



**BEVERLEY SCHOOL
FOR
STUDENTS WITH AUTISM**

BEHAVIOUR POLICY

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To be reviewed: October 2022

BEVERLEY SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Incorporating Policy on Physical Intervention

Policy objectives;

- To provide guidance for staff, parents, governors and other stakeholders on how we keep our students safe
- To demonstrate our ethos towards supporting our students
- To ensure that protocols are transparent

All staff have a duty of care to keep children safe and this policy should be read in conjunction with the document Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Encouraging good behaviour and minimising the risk of problems

We have invested a great deal of time and effort in trying to create a relaxed and purposeful atmosphere. This is important because students with autism learn most effectively when we provide support for communication, give them the structure they need, minimise stress and remove unnecessary distractions. Throughout the school we have a range of strategies in place to support our students in managing their behaviour such as sensory integration programmes, therapies, mindfulness and yoga.

We treat students in a friendly and respectful way. We encourage and reward good behaviour around the school's principles of **Ready, Respectful and Safe**. Students know that they can raise concerns with staff, and that they will be listened to and supported. We want to resolve problems before they interfere with attendance and progress, and we are happy for parents to contact school if they think something is concerning their son or daughter. This is particularly important if parents are worried that their child is being bullied. We teach children to treat each other with respect, and we do our best to ensure that every child feels safe and happy at school.

We know it is important to reward good work and behaviour. Much of this is done in the course of everyday activities through praise and reflective conversation, but we also give certificates and special group and individual rewards.

However, where a student's behaviour is dangerous or seriously disruptive, we take fair and reasonable steps to prevent their actions putting others at risk or interfering with learning. Equally importantly, we also consider the factors that may lie behind their actions and we work in partnership with students, families and other professionals in developing appropriate behaviours and attitudes. It is vital that members of our community understand that we are acting in their best interests and that they are always valued as individuals when inappropriate behaviour is being addressed. The vast majority of our staff have a detailed understanding of the relationship between autism and behaviour. They are very skilled at analysis of behaviour, and we can usually design appropriate programmes if problems arise.

Exclusions from school are rare. Even when there are very serious incidents, parents are consulted, and we discuss ways in which exclusion can be avoided. However, if we decide that exclusion is a necessary and helpful response, then the proper legal procedure will be followed. Parents will be informed as quickly as possible, usually by phone. A letter will then follow, detailing the reasons for exclusion, giving the date of return and explaining about the procedures.

Please note that Beverley School staff follow agreed procedures for dealing with any suspicion of child abuse. We report safeguarding concerns directly to the designated officers.

Our Policy on Positive Handling Strategies and Physical Intervention

It is important to be clear about the use of terminology connected with physical interventions. Our definitions are given here.

Physical intervention – any direct physical contact between staff and students used to support behaviour. This is different to physical contact for emotional reassurance eg a pat on the shoulder, hug or holding hands for younger students to lead them. It is also different to the sensory programmes used in school which may involve deep pressure or squeezing.

Restrictive physical intervention – the use of force to restrict movement or mobility or to disengage from harmful physical contact initiated by students

Seclusion – where a student is forced to spend time alone against their will. This is a form of physical intervention which runs contrary to the Human Rights Act 1998, and can be implemented only in exceptional circumstances.

Withdrawal – allowing or encouraging a student to move away from a situation where their behaviour is dangerous or disruptive, or where they are becoming upset or overstimulated. The student goes to a designated area where either (a) he/she is supervised until staff judge that the student is ready to return, or (b) the student chooses to remain until he/she makes a decision to return. Although in some settings, this may be described loosely as “time out”, in our context it is more usually referred to as “take a break”. “Take a break” is seen as a constructive strategy and does not imply an extreme restriction on access to positive reinforcement. The distinction is important because the Government’s joint Health/Education “Guidance for Restrictive Physical Interventions” (2002) defines “time out” in a very specific and negative way.

