



# Positive Handling Policy

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## Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the use of positive handling and restraint at Ivel Valley School & College and should be read with reference to our behaviour statement and policy.

It is our aim to secure the best learning outcomes for our pupils, both in the formal curriculum and in preparation for life after school and college, and we recognise that these ends are best achieved when behaviour is well managed. The majority of the pupils attending Ivel Valley respond positively to behavioural strategies and techniques used by staff. However, in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. Ivel Valley acknowledges that physical techniques must only be used as part of a holistic approach to behaviour management and positive handling. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) takes its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school very seriously, and recognise the importance of confident and competent staff, who feel supported by their SLT.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in the school:

- Clearly understand the policy and their responsibilities
- Can identify situations where reasonable force is necessary
- Are provided with appropriate training to deal with challenging behaviour

Staff at Ivel Valley are trained in Team Teach, a positive behaviour management programme which emphasises de-escalation and positive handling in conflict management. Team Teach 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'. A number of staff, including senior leaders, are qualified Team Teach trainers, allowing training to be provided in-house, and enabling ongoing support.

We are particularly considerate of pupils with known early childhood traumas, and we follow principles of trauma-informed practice.

An individual Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) plan will be written for all pupils who display challenging behaviour; the PBS plan will include a risk assessment. A PBS plan outlines the key Team Teach principles that need to be followed before an intervention is used. All the staff in the classroom are required to read the individual Behaviour Plan/Risk Assessment to ensure that they understand what is expected of them. All plans should be shared with parents as well as other agencies involved with the pupil. The Lead Practitioner for Positive Behaviour Support will oversee the development of PBS plans and with the support of PBS practitioner will ensure regular observations and reviews of the plans take place.

## The purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is a considered, clear and consistent approach to the use of positive handling at Ivel Valley that all stakeholders can easily access and understand, in order to ensure that our pupils receive the support that they deserve. It is intended to support all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils, including for volunteers and other agencies working within Ivel Valley, to explain the arrangement for the care and control of pupils presenting very challenging behaviours.

This policy should be viewed in the context of the nature of our pupils and their difficulties. Our pupils have a variety of special educational needs and disabilities, including (but not limited to) autism, cerebral palsy and Down's syndrome; all pupils have learning disabilities, and many require additional support in order to meet their social, emotional and mental health needs.

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this policy 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.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils as noted at the end of the policy.

## Positive Handling at Ivel Valley School & College

From Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024:

*"There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom."*

At Ivel Valley, there are pupils whose learning disabilities, social or emotional difficulties mean that they can present behaviour that may occasionally necessitate the use of restrictive physical interventions to prevent injury, damage to property, or a serious breakdown of discipline.

Key terms:

- **Positive handling** uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming him/herself, others or property.
- **Physical restraint** will involve the use of reasonable force where there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property (restraint should be seen as a last resort).
- **Physical intervention** may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action e.g. guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.
- **Seclusion** is when a child or young person is to spend time alone against their will; this requires statutory powers other than in an emergency
- **Time out** refers to restricting positive reinforcement as part of a planned behavioural programme and requires written agreed plan, although some children use this term for when they take themselves out of a situation voluntarily
- **Withdrawal** refers to a young person being removed from the situation, but observed and supported until they are ready to return.

There are clear risks involved when using restrictive physical education and therefore staff are trained using Team Teach to provide them with the skills to minimise the risks of injury, pain or distress to both staff and pupils.

## Strategies for avoiding incidents

Staff, through Team Teach training, possess the skills to adopt effective strategies to defuse potential instances of conflict or aggression. In addition, staff are provided with regular PBS and basic trauma awareness training; these are applied in line with our behaviour policy. It's important that Ivel Valley is a safe and nurturing environment, where pupils are able to access supportive regulating activities throughout the day, but pupils may still become dysregulated for a number of reasons. Staff can then draw on a wide range of positive behaviour support methods, including (but not limited to):

- **affection:** it is important that pupils feel accepted and respected as individuals. **Reject the behaviour, not the person** by showing that you care despite the difficulties
- **calm talking stance:** staff should endeavour to maintain a calm, confident and objective approach in conflict situations
- **change of face:** if there is an incident where the adult present is seen to be aggravating the situation, it should be assessed as to whether moving the adult out of sight might defuse the situation. This should be done, if possible, leaving enough staff to safely support the situation
- **distraction/redirection:** is the action of diverting the pupil's attention from a potentially inflammatory situation to something in which they have an interest
- **humour:** possibly the most effective and most commonly used strategy. Although self-explanatory, staff should make sure the humour is used in the right context for the particular pupil
- **negotiation:** this is the ability to listen and talk to pupils and come to an agreement by setting limits and offering options.
- **planned ignoring:** at times, highly provocative and attention seeking behaviour can be ignored to good effect; the skill is knowing when to ignore and when to intervene. Good practice is based upon risk assessment; this strategy can be discussed with the PBS team to ensure it is being used appropriately
- **reassurance:** is about supporting, comforting and encouraging a pupil in a situation in which they might be feeling helpless, vulnerable, possibly defenceless and exposed to a risky environment
- **success reminders:** remind the pupil of a previous occasion when they successfully managed a situation of a similar nature. If they are feeling particularly low, look to remind them of something they did in the past that made them happy/proud/feel good
- **support through daily routine:** a bored pupil is more likely to present with negative behaviours and therefore a strong daily routine of active engagement in the classroom and in social times can really support positive behaviours; sometimes pupils feel supported by being involved in agreeing their schedule
- **time out:** this is to allow a pupil space on their own; to move to a different environment with time to calm down and regulate.
- **verbal advice and support:** awareness of tone of voice, body posture and eye contact is important as communication needs to be non-threatening, calm and assured. Staff should attend to a student when they are showing signs of agitation/distress/anger and support/advise them according to the situation
- **withdrawal:** this involves removing the pupil from the situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities.

