

Lumley Infant and Nursery School



Positive Handling Policy

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| Head Teacher | Mrs T. Wilson |
| Chair of Governors | Dr M Wood |
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Positive Handling Statement

This document should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy

Positive Handling 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. Our 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 severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. The Use of Reasonable Force, DfE, 2013, describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Head Teacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to themselves, injury to other people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance at Lumley Infant and Nursery School. It should be considered alongside the most recent Local Authority policy statements and local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

The school acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).

Associated Resources

Link to government guidance includes DfES/DoH

http://www.teamteach-tutors.co.uk/guidance/guidance_gov.html

Positive Behaviour Management

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Head Teacher who are expected to use positive handling techniques should be trained. Lumley Infant and Nursery School has adopted the Team Teach model of training which is always provided by qualified instructors within rigorous guidelines.

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (authorised by the Head Teacher) and agreed through the school policies and procedures by the school Governing Body. It can also apply to people the Head Teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils e.g. unpaid volunteers / Agency workers / specialist teachers and tutors (who have appropriate training and experience).

De-escalation before Physical Intervention

Staff members will aim to de-escalate a situation without the need for physical intervention. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the pupils to stop.
- Remind them about expectations 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.
- Consider the Circle of danger i.e. not enter a young person's space.

Modifications to the Environment

Staff will be assessing the environment for risk as incidents begin to escalate. We know that some pupils may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general, it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. Consideration should be given 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 pens, pencils, compasses) controlled?
- What small items are available to a pupil in crisis who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design and arrangements of furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage pupils in crisis to take themselves to a safer place?

Help Protocols

All staff should support each other following Team Teach protocols. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over, and often means 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 (this is achieved by following the Team Teach 'Help Script') is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. Colleagues agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available. Our 'Help Script' must include the word '**more**'. In Team Teach, the use of the word 'more' is a code which means it is time for a change. With 'more' help it becomes the responsibility of the person offering help to make the decision, not the colleague

already involved in the incident. So, the question “can I give you more help?” is not really a question at all. It is a notification that the decision has been taken to change personnel.

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, and telling people to calm down can actually further escalate a crisis. Pointing out what they have done wrong can also make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with a pupil in crisis 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 Principle

At this school, we only use physical restraint when there is no other 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 sometime in the predicted future.”

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control Of Children In The Public Care: Interpretation Of The Children Act 1989” - London: H M S O

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 behaviour from becoming dangerous, provided that it is an agreed part of the pupil’s Behaviour Support 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 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. Staff dealing with pupils presenting challenging and crisis behaviour 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 interests 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).

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 (R Ranasinghe) using the Local Authority's violence and aggression at work pro-forma. We all have a 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 difficult choices. In these circumstances we have to try to think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action 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 policy and guidance, and to co-operate 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 produced a written Behaviour Support Plan as a result (that has been signed and agreed by Parents)?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Supportive Structures for Staff

- Young person's behaviour support plan
- Regular communication with parents / carers
- Family Conferencing / TAF / Behaviour Referral Meeting.
- Discussions between staff to update on current issues - use CPOMs
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning

Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit challenging / crisis 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 confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced with challenging / crisis 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 case the correct decision is to hold back from physical controls.

Behaviour Support Plans (Containing Positive Handling Guidance)

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 Behaviour Support Plan which includes a Positive Handling Section within individual pupils' risk assessment forms. 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 not proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. These plans must be discussed, agreed, signed and regularly reviewed with parents.

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

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 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

The Post Incident Recording and Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a crisis incident. Until the incident has subsided, the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school systems. It is important to note that injury in itself 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 children have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. 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.

Post incident all information should be recorded on CPOMS. This should be an accurate account of the event and include specific techniques used and the timescales they were used for. Any statements etc. should be uploaded as an attachment.

Support for Staff after Incident

Head Teacher and senior staff will give support to staff involved in the incident. Support will vary depending on the incident. Police, parents, carers and social worker may be called for further discussion.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of pupils and staff alike. Any staff

concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection (Tracey Wilson, Louise Phillips or Lisa Brown). Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety (Rachel Ranasinghe).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation if required.

Follow Up

Following an incident consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the pupil's Behaviour Support 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.