Mill Lodge Combined Policy:

Reasonable Force, Physical Restraint, Seclusion & Restrictive Interventions

Approval Date: March 2026
Review Cycle: Annual
Next Review: Spring 2027
Policy Owner: Headteacher / Governing Body

'Place dignity and respect at the heart of workplace culture. Ensure that all staff understand these values and what they mean in practice.'

Dynamis Handbook 2025.

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the school's approach to the lawful, safe and proportionate use of:

- Reasonable force
- Physical restraint
- Restrictive interventions
- Seclusion

The policy complies with statutory duties under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 93 (staff legal powers to use reasonable force), and section 93A (statutory requirements for recording/reporting use of force) as reflected in DfE guidance from April 2026. It also meets the 2025 Regulations requiring all schools in England to record and report incidents of restraint and seclusion to parents.

The school must ensure all pupils and staff are kept safe while upholding pupils' dignity, rights and wellbeing.

2. Legislative and Policy Framework

This policy aligns with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 & 93A)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (England) Regulations 2025
- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (DfE, in force until March 2026)
- Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (DfE, statutory from April 2026)
- Children Act 1989, Equality Act 2010, Education Acts 1996/2002/2011, statutory safeguarding duties (as summarised in sector policies)

3. Definitions

3.1 Reasonable Force

Physical contact used only when necessary, using no more force than required and for the shortest time possible.

3.2 Physical Restraint

A form of reasonable force that restricts a pupil's movement, either fully or partially.

3.3 Restrictive Intervention

Any planned or reactive action that limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom of action. May include physical holds, blocking exits, or physically preventing harm.

3.4 Seclusion

A non-disciplinary intervention in which a pupil is kept apart from others and not free to leave, used only to prevent harm, never as punishment. Must be supervised, safe, and non-threatening.

4. Guiding Principles

- **Safety first:** interventions used only to prevent injury, serious disorder, crime, or significant damage.
- **Minimum force, minimum time:** interventions must be proportionate and necessary.
- **Prevention over reaction:** emphasis on early support, de-escalation and behaviour strategies to minimise restrictive interventions.
- **No "no-contact" policy:** schools must not adopt blanket bans on physical contact; staff must be able to intervene to keep pupils safe.
- **Respect, dignity and safeguarding at the centre of all decisions**.
- **Adjustments for SEND:** interventions must consider the needs of children with SEND or disabilities; personal risk-reduction plans should be used where appropriate.

5. When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Examples include preventing a pupil from:

- Causing injury to self or others
- Behaving in a way that risks serious disorder
- Causing significant damage to property
- Committing a criminal offence

As confirmed in DfE guidance.

6. Prohibited or Unsafe Practices

- Use of force as punishment
- Seclusion as a threat or sanction
- Using force that is excessive, unsafe, or not proportionate – This includes force that restricts breathing or puts pressure on neck, chest or joints.
- Use of seclusion without supervision or in intimidating environments

  Supported by DfE guidance on safe, lawful uses.

7. Staff Training Requirements

The school will ensure:

- Staff *likely to need to use force* are trained in safe, lawful restraint techniques. All ARC staff are trained in de-escalation and positive handling by Dynamis (May 2025). Key staff in main school are also Dynamis trained:
    - 1 SLT
    - 1 pastoral
    - 2 FT TAs, 1 PT Tas, 1 FT inclusion TA
- All staff receive annual training in:
    - De-escalation and positive behaviour support
    - Understanding reasonable force powers
    - The needs of pupils with SEND who may require personalised approaches
- New staff receive induction on legal powers, procedures and recording duties.

Training logs are maintained by SLT.

8. Use of Seclusion

Seclusion must:

- Be used only to prevent imminent harm.
- Never be used as punishment.
- Take place in a space that is:
    - Safe
    - Supervised continuously by a member of staff, either directly or through safe observation.
    - Not threatening or intimidating
- Be for the shortest possible time.
- Be recorded and reported to parents as required by law.

9. Recording and Reporting Requirements (Statutory)

9.1 Recording (mandatory)

The school must record every significant use of force (statutory under section 93A) and all seclusion and restraint incidents (2025 Regulations).

Records must include (minimum):

- Name of pupil(s)
- Staff involved
- Date, time, location
- Antecedents and behaviour leading to intervention
- Type of intervention used
- Duration
- Any injuries or damage

Follow-up actions, support, and review
Requirements set out in the 2026 DfE guidance.

School staff use CPOMS to record use of force and/or seclusion. A template form is in the CPOMS library. This is completed in full and attached as a file to an incident on the child's record.

9.2 Reporting to Parents (mandatory)

Parents must be notified as soon as reasonably practicable following any incident involving:

- Seclusion
- Restraint
- Significant use of force

Statutory requirement from the 2025 Regulations.

10. Post-Incident Procedures

- Staff and pupil(s) involved receive debrief/support from SLT member or a pastoral member of staff. Incidents requiring physical intervention can be stressful, the school will ensure that staff involved are offered appropriate support. This will include post-incident debriefs,

access to senior leadership support, opportunities to reflect on practice and further training if required. Pupils should be given the opportunity to discuss incidents following the use of restrictive interventions. This could include allowing the pupil to share their perspective, supporting emotional regulation after the incident and helping them understand safer alternative behaviours.

- DSL/Safeguarding team review incident for patterns or concerns include ARC lead, SENCo and EYFS lead if necessary.
- Risk assessments or behaviour plans updated if needed.
- Leaders analyse data to improve practice (DfE expectation).

11. SEND Considerations

For pupils with SEND:

- Personalised behaviour support plans must be in place where needed.
- Staff must consider sensory needs, triggers, communication difficulties. All children in the ARC have sensory ladder as part of individual curriculum.
- Interventions must be tailored and proportionate.

12. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints about the use of force follow the school complaints policy.
Allegations against staff follow safeguarding procedures under KCSIE and statutory DfE expectations.
DfE guidance includes complaints processes.

13. Governance and Oversight

The Governing Body must:

- Ensure policy alignment with statutory DfE guidance.
- Monitor incident data and ensure safe practice through BHS committee in first instance.
- Ensure staff training is current and sufficient.
- Review policy annually.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with:

- Legislative updates
- DfE guidance changes
- School needs and risk assessments
- Incident data analysis