

St. James' RC Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

We believe that every member of our school community should feel valued, respected and treated as an individual, in accordance with our school mission statement, which states that we:-

'Promote positive relationships and respect for self and others.'

Central to this aim is the expectation that the children of St James' RC Primary School will display high standards of behaviour, and treat other people, as they would wish to be treated.

Our school behaviour policy is designed to support the way in which all members of our school community can live and work together. It is a whole school approach and all members of staff have a responsibility to maintain positive behaviour throughout the school. The behaviour policy aims to promote an environment which helps children develop into confident, well-motivated and hard- working pupils who enjoy school, have high self- esteem and go on to achieve their full potential.

We endeavour to achieve this in many ways, but the most important include:-

- To actively listen to children, however trivial their concerns may seem;
- Being genuinely interested and concerned for the children and staff in our school;
- Recognising and praising the many positive qualities our children can show;
- Holding the belief that a child's self- image, can change in a positive way through seeing and feeling their successes;
- Always being willing to take the time to help the children feel better about themselves and to listen seriously to any of their concerns.

Respect for All and Democracy as part of British values

Respect for all is an expectation. We believe that our children must have a voice in the school and there are systems in place for them to express their concerns and opinions, that ultimately contribute to the development of the school.

Children can express their concerns by:-

- Speaking to their class teacher or another trusted adult in the school;
- Putting a note in the 'worry box', which alerts the 'Listening Ear Mentor' to create a meeting with them;
- Having regular meetings with the 'Listening Ear ' until matters are resolved.

Children can contribute to the development of the school by:-

- Contributing to the annual questionnaire that goes out to families;
- Letting their Class Rep. know about items that can be brought to the School Council meetings;
- Talking to their class teacher;
- Writing to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

At St. James', we recognise that, at times, a minority of children may significantly deviate from the behaviour policy. The overriding principle related to 'positive handling' is that the best interests of the child, and the children around them, take precedence over every other consideration. The Children's Act 1989 in the UK states that the welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration. Therefore when physical restraint is considered, it is **regarded as a last resort and should only be used in exceptional circumstances.**

Physical Restraint and the Law

There are three main laws that govern the use of physical force in the UK and they are:-

- Common Law
- Section 3 (1) Of the Criminal Law Act 1967
- Section 76 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008

The law states that any person may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances in preventing a crime or assisting in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders or of persons unlawfully at large.

The Law Commission has drafted a list of lawful excuses for using physical force:-

- Preventing a crime or assisting in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders or of persons unlawfully at large;
- To prevent or terminate a breach of the peace;
- To protect himself or another from unlawful force or unlawful personal harm – this is self-defence or defensive force in support of another person;
- To prevent or terminate the unlawful detention of himself or another;
- To prevent or terminate a trespass to his person or property.

In some cases on the common law, defence will be available eg. Where the attacker against whom the force is used is not committing a crime, because they are a child below the age of criminal responsibility. Physical restraint is most probably being used in school to prevent a crime being committed by an aggressor.

What is reasonable force and when can it be used?

Reasonable force is based upon the principle that it must be both necessary and proportionate.

The Government has issued a document called 'Use of reasonable force'. It is guidance only but clarifies responsibilities.

The DFE say that schools can use reasonable force to:-

- **remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;**
- **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;**
- **restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.**

Physical interventions should only be used when dialogue and diversion have failed to stop the behaviour and should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result, taking into account the age and size of the child.

The decision to use a restrictive physical intervention must take account of the immediate circumstances of the situation, coupled with prior knowledge of the child and be based upon an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention.

Only staff who are trained in using positive handling are allowed to restrain pupils. All staff are trained in de-escalation techniques which are aimed at avoiding confrontation. St. James' has brokered positive handling training from an external agency and only the holds taught at the training sessions may be applied.

Incidents may occur on the School premises or on a field trip or on an Out of Hours School activity, eg. Sports event.

It is important that the school staff support the child beneath the behaviour, in order to have an understanding of the behaviour displayed. There are many strategies that are implemented before physical intervention is contemplated:

1. Primary Prevention:

- Ensure the ratio of staff deployed and their level of competence corresponds to the needs of the child;
- Risk assessments for individual school pupils are responsive to specific needs and include current information about specific triggers;
- Talk to the child and his/her family about the way in which he/she prefers to be managed when they pose a significant risk to themselves and others;
- Provide a quiet area for the child to withdraw to for a set period of time. This area needs to be accessible and in view;

2. Secondary Prevention:

- Anticipate the behaviour by observing the situation and build in early intervention strategies to defuse the issue/problem;

