



Positive Handling Policy

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Odessa Infant School

Positive Handling Policy

A. Introduction

At Odessa we set high standards and expectations about the curriculum and the spiritual, moral and social environment in which staff and children work. Staff see their role as enabling children to be successful learners and to deal with and resolve the complexities of life in positive and socially responsible ways. Staff are positive role models in everything they do by promoting respect of each other's rights.

B. Aims

These are the agreed aims of the staff of our school. They are reviewed annually. We have a shared vision of developing relationships and a curriculum that ensures that everyone feels valued, respected and can reach a high level of achievement.

1. Access to Learning

To provide an environment where each child of every race, gender, class and learning need is truly recognised, accepted and valued.

To create an environment where there is a place for everyone and there is a feeling of belonging.

To develop high positive self-esteem in all children and adults.

To enable children to be aware of their interdependency on each other.

2. Curriculum

To have an approach to the curriculum that promotes high levels of achievement and which enable children to reach their potential.

To enable children to have access to and experience the whole curriculum (including the National Curriculum and RE).

To have a recording and assessment system that demonstrates children's achievement, their development and progression.

3. Process of Learning

To acknowledge that all children are decision makers and to enable them to become active participants in their own learning.

To enable learning to start from the child's needs.

To ensure that all the experiences for the children are positive and rigorous.

To provide a smooth transition from Early Years to Year 2.

To prepare children for the transition from Infant to Junior school successfully and confidently.

Developing positive links with shared expectations and giving children clear information about behaviour expectations in secondary schools.

4. Working Co-operatively

To ensure that everyone: Teachers, Parents/carers, Governors and other members of the community work cooperatively and collaboratively to enable the achievement of all.

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. 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.

Positive Handling

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 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in national Guidance. 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 with severe behavioural 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 LEA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

Positive Behaviour Management

The school recognises that the encouragement of positive behaviour and discipline is the result of a partnership between all staff, governors, parents/carers, children and other people in the community.

All of these partners have an important part to play and we recognise that the aim of this partnership is to offer the children the opportunity to develop self-discipline and to have high regard for themselves and all others in the community.

This policy is based on the principle that all children will develop high standards of behaviour according to their age, maturity; ability and that they must be treated and valued as individuals. Our approach to managing behaviour is to be seen within the context of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. This awareness of Equal Opportunities is integral to the encouragement of positive behaviour within the school.

All staff are responsible for encouraging positive behaviour amongst the children. We recognise that as role models to the children, staff must have high standards of behaviour towards themselves and the children.

All staff have a positive attitude and are encouraged to acknowledge and reward appropriate behaviour and express approval. Staff exhibit a range of positive controlling responses and give personal acknowledgement for positive efforts.

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 bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Behaviour Management Programmes and Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and good 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 Intervention

Before any physical intervention is used other strategies must be used to try to defuse the situation first and positive handling used only when absolutely necessary.

The following strategies must be considered to help pre-empt any difficult and violent situations: -

- Change the environment
- Alter routines
- Focus on diversion, reassurance and communication
- The use of parents/carers
- Rewarding progress
- Identifying the key behavioural difficulty
- Identifying the behaviour we want to see
- Our understanding of behaviour

The following strategies could be used to avoid an incident:

- Use a calm voice
- Use humour
- Expectation reminder
- Reassurance
- Listening to the child
- Withdrawal offered
- Staff member change

- Involvement of senior staff

Staff members must remain calm and under control and try to stabilise the situation to prevent it from getting worse.

Steps must be taken to diffuse the situation to prevent the child from becoming distressed or aggressive.

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.

Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff should 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.

Positive Handling as a Last Resort

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. National guidance is clear on this point.

"If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future."

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health - 1997 - "The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989" - London: H M S O

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a 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.

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 Odessa Infant School that all staff working closely with pupils that have Positive Handling Programmes are trained in the pre-emotive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website ([HYPERLINK "http://www.team-teach.co.uk" www.team-teach.co.uk](http://www.team-teach.co.uk)).

Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit challenging 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.

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 challenging 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 Management Programmes are kept on file in each team to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Regular briefing sessions to update staff on current issues and share information.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including changeovers 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.
- Regular debrief sessions for all staff to share experiences, concerns and access support from each other, led by Inclusion team
- Termly refresher meetings in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for staff (when needed) and continuous review by SLT to inform these.
- Staff access to support drop-in sessions weekly (when needed).

Positive Handling Plans

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 Positive Handling Plan. 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. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement 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 IEP.

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 defusion 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.

Training

Teachers and anyone 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. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by

the member of staff and the needs of our children. Once trained, staff should practice regularly with the guidance of our Team Teach Tutors and bring any problems or concerns to them.

Recording

Whenever force is used the incident must be recorded .The Restraint Record Book is kept in the Teachers room. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours.

Staff should:

Read through the guidance page carefully.

Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.

Complete all names in full.

Sign and date all entries.

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.

Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. A record is written into the Incident Book. This refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The SLT will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, Behaviour Management Programme or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Child Protection Policy

Playground Policy

Inclusion Policy

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