

TERRINGTON ST CLEMENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY (Adopted from Norfolk LA)

CONTROLS

On rare occasions controls over pupils have to be exercised. The concept of control involves ensuring that pupils with a high level of personal stress, a dangerous lack of self control, and a furious desire to challenge and threaten, are diverted from harming themselves, others, and seriously damaging property or are protected from the likelihood of them doing so.

Controls May be Used When a Pupil is:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- Injuring themselves, others, or seriously damaging property (including the pupil's own property)
- In potential danger of injuring themselves, others or seriously damaging property
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

Examples of the Above Situations:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff
- Pupils are fighting
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave the school, (this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or school).
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom

- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

Considerations in Applying Control:

It is each member of staff's responsibility to make a risk assessment of the particular circumstances. Staff will need to decide if control is appropriate and, if it is, at what level. Staff will need to take the following factors into consideration:

- the pupil's characteristic ways of responding to stress, authority
- the known intentions of the pupil
- personal history
- knowledge of the pupil including I.E.P. or CARE PLAN
- age
- level of understanding
- cultural influences
- whether the pupil is on prescribed medication or under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- whether there is a weapon involved
- the availability of other staff
- the confidence, competence and self-control of the staff involved
- the influence of other pupils, family and friends
- any future events that may be causing the pupil anxiety
- how long the pupil has been attending the school
- the time of day (food/medication).

In considering these factors particular attention needs to be given to the age, understanding and maturity of the pupil. As a pupil gradually matures he becomes more able to make considered decisions. However, competency is not only determined by age and maturity. The possible consequences of behaviour should be a significant factor in decision making.

A decision which involves an assessment of the risk of potential harm must not be left to a pupil to make alone and will either be a matter for negotiation, or solely the responsibility of the member of staff. The more danger which can be foreseen in a particular situation, the less likely it will be that the pupil is competent to make a decision.

Forms of Control Explained:

Restriction of liberty:

Where a pupil is unwilling to accept being confined or unable to comprehend such reasonable control then:

In the case of a young pupil or one for whom the potential dangers of leaving the site are 'real and obvious' action should be taken to prevent it. This may be made clear by (in order of priority);

1. Clear verbal instructions and warning of consequences, or;
2. Close supervision until the threat of departure has passed, or;
3. By a permitted form of physical action (obstructing, holding or restraint - see below).
 - a) In the case of an older child whose absence is judged unlikely to lead to injury or serious damage, physical restraint is inappropriate. Clear verbal instruction and warnings of consequences should, however, be given.
 - b) In the case of an older child whose absence is likely to lead to injury, a recognised form of restraint can be used.

Prompting

(to encourage an action by physical means)

Prompting may be used where reasonably necessary in coaching and training pupils where they cannot manage unaided, e.g. canoeing, archery, etc. It must always be persuasive rather than coercive and great care must be taken to ensure that any physical contact does not give any cultural offence or apprehension of harm, or arouse any sexual expectations or feelings.

Where prompting is necessary in the general care of pupils with particular needs, further detail is given in Appendix 2.

Obstructing

(the use of a staff member's physical presence without touching to obstruct or restrict a pupil's movement)

A staff member may use his/her physical presence to obstruct an exit and, thereby, create an opportunity to express concern and remonstrate with a pupil and, thereby, reinforce an instruction.

However, 'obstructing' **must be**:

- Likely to be effective by virtue of the overall authority emanating from the staff member rather than simply his/her physical presence and;
- Used in the general context of trying to engage the pupil in discussion about his/her behaviour and its implications and;
- Discontinued if the pupil physically challenges it (when a decision will have to be made as to whether some other form of permitted intervention is justified).

Holding

(to discourage unwanted behaviours)

This should involve no more than a hand placed on an arm or shoulder or leading a pupil by one or both hands and/or possibly by the flat of one hand **placed** against a pupil's back in order to guide him/her to some other place or activity.

This may be necessary:

- To avoid external danger (e.g. holding a pupil's hand while crossing the road)
- To divert a pupil from destructive or disruptive behaviour
- To discourage destructive or disruptive behaviour.

'Holding' is distinguished from 'physical restraint' largely by the manner and degree of force applied. 'Holding' is intended to discourage. 'Physical restraint' is intended to prevent.

Physical Restraint:

Defined as; The positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a pupil **to prevent** significant injury to him/herself or others or serious damage to property. The proper use of restraint requires judgement, skills and a knowledge of non-harmful methods of control.

However it is good policy that Physical Restraint is used only:

- Rarely
- As a last resort
- Where any other course of action would be likely to fail
- When staff have good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary
- When all other courses of action with regard to control have been tried the situation has developed so rapidly and to a degree that restraint has to be employed as the only justifiable response.

Physical Restraint must not be used to:

- Punish
- Gain pupil compliance with staff instructions
- Cause or threaten hurt
- Oppress, threaten, intimidate and bully.