- Attempt to find a solution before the child is out of control;
- Encourage the child to learn to recognise when his/her behaviour is escalating and find appropriate strategies to de-escalate situation;
- Step back from a situation in order to consider the actions to take, unless there is immediate risk of injury, such as a young child running off a pavement onto a busy road;
- Use verbal intervention – speak to the child in a quiet, calm, non-confrontational way to encourage the child to alter his/her behaviour;
- Send away any audience that may have gathered;
- Send for appropriate adult support

Where physical intervention is required the following procedures must be adhered to:-

- Ensure that the adult responding to the situation is aware of procedures. If not, send for assistance. If possible additional adults should be called for as soon as possible.
- Ensure all adults and children are a safe distance away, i.e, an arm's distance from the troubled child;
- The child concerned needs to be informed in a clear way that if the behaviour continues, the member of staff will intervene;
- Throughout the incident, the member of staff should continue to talk with the child in a calm way, making it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as the inappropriate behaviour ceases.

De-escalation

When dealing with aggressive behaviour try to reduce the aggression and calm the child down by:-

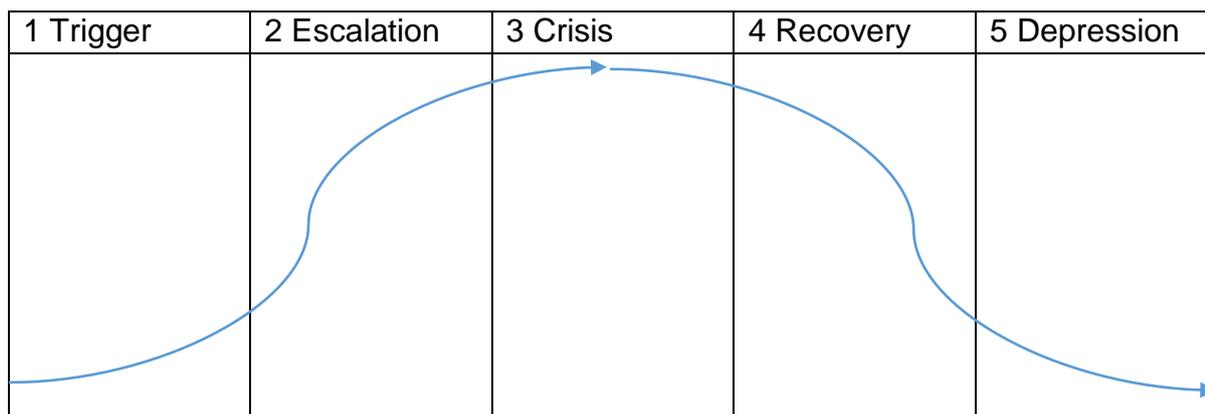
- Using their name (it gives the child status and can set up a rapport)
- Acknowledging their right to their feelings (fairness and status)
- Telling them why you are there (rapport/status)
- Telling them what they can do (autonomy/certainty)
- Offering a 'get out' (status/autonomy)

During and after Physical Restraint

The Head Teacher or a member of the LMT must be informed that the physical restraint is happening as soon as possible.

The incident must be logged on a physical restraint form; the form must be seen by the Head Teacher. (The PR folder is kept upstairs, on a shelf outside the Finance Officer's room)

Kaplan and Wheelers 5 stage model



- It is essential that the child who has been restrained is not asked to take part in any dialogue about the incident that occurred until they are completely calm; this can take around 90 minutes and will ensure that they have returned to baseline level.
- It is important that staff have time to discuss their experiences and reflect upon the events that occurred, using their reflections as a learning platform.
- The parents must be informed after an incident has occurred.

Ensure that on all school trips, that at risk children are accompanied by the professional i.e the class teacher or teaching assistant. On occasions it maybe considered that an additional member of staff accompanies a particular child.

Training

A range of training should be provided for specific personnel who manage the individual child.

This may include:

- Supporting and managing children with emotional difficulties;
- Attachment disorders;
- Behaviour of the minority;
- Including children with ASD
- Supporting children on the Autistic Spectrum
- Children in care – fostered and adopted
- Positive Handling

Pupils with behaviour plans or needs that may impact upon behaviour

Teachers will have a folder containing the records of any pupils who attend regular behaviour meetings or who have Statements/EHCs or Pupil Support Agreements that relate to behaviour. The Head Teacher keeps copies of all of the targets that relate to the behaviour of these children and they are used for regular review meetings with parents. A list of children with personal behaviour plans is recorded in the child's records record folder.

It is vital that all staff know about the children with behavioural issues in order to ensure a consistent approach.

Although it is important to discuss the possibility of positive handling being used with their child, it is not necessary to ask their permission to use it; the safety of the child and other children is the most important factor.

Written: January 2016

To be reviewed: January 2019 or before if there are any changes necessary