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PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Physical Intervention Policy

Rowhill has a “duty of care” to their pupils. This may involve all staff having to handle pupils to prevent them from harming themselves or others, or from damaging property. The dignity and interest of the child remains paramount at all times, before, during and after the intervention

Introduction

This policy has been written to support all staff who work with pupils and for students and volunteers working within the school.

The policy is intended to explain the school’s arrangements for physical intervention. Its contents are available to parents and Governors, and are published on the school website.

It should be read in conjunction with DfE guidance on “Use of reasonable force” dated July 2013, and the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Purpose of the policy

Rowhill is committed to providing a stimulating, fun, creative and educational environment for pupils with complex needs and learning difficulties.

Rowhill believes that good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital in school and this is a large part of our approach. It is also recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and support given by staff to the greatest extent possible. It is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force is required.

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 reasonable force is necessary
- are provided with appropriate training annually to deal with these difficult situations

The application of any form of physical intervention places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Physical Intervention will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff, good order or property are at risk.

Underpinning Principles

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

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

- individual consideration of pupil needs by staff who have a 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
- be informed about the school’s complaints procedure.

Training

Training for all staff will be made available. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.

‘Team Teach’ training in physical intervention and de-escalation is completed by all Rowhill School staff. Staff that have not yet received training do not physically intervene with pupils but call for help and ensure other pupils are safe.

Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour

Staff working with our pupils are aware that pupils with these difficulties may in some instances not be in control of their behaviour.

The Head teacher will ensure that all staff are aware of the needs of individuals who are at risk of exhibiting poor behaviour, and aware of strategies to avoid or deal with this (see Behaviour policy & individual risk assessments and handling plans in central resources).

Pupils can be helped to manage their own behaviour through the use of appropriate behavioural programmes and by staff consistently using positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. All staff should be aware of these programmes and the strategies to be used. Good communication between staff is essential particularly when relatively unstructured situations allow behavioural issues to increase.

Staff working as a team will create:

- a calm, secure atmosphere throughout school and use consistent approaches
- opportunities for pupils to earn praise and rewards. It is especially important to notice and reward behaviour that matches the targets of any individual provision/handling plans developed for pupils .

Opportunities to identify problem behaviour or triggers in order to avoid creating further difficulties i.e. by anticipating behaviour before it occurs (use of “now... next” strategy).

There will be good awareness of pupil behaviour so that negative attention seeking behaviour is seen but ignored where it is safe to do so (with a pupil with multiple behaviour issues, staff may need to work on one behaviour at a time). Opportunities will be found to explain actions/sanctions to the pupil where possible.

Behaviour issues will be considered when organising staffing, where possible. There may be potential for staff to be swapped periodically to lessen strain on staff, or it may be best to keep staffing consistent. Some members of staff may be better able to deal with behaviours that others find upsetting. Finally, some combinations of students and staff may work better than others for whatever reason – all of these factors will be considered when putting groups together.

There will be regular contact with parents/carers to share plans, and liaison with outside agencies for support and involvement to ensure that “joined up” approaches are in place (e.g. through annual reviews & Child Protection meetings).

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment.

Where behaviour requires intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident (this may include physical intervention taking place immediately):

- verbal redirection to positive desired behaviour (using signs & symbols if appropriate).
- an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable (‘The computer will break’)
- a warning of the intention to intervene physically, and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible summon assistance (‘if you don’t stop banging the computer, you will be moved away from it’)
- physical intervention *using the minimum degree of force necessary for the minimum time.*

It is recognised that in extreme circumstances, where staff do not feel able to manage a situation (for instance in the community with a limited staff group), it may be deemed necessary to call the emergency services for assistance.

Planned Physical Intervention and Risk Assessment

This will :

- arise from risk assessments that the school will carry out on some pupils.
- be agreed in advance (school, parents, other agencies, child)
- be implemented only by trained staff

Unacceptable levels of physical intervention

The school is aware of what constitutes unacceptable measures of physical Intervention, and they will not be used, for instance:

- locking a child in a room without due cause or supervision
- physical punishment including slapping, pushing and rough handling
- deprivation of food/ drink/ medication /sleep
- use of a mechanical or therapeutic device unless agreed as part of a physical intervention plan

Recording

Where restrictive physical intervention has been used, a record of the incident will be kept in the bound book kept in the DSL office for that purpose. This will include:

- the name of the pupil(s)
- the date, time and place of the incident
- a brief description of the incident and any actions taken

The form will be completed as soon as possible after the incident by the staff member concerned, preferably within two hours of the incident taking place. It will be countersigned by a governor. Staff should complete necessary paperwork before leaving the premises and ensure parents/carers/social workers have been informed in all cases.

Specific details of the use of planned or unplanned physical intervention will be recorded in each case, and will include:

- how the incident developed (triggers)
- attempts made to calm the situation
- names of staff or pupils who witnessed the incident
- the outcome of the incident including any injuries sustained, by any pupil or member of staff
- any damage to property which had resulted
- (where possible) the pupil's view of the incident

The school will review such records regularly (at least every few weeks) to ensure that:

- records are being appropriately kept
- patterns of behaviour in individual pupils or at particular times of the day/ certain lessons are being identified and problems addressed, and to monitor staffing levels
- training issues arising from the above are being identified and addressed