

Stanton Community Primary School



Nurture, Enjoy, Aspire, Achieve

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

It is the philosophy of our school that it holds, as its first priority, the needs of the children in its care.

Rationale

The purpose of this Positive Handling Policy and Practice document is to describe the school's ethos, culture and values within a framework for relating positively to children and improving their behaviour. This approach requires an environment with clear, predictable and consistent structures that also operates in such a way as to maintain the naturalness and flexibility of school life.

Our beliefs as expressed in our Vision Statement are that:

Every child is entitled to:

- start their learning journey the 'right' way.
- support with their emotional well-being as well as their physical well-being.
- master the curriculum at their own depth of challenge.
- access a range of opportunities to develop an extensive range of language both written and orally across the curriculum.
- have their opinions listened to.
- an inclusive and supported learning environment whatever their needs.
- be given the tools to take full advantage of the next steps in their learning journey.

This positive view of children and our work underpins and drives our culture and ethos, creating a firm foundation for the positive management of behaviour.

Scope

This statement of policy and practice relates to the operation of Stanton Community Primary School.

Principles

The policy and practice seeks to demonstrate:

- a whole establishment approach conducive to quality physical and emotional care, and therapeutic intervention which incorporates effective teaching and learning in an innovative and sensitive way
- arrangements and practices which are known to children, staff, parents/carers and placing authorities that effectively convey the culture of Stanton Community Primary School.
- a sense of home, community and shared values
- mutual respect
- the promotion of positive relationships
- a commitment to proactivity rather than crisis driven approaches
- the encouragement of self-worth, self-confidence and self-discipline

- an emphasis on positive effort and achievement
- an active partnership with parents/carers
- that restorative approaches are embedded as a response to inappropriate behaviour that impacts on others
- that any use of sanction is considered, fair and consistent
- sensitivity to the needs of the local community

Entitlement

Stanton Community Primary School recognises that children, staff, parents/carers, placing authorities and the community all have rights and responsibilities that should be reflected in its policy and practice for managing and supporting children's behaviour.

Child's Entitlement

All children are entitled to:

- be listened to again and again and again and again.....
- opportunities to develop self-worth through gaining success and accepting responsibility
- opportunities to develop self-discipline, self-regulation and emotional intelligence
- an orderly, caring and supportive regime in which each individual's growth can be nurtured through personalised learning
- consistency of treatment from staff member to staff member and between staff groups
- know the rules, routines and expectations of the school
- participate as appropriate in the development and continued review of the school's policy and practice in respect of behaviour
- praise and reward for positive achievements and endeavour
- open access to support mechanisms within the school
- positive role models to emulate
- be treated as an individual
- expect their potential to be fully explored in a range of situations and activities
- have any complaints dealt with effectively and speedily
- a de-briefing, repair and reflection process following serious incidents

Staff Entitlement

All staff are entitled to:

- mutual respect
- an orderly and supportive environment in which effective caring and teaching, can occur
- active participation in the development and review of the policy and practice
- systems which allow staff to be involved in the personal and social growth of the children
- access to positive handling training - Team Teach
- advice and support from senior colleagues
- regular time allocation for induction, personal and professional development
- a de-briefing, repair and reflection process following serious incidents

Parents/Carers Entitlement

Parents/Carers are entitled to:

- be regularly and actively involved in the academic, social and personal education of their children
- involvement in seeking constructive solutions to problems involving their child
- regular agreed contact with staff
- information about the Stanton Community Primary School policy and practice

Community Entitlement

The local and wider community is entitled to:

- consideration and respect
- neighbourliness
- the co-operation of the school in matters which effect the community

Policy Statement

Staff at this school are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others and to ensure their emotional well-being. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request. Parents are invited to read this policy along with our behaviour management policy on our school website.

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 'restraint' means 'to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention' (Use of Reasonable Force , DfE July 2013). A 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 experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance (Use of Reasonable Force , DfE July 2013; Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention, HM Government Jue 2019). It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

School Expectations

The management takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence inappropriate behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules 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.

Modifications to Environment

Staff will not wait until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at this school may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration 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 and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil 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?
- Are the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?

- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean 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 is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

At Stanton Community Primary School our script includes;

- **"How can I help?"** when looking to support a member of staff or child.
- **"More help available"** when a staff member has offered help, been told that help is not needed but feels the staff member requires further support.
- **"I am holding you safely until you can hold yourself safely"** when holding a child to ensure their safety and that of others around.
- **"I care too much to let you hurt.....yourself....other people.....let yourself do something you would later feel bad about...."** When a child is being held due to others being at risk, or they are at risk of hurting themselves, others, destroying property etc.

