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Statutory Policy
Review Frequency – 3 Years

Reasonable Use of Force Policy

Rationale

Birchwood High School has a positive behaviour management strategy. We believe in the importance of encouraging good behaviour at all times. However, there are occasions when a pupil's behaviour might be such that it endangers either themselves or others. In these cases, we will apply our right to restrain pupils. We will only apply restraint where absolutely necessary and will do our best to work effectively with pupils, staff and parents to minimise the likelihood of this happening. Force will never be used as a punishment.

Aim

Birchwood High School is a happy school and we aim to maintain and develop this positive and caring environment.

Objectives

- To maintain a safe and orderly environment.
- To ensure that all pupils feel safe.
- To work with and support pupils with emotional and behaviour difficulties.
- To enable staff to restrain and control pupils in a safe manner where absolutely necessary.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the powers that they have and that they are able to use them safely where absolutely necessary.

Definitions

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use the necessary force to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence
- causing personal injury, or damage to the property of any person (including the pupils)
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school.

Responsibilities

Governing body

- To receive feedback from the Principal on the effectiveness of this policy.
- To monitor the number of incidents where restraint is necessary.
- To ensure that no particular group is over-represented in the restraint log.

Principal

- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and that induction of new staff brings new recruits and temporary staff up-to-date.
- To make sure that training is available in positive handling techniques.

- To ensure that practice is followed and staff receive the support that they need.
- To work with different agencies to ensure that positive handling plans are effective and that families and children feel supported.
- To report on the number and types of incidents to the governing body.

Other staff

- To complete necessary risk assessments and positive handling plans.
- To implement positive handling plans and apply this policy.

Procedures and practice

The amount of force used should be proportional to the consequences it is intended to prevent. It should always be the minimum amount needed. It is important that staff find ways of avoiding situations that might trigger the need for restraint. This does not mean that pupils should be allowed to avoid the usual rules and regulations of the school, but that staff should attempt to find ways of enforcing these without creating confrontation. Wherever possible, alternative strategies should be found.

It is important that members of staff are made aware of any pupils in their care who might need restraint. They should receive information and training on how to deal with this. As far as possible, staff should not use force unless another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

Consulting with children

Pupils are consulted annually about the practices and policies of the school. This includes questions about the behaviour of other pupils and the sanctions taken to ensure good order throughout the school. This information is used during the review of this and linked policies.

Avoiding the need to restrain

The curriculum provides opportunity for staff to discuss the behaviour of pupils, the implications of actions and the need to work together cooperatively and supportively. Staff will take reasonable steps to avoid the likelihood of situations arising where force is needed.

Where a situation is escalating, staff should:

- remain calm
- seek support from another member of staff
- use non-threatening verbal and body language
- try to provide a way out of the situation for the pupil
- give a clear oral warning that force may have to be used
- inform the pupil that restraint will stop as soon as possible. 2019

All staff will receive training on the reasonable use of force policy annually as part of their safeguarding update.

Pupils at risk

Where pupils do exhibit challenging behaviour and it is known that the need to restrain is a possibility, positive handling plans should be drawn up (see Appendix A).

Where a particular pupil is identified as possibly needing restraint, the school should:

- complete a risk assessment

- complete a positive handling plan.

A pupil support plan should also be completed to ensure that effective strategies are sought to help improve the pupil's behaviour and address any emotional and behavioural needs there might be.

Support for staff

Restraining pupils can be traumatic for staff. Any member of staff involved in an incident will be offered post-incident support and counselling. Time must be taken to reflect and evaluate the incident and response and consider how practice might be improved another time.

Types of force

This includes:

- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- in more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds. Wherever possible, this should be avoided and only carried out by those with specific expertise or training.

Post-incident

Following every incident, staff should make sure that:

- a record is made, including witness observations, before there is opportunity to forget the detail of the incident (see Appendix B)
- staff involved are supported and counselling given as appropriate
- parents are informed
- a review of the incident is conducted, including how it might be avoided in future.

Working with parents and the local community

Working with parents can help to support pupils with challenging behaviour. A supportive relationship will enable home and school to recognise patterns in behaviour, triggers resulting in the need for restraint and ways in which the behaviour can be avoided. Parents must be informed every time a pupil is restrained.

Special needs

It is important that governors and the Principal check that no particular group is over-represented in experiencing restraint. Where pupils with SEND are needing to be restrained on a frequent basis, every opportunity should be taken to ensure that their needs are being met and the strategies are in place to help them manage their behaviour. This will frequently involve liaison with outside agencies.

Any planned use of physical intervention should be compatible with a pupil's statement and properly documented in school records.

Equal opportunities

As with SEN, it is important that no particular groups of pupils are over-represented in relation to the need to restrain.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be due to be reviewed in September 2021 or earlier if legislation or practice should change significantly in the meantime.

The success of this policy is monitored through the number of incidents of restraint that take place.

Linked policies

- Behaviour policy
- Health and safety policy

Appendix A - Form - Positive handling plan

It is expected that individual plans will be drawn up to support children where restraint is a possibility. This form could be adapted as appropriate to fit within your setting.

Setting:
Name of child:
Key workers:
Name of parent/carer:

Likelihood of necessary:

Type of behaviour and likely risk:

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.....

.....

Potential triggers include:

.....

.....

.....

How likely is it that the situation will occur?

Strategies to be used to avoid the need for restraint:

1.
2.
3.

Strategies to be used should the need for restraint be necessary:

1.
2.
3.

Post-incident follow-up:

.....
.....
.....

Agreed by:

Date:

Methods of communicating the plan:

1.
2.

Staff training issues:

1.
2.

Appendix B - Record of restraint

This form could be used as a way of formally recording any incidents where restraint is necessary.

Name of child:	
Date of incident:	
Members of staff involved:	
Names of any witnesses:	
Events leading up to the incident (include place, people present, possible triggers):	
Accounts of the incident (please include child, member of staff, records from witnesses):	
Force used and reason why:	
Injuries sustained:	
Follow-up action:	
Parents informed:	
Report compiled by:	Report counter-signed by:
Date:	Date:

