St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Pontefract, a Voluntary Academy

Positive Handling Policy

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Our Mission Statement

Inspired by Catholic teaching, we learn how to serve and love each other as disciples of our world with the same faithful joy which we see in Jesus, our saviour and our Lord.

TO LOVE AND SERVE WITH JOY

Introduction

The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidance relating to interaction between adults and pupils such as the SEND Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff, who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control.

Definitions of Positive Handling

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion, and de-escalation. Risk assessment identifies positive prevention strategies and how a pupil may need to be supported in a crisis.

Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- expect support plans to be designed to achieve outcomes that reflect the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and others affected by the behaviour requiring intervention;

Objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practiced by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a small part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

· Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where use of force is necessary and

· Named staff are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

When can reasonable force be used

The DFE Document Use of reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies 2013 states that:

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances

Schools can use reasonable force to:

• prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
• prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
• prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
• restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

The use of **positive handling techniques** is one of our control methods for reducing risks presented by children's challenging behaviour.

Staff must be aware that they are responsible for:

· assessing risks (dynamic risk assessment) related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties and

· making judgements about when the use of force is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as necessary to manage a situation.

· Staff need to be aware that they are required to record incident involving positive handling on CPOMS.

Minimising the Need to Use Force

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we constantly strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force. In addition to this, pupils who present with persistent challenging behaviour will be monitored by staff who will work in partnership with the SENDCo and class teacher, in supporting the EHCP and associated behaviour targets.
Pupils who have issues relating to sensory dysfunction or other conditions that may result in increased anxiety levels, and therefore an increase in the likelihood of challenging behaviour, may have individualised support or programmes to help them to manage this.

Through the PSHE curriculum pupils learn about feelings and managing conflict, where this is appropriate to their level of development. The ethos further promotes independence, choice and inclusion; pupils are given maximum opportunity for personal growth and emotional wellbeing.

All staff have skills to help them to defuse situations before behaviour becomes challenging and how to de-escalate incidents should they arise. Reasonable force will only be used when the risks involved in doing so, are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.
Prevention of unsafe behaviour will be enabled through:

· The deployment of appropriate staffing numbers;

· The deployment of appropriately trained and competent staff;

· Avoiding situations and triggers known to provoke challenging behaviour;

· Creating opportunities for choice and achievement;

· Developing staff expertise through a programme of Continuous Professional Development in regards to SEN e.g. ASD

· Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed

· Staff employ 'diffusion' techniques to avert escalation of behaviour into violence or aggression

Use of Physical Handling
No legal definition of reasonable force exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in St Joseph's Primary School:
1. Positive Handling uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.
2. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
3. Staff would be expected to follow the pupil's Support Plan/ EHCP / Risk Assessment in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour.
4. If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate staff would then be expected to **employ other Positive handling techniques that they have been trained**.
5. Only if all of the above have been tried and are unsuccessful should staff even consider any other form of restraint. The overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used.
All the techniques used take account of a young person's;

· gender

· level of physical, emotional and intellectual development

· special needs

· social context

They also provide a gradual, graded system of response.

Behaviour Records / Risk Assessments
Where behavioural records and/or risk assessment identifies a need for a planned approach, plans (Support Plans/learner profiles) are written for individual children and where possible, these will be designed through multi agency collaboration, shared with all Teaching and Support Staff and, with parental consent, shared with other agencies/services supporting the child to facilitate consistency of approach so far as is possible.

Other Positive Handling strategies include:

· **Time out**: This involves restricting the child's access to positive reinforcements in a room or area which they may freely leave. It is a specific behaviour management technique and does not necessarily mean time spent out of the class/group, but rather refers to a withdrawal of attention and/or things they find rewarding. It could be as simple as turning away from a child who is attention-seeking, or positioning a child away from the class/group. This withdrawal of attention could also be achieved by sending a pupil to another class/group or a quiet area.

· **Withdrawal** Which involves removing the child from a situation that causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group, to allow them time to calm down or to prevent a situation from escalating. They may need time away from staff and pupils (either on their own or in another class/group) in order to break the cycle/pattern of their behaviour or to reduce their level of anxiety/distress.

After the use of a restrictive physical intervention
After the use of an unplanned restrictive physical intervention, the following steps will be taken:

· Details of the incident will be recorded in the by all adults involved on CPOMS

· Recording will be completed before the end of the school day whenever possible. Staff will be offered the opportunity to seek advice from a senior colleague or professional representative when compiling their report.

· Any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded following normal school procedures.

· The Headteacher will check that there is no cause for concern regarding the actions of adults involved. If it is felt that an action has 'caused or put a child at risk of significant harm' the Headteacher will follow the school's child protection procedures and also inform parents/carers.

· Parents/carers will be informed by the Headteacher/SENCo/Class Teacher on the day of the incident. Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have regarding an incident.

· Support/debriefing will be available for adults and pupils who have been involved in any incident involving restrictive physical interventions.

· Staff involved in any incident involving restrictive physical interventions will be given adequate time to recover before returning to their duties.

Positive Handling

Through the provision of Positive handling training, the risk of harm towards staff is reduced but it is possible for some injury to be received. All such occurrences should be treated and subsequently recorded on CPOMS. Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students on placement, visitors or parents as they will not have control of pupils who may present with challenging behaviour, but will be supervised at all times.

Positive handling trained staff

Identified staff have been trained to use positive handling techniques within St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. A list of these staff is located on the staffroom safeguarding noticeboard and the main office.