**Physical intervention** is an approved behaviour support strategy, but must be used as a last resort when all of the above strategies have been exhausted.

## Escorts and interventions

If a situation develops that requires physical intervention and where the adult(s) need to assume control, staff should be aware of their surroundings and ensure that they do not apply an escort or method of physical intervention where there is limited space, e.g. on the stairs or where they expose themselves or the pupil to unnecessary risk of injury due to the environment.

Staff must always use the least restrictive form of physical intervention, so guides and escorts should be used instead of a more restrictive intervention whenever possible.

## Risk assessment and planning for use of restrictive physical interventions

Informal risk assessment is a routine part of life for staff working with pupils that display very challenging behaviour. Staff must always think ahead to anticipate possible incidents: should a proposed activity or situation involve unacceptable risk, then the correct decision is to do something else. Any pupil that displays very challenging behaviour and who has a positive handling plan will also have a risk assessment for behaviour. Appropriate Team Teach interventions that we anticipate using will be recorded on the PBS plan. PBS plans are written for pupils on Tier 2 by class teachers and for pupils on Tier 3 by the PBS lead. All plans are written in conjunction with parents, careers, the pupil where appropriate and other agencies involved with the young person.

A small number of Ivel Valley's Team Teach trainers are Advanced trainers, which means that they can train staff in advanced modules, which include ground holds and management of weapons. Staff are only trained in advanced modules if deemed absolutely necessary. RPI is never to be used as a threat or punishment.

## Use of restrictive physical interventions in unforeseen and emergency situations

On occasion, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations when they have no option but to use reasonable force to manage a crisis. It is important to note that:

- before using force, staff must attempt to use diversion or diffusion to manage the situation
- when using force, staff must only use techniques and methods for which they have received training on, i.e. are approved by Team Teach and have been taught to them by an accredited trainer
- in exceptional circumstances (where permitted techniques are ineffective or staff are unfamiliar with the action they should take), staff manage the situation as best they can and act 'in loco parentis' – considering the best interests of the child

Staff must always report and record the use of positive handling that occurs in **any** situation.

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil. They will fall into three broad categories:

- where action is necessary due to a risk of injury to themselves or others;
- risk of significant damage to property;
- where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally. 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.

## Post-incident support

Incidents that require the use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned, and can be strenuous both emotionally and physically. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with Ivel Valley procedures. Opportunities for pupils and staff to de-brief will be given, as appropriate.

The Headteacher and PBS Lead Practitioner must be alerted as soon as possible that a situation involving physical intervention is taking or has taken place through completing an incident report on CPOMS. Parents/carers must be notified on the same day about the incident and physical intervention that occurred, e.g. face to face, phone or e-mail.

## Reporting and recording use of restrictive physical interventions

All incidents involving restrictive physical intervention must be recorded, **on the same day**, using CPOMS, which has a structured form to capture all the necessary information. Descriptions of events must be written using factual and not emotive language. The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher (DSL) and PBS Lead Practitioner are alerted to all behaviour-related records on CPOMS to provide ongoing daily monitoring.

## **Monitoring use of restrictive physical interventions**

The use of physical intervention is monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the wellbeing 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 Ivel Valley.

SLT will look at patterns of behaviour and the use of positive handling in the behaviour data generated by CPOMS to ensure that this policy doesn't unintentionally discriminate against pupils based on their protected characteristics. The PBS lead will also use CPOMS to identify incidents where more support and training might be needed to reduce the need for RPI. The data drawn from CPOMS will also support evidence based of PBS plans to ensure we are meeting needs of pupils and assess the impact of the PBS plans.

## **Responding to complaints**

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. In the event of a complaint being received in relation to use of force by staff, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff and in line with the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The complaints procedure is available on Ivel Valley website; any complaint will be dealt with according to this policy. ~~by the Headteacher, the Governors and, where appropriate, a representative from the LA.~~

# **Roles and responsibilities**

## **Headteacher**

- Ensure the positive handling policy is reviewed annually in conjunction with the behaviour policy.
- Ensure that the school & college environment encourages positive behaviour and that staff manage incidents involving positive handling effectively.

## **Deputy Headteacher / DSL**

- To ensure that the information below regarding equalities & inclusion and safeguarding is applied consistently

## **Positive Behaviour Support Lead**

- Promote PBS throughout Ivel Valley
- Oversee the work of the PBS team
- Monitor behaviour incidents on CPOMS, identifying and putting in place any actions needed
- Where physical intervention has been used, ensure that it is reasonable, proportionate and necessary
- Provide ongoing guidance, advice and support to staff on managing incidents effectively
- Monitor the impact of PBS plans
- Ensure staff are provided with appropriate training, including Team Teach
- Ensure that any allegations against staff relating to this policy are managed sensitively and appropriately, as per the 'allegations against staff' procedures
- To monitor and review all rewards and consequences put in place to ensure they are consistent, meaningful and appropriate for our pupils

## **Staff will:**

- *Follow both this policy and the behaviour policy*
- Treat all pupils with respect and dignity

- Provide a nurturing and positive environment where everyone feels safe and valued and mistakes are seen as a part of learning. Many of our pupils learn in small incremental steps over a long period of time and our teaching must be delivered accordingly
- Model the behaviour that we expect from our pupils, especially with regard to the school and college rules. As staff, our relationships with each other should clearly demonstrate what we expect of our pupils
- Adopt proactive approaches to support positive behaviour and reduce the likelihood of escalation
- Use the Ivel Valley Golden Rules and Expect Respect to provide clear expectations, structure praise and motivate pupils
- Take note of the fact that we do not condone a punitive approach to managing behaviour; however, we do believe that it is important to take the time to teach the consequences of poor choices in a non-judgemental way
- Ensure that all pupils have access to their personal communication supports, if needed
- Be aware and understanding that we will need to use different approaches and strategies with different individuals, as per their needs
- Contribute to and support PBS plans for individual pupils, applying advice consistently and liaising with the teacher and/or PBS team if the plan needs reviewing
- Work closely with the PBS team, families, carers and other professionals to provide an effective coordinated approach in line with our PBS model
- In order to continue improving our provision, staff are encouraged to continually reflect on their practice and to maintain an inquisitive mind.

### **Pupils**

- Pupils at Ivel Valley School will be supported to follow the Golden Rules
- Students at Ivel Valley College will be supported to follow the Expect Respect rules

The Golden Rules and Expect Respect rules can be found in the appendix.

These rules should be expanded upon in classroom settings in order to provide the required specificity for the individual, given their particular needs. It is important to recognise positive behaviour of all pupils regardless of their individual understanding of the Golden Rules and Expect Respect, as an inclusive school and college we will celebrate all pupils' success. This recognition is also important for pupils' parents/carers.

## **Legal framework & statutory guidance**

### **Linked national guidance:**

Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE: 2024)

The Equality Act (2010)

Getting the Simple Things Right (DfE: 2011)

Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Interventions for Learners with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (DfES: 2003)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version)

Positive environments where children can flourish: A guide for inspectors about physical intervention and restrictions of liberty (Ofsted, 2021)

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE: 2017)

Searching, screening and confiscating: Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies (DfE: 2022)

SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement. Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England (DfE: 2024).

Use of Reasonable Force (DfE: 2013)

### **Linked policies:**

Allegations Against Staff Policy and Procedures  
Behaviour Policy  
Complaints Procedure  
Exclusions Policy  
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy  
Touch policy

## Equalities & inclusion

Ivel Valley School & College will apply this policy fairly and without prejudice. Ivel Valley recognises and will abide by its duties to ensure that pupils and staff are protected from discrimination in relation to their protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This policy has been written with due regard to the Equalities Act 2010.

SLT will look at patterns of behaviour and the use of positive handling in the behaviour data generated by CPOMS to ensure that this policy doesn't unintentionally discriminate against pupils based on their protected characteristics.

## Safeguarding implications

Safeguarding is a priority at Ivel Valley: we firmly believe that all children have the right to be protected from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The implementation of positive handling at Ivel Valley School & College is an important part of keeping children safe. However, we recognise the impact that positive handling might have upon our pupils and therefore it is essential that teachers are aware of individual pupils' backgrounds and - in conjunction with the PBS Lead Practitioner - consider strategies to manage the needs of individual pupils appropriately.

## APPENDIX



- ★ We are kind to others
- ★ We respect other people
- ★ We ask for help when we need it and always try our best
- ★ We are polite to others
- ★ We take good care of our school and look after our things
- ★ We listen to each other



**IVEL VALLEY COLLEGE**

# **EXPECT** *Respect*

- We treat each other with respect
- We accept that mistakes are a part of learning
- We treat others as we would like to be treated
- We take good care of ourselves, our college, and our environment
- We take responsibility for our choices