Physical intervention should not normally extend beyond "Holding". Only in extreme and exceptional circumstances, for example, where the risk to persons is severe, the damage to property extensive or a pupils' behaviour is seriously prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline, may staff take action beyond this.

This form of intervention should whenever possible be used by those staff members trained in approved non-harmful methods of restraint.

PROCEDURE FOR PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

The following procedure for physical restraint must always be followed:

- Try to give the pupil a clear warning, i.e. "Look, you're giving me no option.....". Still try to offer an alternative escape route from the situation by calming down and talking things through - in fact this offer must stand all the way through the incident.

Note: Do not discuss the issue that led to the intervention whilst holding the pupil

- Once physical intervention is necessary then it is important that it happens quickly, smoothly, confidently and successfully after first removing objects that could cause injury or damage.

Note: This should occur under the considered calm control of the member(s) of staff involved.

- The intervention should be **proportionate to the circumstances, pupil and staff involved**. Staff will need to make an instant **risk assessment** of the situation. This will involve the considerations as detailed on page 27-1-11.

The choices you may have are:

- Removing the audience
- Observing and actively discouraging from a safe distance
- Physically intervening to restrain the pupil

Note: Remember when circumstances, time and resources allow, staff should not tackle these incidents on their own.

When circumstances justify the use of restraint, staff can restrain a pupil as follows:

- In a standing position
- In a seated position
- In a seated ground position
- In a seated kneeling position

When carrying out these forms of restraint the following guidance must be adopted:

- It is usually easier if one staff member takes the lead and directs events. Only one member of staff should do the talking at any one time

- With two people present, where possible approaching from the side, rather than face on, they should take an arm each. They should move in close to the pupil's side, reducing their space for movement
- Beware of kicks, knees, head butts, bites, etc. Staff should lean their heads slightly away from that of the pupil. If the pupil starts to spit at staff, they should be told to stop. If they persist, staff can hold the pupil's head still, facing forward, using the L-shaped palm method
- Staff should take hold just above the wrist, on the long bones, hold the front of the shoulder or the upper arm. Check the positions of (pupil and staff), head, hips, hands and the safety of the hold. Communicate with each other and the pupil. Reassure that you will relinquish control when the pupil has regained sufficient composure and self control. Ask the pupil to take deep breaths, slowly and calmly.
- If standing, it may be better to face the pupil away from any audience or into a corner for safety. Try not to move the pupil long distances. The greater the distance, the higher the potential for injury to all involved. Where possible, remove any audience. Let the pupil know what you are doing and why. When moving a pupil towards a chair, always move forward until near the chair, then turn and checking for safety, place the pupil in a seated position. Remember to stay close in
- If sitting, aim for a well padded office type chair with no arms, it is a good idea if there are two together. Staff should consider in advance what chairs might be suitable for this type of intervention. Keep well to the side and slightly behind the pupil.
- It may be necessary to lower the pupil to a kneeling position or seated on the floor. In doing this you should follow the same process as above trying to stay close beside the pupil with no daylight between you. Maintain only the pressure that is required to keep safe
- Arms should be to the side not across the back. Do not force the arms up the back, pain should never be used to gain compliance.

Note: You should not place the pupil in the prone or supine position on the floor unless the circumstances are exceptional and you have received specialist training.

Once the situation has been "made safe" then we can begin the recovery process. The emphasis should be on speaking to the pupil about the choices he/she has and that the focus of control will be returned to them when they can demonstrate to the staff that they can relinquish control back to the pupil.

This may involve persuasion and explanation. Use ploys like;

- "Now that hasn't got us anywhere, has it"?
- "Look, this needn't have happened."
- "I don't want to be the person in control here. I want you to be".

It is not unusual to be faced with a continuous stream of abuse, obscenities, etc. Ignore these and let them run their course. Each time you try and talk be calm, deliberate and conciliatory in tone. If you are not successful use the following;

- "OK when you're calm enough we'll talk"
- "Tell me when you've calmed down and we can get you out of this mess"

With a particularly reticent pupil it may be possible to break through by talking to other involved colleagues, about the pupil, for example;

- "And you know George has had an excellent week so far...."
- or
- "You know I would have thought George would have been able to get himself out of this situation, he's not daft"

Offer positive feedback as soon as possible;

- "Good! That's better. You're much calmer now".

Once things begin to calm it can be coupled with significant changes in restraint, but this must be on staff terms and not when demanded by the pupil. If he/she asks sensibly and calmly to be released staff must choose whether to release before bargaining or as part of the bargain of restoring things. This is a matter of experience with other restraint situations and your knowledge of the pupil

The overall aim is to gradually go back and discuss what provoked the whole episode, getting the pupil to face up to the problems and its consequences. Staff should want the pupil to realise and learn that there was a more acceptable and appropriate way of dealing with the situation. The pupil should accept responsibility for his/her own behaviour.

In the end the staff member should work with the pupil to enable them to restore things with others and return things to normal where possible.

