Team Teach Positive Handling Policy

Ffederasiwn Ysgolion **Llanidloes** Schools Federation

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Policy Statement

Staff at these schools are trained to look after the learners in their care and aim to focus on de-escalation techniques wherever possible. Staff have a duty to intervene to prevent learners 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 have received the appropriate Team Teach training and will follow the schools' 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 small number of responses that may involve the use of force to control or restrain a learner. 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 learners who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Learners 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 learners. 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 these schools. 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 necessary.

School Expectations

The schools take seriously their duty of care towards learners, employees and visitors to the schools. 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 these schools are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The secondary school Behaviour Policy and the primary school Pupil Discipline Policy are intended to reward effort and application and encourage learners 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 that may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Learners and parents are

encouraged wherever necessary to contribute to Positive Handling Intervention Plans (PHIP) to support all learners when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur. However, the schools will protect and care for all children in the same manner whether or not a PHIP is in place.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason;
- give clear directions for learners to stop;
- remind them about rules and likely outcomes;
- remove an audience or take vulnerable learners to a safer place;
- make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects that could be used as weapons;
- use positive touch to guide or escort learners to somewhere less pressured;
- ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Modifications to Environment

Ideally, staff will not wait until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. This may mean considering secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used.

Help Protocols

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. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They agree scripts during Team Teach training so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

Well Chosen Words

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When learners are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

The Last Resort Principal

At these schools, 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")*

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 that may be effective.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous if it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a learner has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the learner 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.

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

- How is this in the best interest of the learner?
- 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 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 learners 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 learner secluded.

Team Teach

It is the policy of Llanidloes Schools' Federation that the majority of staff working closely with learners are trained in the pre-emotive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the schools' Behaviour Policies. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be 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. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. All staff have shared responsibilities to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible.

As a minimum requirement, to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school policy and guidance and to cooperate to make the school 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 physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important too.

Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with learners 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 that 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 learners concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of 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 circumstance the correct decision is to hold back from physical controls.

Getting Help

At these schools, the following support structures are in place:

- IDPs and PHIPs are kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each learner is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including changeovers of staff during a crisis with a learner.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the learner(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.

Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All learners who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies that have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses that 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. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents that relate to the learner. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in and Pastoral Support Plan or IDP.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the schools recognise that there will be unforeseen or emergencies when staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the learner;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available that 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 intervention. They should only use the techniques and methods approved

for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

Post-Incident Support Structure for Learners and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of these schools 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. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries that require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the schools' systems. It is important to note that injury is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post-incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships, a serious incident does not necessarily result in long-term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that learners have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspectives. When time and effort are put into a post-incident support structure, the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for learners to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The schools have a formal complaints policy and procedure. Learners should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are open schools and promote transparent policy and practice to protect the interests of staff and learners alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. These schools have 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. Qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines always provide positive handling training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our learners.

Recording

Whenever overpowering force is used, the incident must be recorded using the approved forms (see appendix A). The Incident and Concerns paperwork is kept in

the headteacher's office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record that should be completed within 24 hours.

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.

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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The headteachers will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The schools' incident logs are open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual learner, will follow the appropriate procedures. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

APPENDIX A

Record of Physical Intervention

Section A: details of people involved

Date	
Name of learner	
Staff	
Time	
Location	

Section B: reason for physical intervention

Please tick appropriate box

To avert an immediate danger of personal injury to the learner	
To avert an immediate danger of injury to another person	
To avoid serious damage to property	

Section C: participants

The action was taken in the presence of:
(other staff name(s))

_____
_____
_____

Section D: distraction and diffusion techniques used

Please tick appropriate boxes

Humour	
Quiet voice	
Friendly body language	
Step away	
Verbal advice given	
Reassurance	
Time out offered	
Time Out Directed	
Distraction	
Transfer adult	
Tactical ignoring	
Consequences	

Other (give details): _____

Section E: description of the incident

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section F: method of physical intervention

List the Team Teach hold(s) that were used:

_____

Section G: reporting injury

Was anybody hurt during a physical intervention? Yes / No

If yes, please tick appropriate boxes

A learner was injured	
SLT informed	
School nurse informed	
A member of staff was injured	
Accident report form completed	

Signature: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____