

Ivel Valley School

Positive Handling

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governors
Sept 2020	Sept 2021	Roger Williams	Full Governing Body

Rationale

At Ivel Valley School we strive to maintain an environment that is calm, kind and nurturing and our learners typically respond well to strategies that are designed to prevent any escalation of undesirable behaviour, however, the needs of our learners is such that the presentation of some extreme behaviours can only be managed with the use of restrictive physical interventions. Government policy makes it clear that the 'use of force' is acceptable in order to prevent injury, damage to property, or a serious breakdown of discipline; although this is the case for all staff regardless of any training they may have received, we endeavour to train all of our staff using the principles of Team Teach in order that it is conducted safely for both learners and staff, and within legal guidelines.

Positive Handling is a graduated approach that moves to risk-reduced control of extreme behaviour by the use of the least intrusive physical intervention for the least amount of time. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance.

- The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils as noted at the end of the policy.
- The policy has been developed for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils, and for volunteers and other agencies working within the school, to explain the school's arrangement for the care and control of pupils presenting very challenging behaviours.

Aims and values

Our aim is to use positive handling as little as possible and we recognise that its use can be traumatising for both learners and staff, therefore, we keep track of the proportion of serious incidents that result in the use of restrictive physical intervention with a view to keeping this to a minimum.

The welfare of our learners

All our learners have a right to feel safe whilst enjoying a high quality education. If they become emotionally dysregulated for any reason then they are to be treated humanely and with dignity and respect.

The welfare of our staff

Our staff also have a right to feel safe at work and will be provided with the necessary training to ensure that they are competent and confident enough to deal with exceptional circumstances that may arise as a result of extreme behaviour. Staff should inform the appropriate member of the senior leadership team if they have any medical conditions that inhibit their ability to engage with positive handling.

Staff are expected to carry out a dynamic risk assessment prior to using any restrictive physical intervention in order to ensure that it is the most appropriate and safest recourse of action. The guiding principles to be considered at such a time are:

- Is the intervention **reasonable, proportionate and necessary**? This is the best legal defence.
- Is it in the best interest of the learner?
- Does it involve the minimum use of force for the least amount of time?
- What would I want someone to do in similar circumstances if this were my child?
- How can I maintain the learner's dignity?

Proactive and reactive strategies

Strategies can be thought of as either proactive or reactive. Proactive strategies are concerned with developing approaches that produce change over time and positively affect the well being of the individual. Reactive strategies are a means of coping safely in the short term. The long term use of reactive strategies can lead to a much restricted existence for the individual which limits their life chances, whereas, proactive strategies enable them to enjoy more opportunities and be better prepared for adulthood.

The use of restrictive physical intervention is itself a reactive strategy and developing good behaviour in the long term through holistic proactive strategies is the preferred focus and, in time, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) will circumvent the use of these restrictive approaches.

A graded and gradual approach

Staff at Ivel Valley School are trained in the Team Teach method of Care & Control/Positive Handling which aims to 'promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and continuum of graded and gradual techniques with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before Positive Handling strategies are utilised'.

De-escalation strategies will consider:

- Use of space
- Management of time
- Changes to the environment
- Stance, posture and gestures
- Facial expressions
- Eyes, voices and words
- Simple positive messages

On occasions, where these fail, the following graded interventions can be adopted:

- Guides – minimal resistance
- Escorts – moderate resistance
- Holds – rigorous resistance (restrictive physical intervention)

Risk assessment and planning for use of restrictive physical interventions

In the event that de-escalation techniques have been unsuccessful and the use of escorts or holds are deemed to be reasonable, proportionate and necessary, staff are trained to carry out a dynamic risk assessment in order to establish the safest course of action; should a proposed activity or situation involve unacceptable risk, then the correct decision is to do something else.

Any learner that displays very challenging behaviour will have an Anxiety Curve Profile which will detail the appropriate positive handling methods for them as well the most effective de-escalation strategies; additionally, there will be a Risk Assessment detailing the control measures that have been designed to reduce the risks.

Post-incident support

Incidents that require the use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and may result in injuries to the learner and members of staff. Learners should be supported by staff once they are calm in order to repair relationships, understand their point of view and discuss alternative ways of managing the situation. Support for staff will be available from the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of attempts to keep people safe.

Reporting and recording use of restrictive physical interventions

All such incidents, together with details of any injuries, should be documented on CPOMS and parents/carers informed on the same day. Descriptions of events will be written using factual and not emotive language.

It is a legal requirement that records are kept and remain accessible for 75 years after the date of birth of the learner.

Monitoring use of restrictive physical interventions

The use of physical intervention is monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the well-being of pupils in their care, and provide a basis for appropriate support. The data generated is used to help determine training needs, what specialist help is needed for pupils and to assess the appropriateness of the pupil's placement at the school.

Responding to complaints

In the event of a complaint being received by a school in relation to use of force by staff, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff.

Any complaint will be dealt with by the Principal, the Governors and, where appropriate, a representative from the LA.

Related Documentation

Behaviour Statement
Behaviour Policy
Safeguarding Policy

Anti-bullying Policy
Complaints Procedure Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Use of reasonable force in schools (2013)
Equality Act (2010)

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.