Restraint Considerations and Actions

- **The extent of force used should be no more than is necessary to control the situation. It should be reasonable as defined by the circumstances**

- There should be a minimum of two staff involved when restraining a pupil. Staff should not act alone where they have time to get assistance
- Staff have a duty of care to themselves as well as to the pupils. A risk assessment should be made of each situation and a balanced and appropriate decision made
- Staff will need to account their justification/motivation in using reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil
- Staff will be expected to exhaust all behaviour management strategies (where possible) before using physical intervention
- Staff having any concerns whatsoever about the use of physical restraint, or indeed any other form of external control, should discuss the situation with their Headteacher
- The event should be discussed with other involved staff so that the provision of feedback is achieved and the potential for improved approach, teamwork and skills gained
- Following a serious incident staff and pupils should be provided with a support process that allows for reflection repair and change. Triggers and patterns of behaviour should be looked for and alternate ways of managing behaviour sought. A plan should be agreed about future action, (involving staff, parents, placing agencies , etc.)
- A Pupil Incident Report must be drawn up in liaison with involved colleagues and the pupil given the opportunity to discuss, and if he/she wishes record, or have recorded, his/her feelings and opinions (see Appendix 3)
- Incident Reports need to be monitored and evaluated to identify levels of incident, patterns or trends developing
- If Physical Restraint is used on the same pupil on two or more occasions in any week a meeting should be held. This meeting should plan strategies to;
 - Safeguard and promote the pupil's welfare
 - Meet appropriately the pupil's needs
 - Manage his/her behaviour
 - Minimise the need for external controls

This meeting must also consider:

- The wishes and feelings of the pupil and parents
- The circumstances under which future meetings should be convened with the same agenda.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF FOLLOWING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

Anyone who suffers shock or injury should get medical attention as soon as possible.

Immediately after an incident, the priority is to make sure another does not happen. This may mean not immediately confronting the person who has made the attack and making a judgement about when it is appropriate to deal with that person and examine the incident. **The importance of this must be understood by all staff so that a colleague's apparent inaction is not misjudged.** In residential and day care settings, exclusion is unlikely to be an immediate or appropriate option, and any action should balance the need to avoid condoning violence with the need to avoid precipitating further violence. Specifically, threats of punishment should not be made. Where a sanction is appropriate it should not be immediate - the immediate priority is to prevent a recurrence and assist the injured person.

If, at a subsequent stage a sanction is to be applied, the injured party should not be responsible for making the decision on his/her own. All incidents should be reported to the Headteacher or Delegated person in her absence. This person should discuss it with the people involved as soon as possible, and a report form should be completed (see Appendix 3).

The Headteacher will decide if the incident should be reported to the police. This must be done swiftly in order to make possible an immediate enquiry and increase the likelihood of a successful prosecution. The police may or may not decide to take action - this judgement is made by the Police/Crown Prosecution Service. The incident will be reported to the Chair of Governors and Governors for Safeguarding as soon as possible.

Effects of Violence on Individuals

Feelings of fear, anger shame, inadequacy or violation are normal and healthy. These reactions should be expected by those involved. The Headteacher should anticipate such reactions and ensure that they can be talked through. The incident reporting form should provide such an opportunity. The Headteacher should also make clear statements that the presence of those feelings will not be seen as a sign of failure or professional shortcoming. In addition to being aware of the possibility that the injured person will become very self-critical, the Headteacher should also anticipate the tendency for others with the benefit of hindsight to criticise or 'blame the victim'.

The effects of violence may last for a long time or may appear as a delayed response. The likelihood and severity of delayed responses are known to depend on such factors as the amount of fear the person who was attacked experienced; on the degree of control which the person who was attacked

had during the incident - on how helpless he/she was; and on whether the person who was attacked thinks he/she lost control during the incident.

While at first there may be no apparent reaction, the Headteacher should anticipate a delayed reaction if any of these three factors has been present.

Longer term and delayed effects can damage a person's professional capacity and can damage their quality of life.

The likelihood of this kind of damage can be reduced by the appropriate behaviour of colleagues and managers immediately after a violent incident and by their behaviour over subsequent weeks.

Immediately after an incident it is important to ask the person who was attacked what they need. Wherever possible, managers and colleagues should act to see that need is met.

Subsequently staff may need understanding comfort and warmth. They may need to be encouraged to talk about their experience. To accept that it happened. To understand what happened and to adjust to it.

There may be a need to overcome feelings of guilt, shame and responsibility for the aggressor's behaviour.

The person attacked may need help to regain normal patterns of behaviour, including being able to relax and sleep.

The person attacked will be encouraged to contact Norfolk Support Line and/or union to seek professional advice.

Reporting:

All incidents of restraint must be reported to the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team in their absence and recorded in the Positive Handling/Restraint Log and recorded on CPOMS.

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To be reviewed annually unless changed by Norfolk Children's Services