- **endangering or harming others**
- **self-harming**
- **causing damage to property**
- **significantly disrupting the school, other pupils, or members of the public.**

In one or more of the above scenarios, only trained adults will use reasonable force only when all alternatives have been exhausted and failed (e.g. calm talking, distraction, warnings, reassurance, humour, options, change of face).

PREVENTION AND DE-ESCALATION

Achieve Beyond Schools are committed to minimising the need for the use of force through:

- Fostering positive relationships and trust with all pupils.
- Implementing individualised risk assessments and behaviour support plans where necessary.
- Providing training in de-escalation strategies and conflict resolution.
- Maintaining calm, de-cluttered and structured learning environments to reduce triggers and risks.

AUTHORISATION AND TRAINING

- Only adults who have received appropriate, in-date training in approved positive handling techniques are authorised to use reasonable force, except in emergencies where immediate action is required. All certificates are kept on file.
- Initial and refresher training will be refreshed at appropriate intervals to ensure competence and confidence.

RECORDING, REPORTING, AND NOTIFICATION

- All incidents involving reasonable force must be reported to the Executive Head or Head of School, recorded on the schools' pupil management information system on the same day.
- Records must include:
    - date, time, and location of the incident
    - names of those involved
    - description of events leading to the use of force
    - nature of the force (technical hold) used and its duration
    - outcome of the incident, including any injuries sustained
    - post-incident follow-up.
- Parents/carers must be notified on the same day by the adult who performed the physical intervention.
- For monitoring purposes, a decision is made as to whether the intervention was a 'standard' or a 'serious' physical intervention. Although reviewed case by case, an incident may be deemed serious if, for example, a pupil has been in crisis throughout the day and requires more support than usual, or if a pupil requires a more restrictive physical intervention.

POST-INCIDENT PROCEDURES

- Pupils will be offered appropriate support and the opportunity to reflect and repair relationships following an incident.
- Where patterns are identified, risk assessments and behaviour support plans will be updated accordingly.
- The pupil will have time to rest, reflect and recover; they will then re-join the activity or lesson when appropriate. This must be neither rushed (the pupil must be properly calmed and ready to re-engage) nor unnecessarily elongated.
- Any pupil who has been held should be given the opportunity to be debriefed and talk through their experience with an adult who was not involved in the physical intervention, normally by the end of the school day.

In all circumstances, we recognise that physical intervention can only deal with the immediate problem and careful assessment is needed to prevent repetition. This assessment takes the form of a reflective debrief with the Executive Head or Head of School at the end of the school day (it is also important to ensure adults are given time to debrief and reflect on the incident, including in terms of their own wellbeing).

MONITORING

- Leaders monitor all incidents involving reasonable force to identify trends, risks, and training needs as a standard meeting agenda.
- Data will be analysed to ensure compliance with safeguarding standards, equality duties, and health and safety requirements. It is also externally scrutinised by the Proprietor Body and the Advisory Panel as part of our quality checks, holding leaders to account.
- Where patterns appear, other strategies are trialled. The data we use is based on numbers of physical interventions per pupil, per term, per school and over time, including comparing previous years. We also analyse data for pupils who are not involved in physical interventions.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

- All pupils have an individual risk assessment (linking with their learning or behaviour plan), this might be considered by others as an equivalent to a 'care plan'). These are updated on a termly basis, or more frequently if specific issues arise.
- In an emergency, adults will inevitably need to make a dynamic risk assessment, which will include a judgement of the capacity of a young person at that moment to make a safe choice. In loco parentis, we need to ensure that our priority is a child's safety.
- When considering a pupil's dynamic risk assessment, if there is a temporary period of incapacity that may place a pupil at risk of significant physical or emotional harm, adults may need to use physical intervention as one of the measures to protect the pupil.
- When it comes to protecting pupils, adults are encouraged to consider what they would want somebody else to do if that was their child.

SAFEGUARDING

All adults must be aware that any physical contact can be misinterpreted. For this reason:

- Physical contact with pupils should, wherever possible, be observable by others (not behind closed doors or in isolated areas).
- Adults should reflect on their use of touch in reflective practice and wider conversations with the Head of School or Executive Head and seek guidance if unsure.
- Any physical intervention or touch that causes concern should be immediately reported to the DSL to seek support and guidance, and to ensure adherence to our safeguarding and whistleblowing policies.