



Wolverham Primary and Nursery School

Positive Handling Policy

Policy Statement

Staff at this school are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy.

Introduction

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in national Guidance (DfES/DoH 2002). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

School Expectations

The management takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils will be encouraged to participate in the development of their own Pupil Awareness Plans (PAP) by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents will also be encouraged to contribute.

A member of staff should aim not to use physical intervention unless it is the last resort. Effective action to reduce risk includes:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop
- Remind pupils about rules and likely outcomes
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and seek help
- Ensure that the management/SLT are informed immediately if a situation arises where there may be a risk to pupils or staff

Staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at school may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?

- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design arrangement or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

Helping Each Other

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted.

The Last Resort Principal

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is **no realistic alternative**. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

"If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future."

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – "The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act , 1989" – London: H M S O

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation.

Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

Team Teach

It is the policy of this school that a number of staff (identified by the SLT) working closely with pupils are trained in the positive behaviour management. Team Teach (previously called De-Escalation Training) is delivered to selected staff at least every 3 years. A record of this can be located on the single central record.

Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the Headteacher for Health and Safety in the school

Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Getting Help

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEPs and Behaviour Support plans kept in SEN file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them
- Pupil Awareness Plans for all vulnerable pupils
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning
- At least 3 yearly refresher meetings in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for key staff, and continuous review by SLT to inform these

Pupil Awareness Plans (PAP) - Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Pupil Awareness Plan (PAP). The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. PAPs should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the Headteacher. Any safety concerns should be reported immediately. The school has a whistleblowing policy which is adhered to by all staff.

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This school has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfE and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of individual pupils.

Recording

Whenever overpowering force is used the incident **must** be recorded using the approved forms. The Incident/Concerns books are kept in the Headteacher's office, and the incident sheets are kept in folders in the Headteacher's office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. Electronic copies are stored on the secure server along with all other documentation.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms

Monitoring and Evaluation

The SLT will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation. The safeguarding governor checks and signs the Bound and Numbered log book on a half termly basis and this is reported back to Governors at the full governing body meetings.

Reviewed April 2016

Due for review April 2019