



Paternoster School Positive Handling Policy

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. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

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 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 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 Ethos

Staff should seek to maintain and develop a positive ethos in which constructive relationships can be developed with pupils. Pupils are more likely to value relationships with staff if they feel valued themselves.

Physical contact can and should be used appropriately and positively to reinforce relationships. In the 2011 guidance on the use of reasonable force, it states: "Schools should not have a no contact policy". In SLD schools it is an integral part of the teaching process. When it must be used in less positive contexts as a means of managing behaviour then it should always be the **minimum** the situation requires and **reasonable** in its application.

Staff should be aware that for their own and the pupils' safety, they should wear suitable clothing, shoes which protect their feet, keep long hair tied back, keep nails short and avoid wearing necklaces or rings which could cause injury.

Touching

This means: everyday acts of communication by physical means to indicate approval, affection or sympathy. At Paternoster School touching is acknowledged to have a positive influence on

relationships with most pupils, but should always be age-appropriate and open. (Those who are likely to react negatively to touching should be clearly identified.)

Examples of touching:

- Holding a hand
- A pat on the shoulder
- An arm around the shoulder

Staff should be mindful of the physical context of their actions. Touching of this type should never take place in areas to which there is no open access. Staff who work with pupils on an individual basis are particularly at risk, therefore they should take care to always keep doors open and stay within hearing range of another member of staff.

Many of our pupils will require physical prompting and support to enable them to learn certain skills, but staff should remember that some pupils might find this difficult, and use their judgement sensitively.

For example:

- Using pencils and scissors.
- Support in PE and swimming.
- Using Makaton signs.

In addition, some pupils may have de-sensitisation activities as part of a structured programme, and these should always be planned and recorded. Routine physiotherapy programmes should be carried out according to the written advice of the physiotherapist and the agreement of parents or carers. Staff should work within range of other members of staff.

It is acknowledged that staff will have to touch pupils on intimate parts of their body when changing them. This has a clear and legitimate purpose but must not last longer than is necessary.

Staff should always ensure that another adult is aware of the reason for withdrawing a pupil, and ensure that there is open access to the work area while having regard for the pupil's dignity and privacy.

Massage

Some pupils may benefit from massage of the hands or feet. Parental consent will always be sought before any massage is delivered, and pupils will usually be seen as part of a small group, rather than individually. Baby lotion may be used, but medical advice will be sought for use of specialist massage oils. From time to time professional therapists may be brought into school to deliver massage on an individual basis. They will always meet with parents before a child commences a programme of massage. Normally a parent or TA will accompany the child for the session.

Holding for reassurance

Holding in this context is the use of physical contact to direct or calm pupils which falls short of physical restraint and the restriction of liberty. This type of intervention is distinguished from restraint by the degree of force applied. Holding should convey directly the intentions and expectations of the adult. Young children can often be frightened by their own lack of control and holding can reinforce that the adult is in control.

For example:

- To divert a pupil from disruptive or destructive behaviour, by being led away by the hand, arm or by means of an arm around the shoulder.
- To ensure a pupil's personal safety as in crossing the road, negotiating stairs etc.
- To enable a pupil to calm down after an extreme temper tantrum. This type of holding should be recorded in the bound book held by each class, which should then be handed to the head teacher for monitoring.

Restricting liberty

This refers to the actions by which one person restricts the movements of another. At Paternoster School this will only be done to ensure the pupil's personal safety or as part of a care plan or planned physiotherapy or behaviour programme.

For example:

- The use of barriers such as doors with two handles and fob entry.
- Placing door handles beyond the reach of pupils.
- Locking doors (school entrance).
- Placing a pupil in a "time-out" room. (Staff should always remain at the open door to supervise the pupil.)
- Strapping a pupil into a wheelchair.
- Placing a splint on a pupil's arm.
- Strapping a pupil into a standing frame.
- Strapping a physically able pupil into a chair specifically provided to support learning. (The class teacher and OT should provide a protocol for its use including a time limit).

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 inappropriate behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans, where possible, 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 crises if, and when, they occur.

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 pupils to stop.
- Remind them 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 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 at this 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 (including scissors, pens and pencils) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- Do they need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design arrangements of 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 anxious pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

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. 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.

Well Chosen Words

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually 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 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.”

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.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Intervention Plan. 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. 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 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 Paternoster School that all staff working closely with pupils are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to

complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy. 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. 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. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

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 school and 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 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 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 the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Getting Help

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEP's and Positive intervention plans kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Twice weekly briefing sessions in the morning to update staff on current issues.

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 Intervention 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. 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 Intervention Plans should be considered alongside the Statement or EHCP and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context.

Safe Space

Within the school there is a safe space where pupils can be taken as part of the de-escalation process. There is a protocol for it's use. This protocol reflects the Department for Education advice entitled 'Behaviour and Discipline in School' issued in July 2013 and last updated in September 2014 and, in particular, paragraphs 42 and 43 thereof on the use of isolation and all practice should adhere to these guidelines.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school 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 principals are that any physical intervention should be:

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

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

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 DfES 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.

Recording

A pupil who is out of control may be offered use of the safe-space if this is part of their positive intervention plan. (There are guidelines for use of the safe space). All instances of positive intervention must be recorded on Sleuth ~~in a bound and numbered incident book~~ and reported to the behaviour coordinator ~~head teacher~~. Parents should always be informed of an instance of restraint by using the standard letter (see appendix). An "Accident/Incident or Near-Miss" form must be completed for every incident involving injury, damage to property, verbal or physical abuse and **every physical intervention**.

The Incident/Concerns forms are kept outside the main office. Sleuth is an on line computer system and each class and teacher has a log in to access on the class iPads ~~Bound books are located in all classrooms.~~

Staff should:

- ~~• Read through the physical intervention form carefully~~
- Complete Sleuth as soon as possible after an incident and in full
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full

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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher and behaviour coordinator 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 incident book~~ Sleuth should be monitored regularly by the SMT and methods of dealing with challenging behaviour evaluated. The head teacher should report the number of instances in which physical intervention has been used at each governors' meeting.

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 pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Intimate Care Policy
Safe Space Policy

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