

THE ACORNS PRIMARY and NURSERY and WHITLEY VILLAGE FEDERATED SCHOOL



Positive Handling Policy

November 2017

Policy Statement

Staff at this Federation 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
- Seriously disrupting good order in the schools
- Causing damage to property

At The Acorns Primary & Nursery and Whitley Village Federated School we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the Federation's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so.

Introduction

The term "Positive Handling" includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term "physical restraint" is used when a force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as "Restrictive 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 Head teacher 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 Federation. It should be considered alongside the most recent LEA 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,

Federation Expectations

The management takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the Federation. 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 Federation are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The Federation 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 to foreseeable risk.

Whenever possible, pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Behaviour Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crisis if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

Before physical intervention becomes necessary staff will take effective action to reduce risk.

They can:

- Show care and concerns by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation, reason and distraction.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Well-chosen language is used to de-escalate situations.
- 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 get help.

Modifications to Environment

Ideally staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils may occasionally exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. This may mean giving consideration to providing a “time out” area where pupils will feel safe.

Help Protocols

The expectation at this Federation is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case they are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else’s group. Colleagues support each other by acting as critical friends during and after incidents.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

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. 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. 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.

Team Teach

It is the policy of the Federation that as many staff as is possible are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to compliment the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the Federation Behaviour Policy. Only members of staff in receipt of this training and authorised by the Executive Headteacher are permitted to use physical restraint. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website (www.team-teach.co.uk).

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. Key to addressing any health concerns is the risk assessment process, both at informal and written level. As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with Federation policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the Federation safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important too.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

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.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this case the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Support Systems

At this Federation the following support structures are in place:

- Pre-warnings communicated within teams
- Team responds quickly to verbal requests
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-over of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil
- Individual Education and Behaviour Plans kept on file to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them
- Liaison with external agencies
- 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
- Debrief sessions for all staff to share experiences, concerns and access support from each other, led by a member of the SMT

- Refresher meetings in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for trained staff.

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 Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in an Individual Education or Behaviour Plan.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the Federation recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences.

The key principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- In the best interest of the child
- Reasonable and proportionate
- Intended to reduce risk
- The less intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this Federation. If staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this Federation to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery stage. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the Federation's systems. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Complaints

The Federation has a formal Complaints Procedure if there are allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The Complaints Procedure applies equally to staff. We are an open Federation and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interest of staff and pupils alike.

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Executive Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This Federation 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 DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our pupils.

Recording

Whenever physical restraint (**note the word 'restraint', which does not include all physical handling*) is used, the incident must be recorded in the Bound & Numbered Book. These records will be kept securely in the Admin office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours and signed by a member of SMT. They should also be shared with parents/carers after the incident is no longer critical.

Staff should:

- Read through the 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
- Take the book to a member of SMT to read, question, discuss and sign

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future. Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. The Executive Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school's Bound & Numbered Book is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Other relevant policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with: Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

** Team Teach Training was last delivered in November 2016. The following staff are Team Teach Trained:*

- Nathan Painter
- Anne-Marie Walker
- Emma Morgan-Lloyd
- Liz Gillin
- Dawn Gelder
- Dave Philp
- Connor Walker
- Rachel Sutton
- Hannah Mansfield
- Nicky Hearne
- Julie Unsworth
- Sarah Warner
- Dawn Witkiss
- Dawn Allsopp
- Vicky Clarke
- Carol Dodd
- Lesley Foulkes
- Leanne Goodwin
- Louise Griffiths
- Claire Griffiths
- Jess Haigh
- Natalie Harding
- Calli Hartley
- Tracy Lee
- Jo Paylor
- Pam Ramsay
- Claire Riley
- Jane Speed
- Kim Cairns