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. Telling people to calm down can actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person 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 Principal

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no 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. It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a dynamic 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.

Emergency Doctrine

Emergency Doctrine is a principle that allows individuals to take action in the face of a sudden or urgent need for aid, without being subject to normal standards of reasonable care. Also called imminent peril doctrine, or sudden peril doctrine.

The emergency doctrine allows people to act in critical situations that call for quick action—a fire, an automobile crash, a collapsing building—without danger of recrimination. An example of someone who might be covered under the emergency doctrine is a person who performs cardio-pulmonary resuscitation on a heart attack victim and in so doing breaks several of the victim's ribs. Another example is when a driver, surprised by a pedestrian who steps out from between two parked cars, swerves to miss the pedestrian but then hits another car.

The emergency doctrine also covers situations in which an individual acted in **good faith** when disaster seemed imminent even though ultimately it was not.

Parents rights are diminishing rights as children grow older and become more capable of making their own decisions. Good parenting involves encouraging and supporting children to assess and manage risks for themselves. There may, however, be circumstances in which a **dynamic risk assessment** determines that older children, or young adults, lack capacity in the short term. For example, somebody under the influence of alcohol or drugs, suffering from hypothermia, a head injury or a blood sugar imbalance related to diabetes or suffering extreme emotional distress, may lack capacity in the short term. In such an emergency there is a **positive duty** to do whatever is **immediately necessary to prevent a serious deterioration** in the physical or mental well-being of the child or adult concerned. In such circumstances restraint or other deprivations of liberty may be justifiable for children.

Summary

Our Positive Handling Policy along with Team Teach training is designed to **minimise risk** and help young people to **build and maintain positive relationships**. At Stanton Community Primary School staff receive clear guidance and regular training so that they are more likely to be both confident and competent at supporting the young people we care for. Confident staff can reassure people who are anxious, offer boundaries and choices when people challenge, with safe and effective physical intervention strategies as a last resort. We can also help people to learn how to better manage their own feelings and therefore their behaviour by providing opportunities for support, reflection and repair. Stanton Community Primary School is a **safe setting without fear**. It is a place where staff go to work not expecting to be hurt. It is a place where children, young people and adults know they will be positively cared for. It is a place of safety and security, providing for some a contrast with the chaos, confusion and instability they may have experienced elsewhere. For some people a teacher can become a pivotal person in their lives. How our staff respond to our children, as opposed to the **behaviour**, can **build the bridges which lead to positive change**.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling 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. People 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 interest 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). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

Team Teach

It is the policy of Stanton Community Primary School that staff are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches.

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 in the school. We all have 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 unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which 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 and policy and guidance, and to cooperate 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 nonphysical 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 provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Risk Assessment

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

Getting Help

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEP's and Behaviour Support Plans for those pupils who have SEND are kept on file to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- We have an Emotional Support worker who supports children and families.
- Weekly briefing meetings with the Emotional Support Worker, Head teacher - designated person, Senior teacher - Deputy designated person and SENCo
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-over's 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.

Behaviour Support Plan/Risk Assessment

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/Risk Assessment. 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 proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Behaviour Support Plan/Risk Assessments should be considered alongside the SEND documentation and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in and Pastoral Support Plan or MEP.

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 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 serious 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's 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 pupils 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.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

Training

Teachers and employed staff authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This school has adopted the Team Teach Model of training.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. Our preferred approach is for whole staff team training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should practice regularly guidance of our in-house instructors and bring any problems or concerns to them. By training the whole staff we ensure an authentic approach to everyone supporting in ensuring a pre-emptive preventable approach in the use of restrictive intervention.

Recording

Whenever overpowering force is used the incident must be recorded using the approved forms. The Incident/Concerns books are kept in the main office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. Where appropriate parents/carers will be informed.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully.
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation. A copy of every serious incident will be filed in each child's individual blue folder along with a copy of the year's behaviour management policy and positive handling policy. The original documents will be ar-

chived by the school and kept with a copy of the same policies each year. Every term an analysis of this data is undertaken which informs next steps of risk management.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Behaviour Support Plan/Risk Assessment, or this Positive Handling Policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures. (See staff and pupil disciplinary policy)

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour Policy

Touch Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Safeguarding Child Protection Policy

The Use of Reasonable Force DfE 2013

Positive Environments Where Children Can Flourish, Ofsted 2018

This policy was written in November 2019 and will be updated in September 2020.