Any student who requires the use of a quiet room/alternative space should have it included in their individual positive behaviour care plan. This avoids it becoming a ‘norm’ but also makes it a transparent process for all stakeholders, especially parents.

Also, it is a requirement for staff to note on incident forms how long a student was in the quiet room/alternative space. More significantly, if the door is closed during an incident, the length of time should be noted on the form. A member of senior leadership should be informed during the incident so that they can attend or intervene if needed.

Physical punishment is prohibited by law and is in any case inconsistent with our values and ethos. However, if students are injuring themselves, causing serious damage to property, or there is danger to other students or staff, then physical intervention may be needed. This is very different to physical punishment, and never involves the deliberate use of pain to control students. Having said this, we must recognise that in some extreme situations, our risk assessment may show no safe pain free-way to protect staff or students from very dangerous behaviour. In such cases, we may have to teach staff, and sanction the use of, breakaway or disengagement strategies that involve some discomfort.

Children may never be locked in a room alone, be left without support or supervision, deprived of food or drink or denied access to a toilet.

Legislation also permits physical intervention by teachers and other authorised education staff when this is required to prevent “behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline”. We expect that staff will make a particularly careful assessment of the options available if they are contemplating physical intervention in a situation covered by this last category, as other strategies may be more appropriate when there is no immediate danger of injury or damage.

Working with officers of the LA, and within the LA's policy framework, we have identified an approach to physical intervention that is consistent with our philosophy that non-confrontational strategies can and should be used wherever possible. Our autism-specific approaches, good relationships between staff and students, and the relaxed and purposeful atmosphere, mean that restrictive physical interventions will be required relatively rarely, given the range and nature of our students' needs. This belief is shared by the authors of the training package which we use (Team Teach). Team Teach provides a coherent and well-organised framework for initial training, refresher sessions and sharing of good practice. We have accredited Team Teach Tutors within school, and we can also work in partnership with other tutors locally to run regular training courses and refreshers. If staff make a judgement that it is necessary to make a restrictive physical intervention with students, then they use accepted techniques to deal with all but the most extreme and unexpected threats to safety. Staff are trained to apply the minimum of force in a graded response to the situation, and aim to release the student as soon as it is safe to do so. Staff make every effort to use the least restrictive of the techniques they have been taught. Judgements about the techniques that are appropriate must reflect our knowledge of the student's personal characteristics, such as age, family background and medical needs. The interventions we use are very clearly not intended to be a punishment. Staff know that they will be expected to explain their actions, and that details of incidents must be recorded. Parents are informed as soon as possible after any serious incident when restraint has been required. In accordance with the best practice, as described in Government Guidance in 2010, parents are also informed about any other significant incident involving their child, even if restrictive physical intervention was not used. Incidents involving restrictive physical interventions are also followed up with post incident support and debriefing for staff and, wherever appropriate and helpful, students.

Staff should always consider their own personal safety alongside all the other factors involved, and should try to summon assistance as quickly as possible when a potentially dangerous situation arises. Where assessment of the risks indicates that staff intervention in the specific circumstances is not likely to make the situation better, and involves unacceptable risks to personal safety, it is sensible to withdraw promptly and reconsider options.

Whenever it is recognised that a student's behaviour is likely to present serious challenges on a regular basis, a behaviour support care plan is drawn up. This details preventative strategies as well as the planned physical interventions that have been agreed. A standard proforma is used and the plan is shared with parents, any other professionals involved, and with the student/students whenever appropriate.

The statements and guidance above refer to actions that constitute "restrictive physical interventions". For adults working with children and young people with complex needs, there will be occasions when physical contact is needed in quite different circumstances. This could include escorting, prompting, assisting, guiding or comforting students. These things are a natural part of the work in a school such as Beverley. Staff always take care to avoid hurting or upsetting children unnecessarily, and we need to be confident that we are not encouraging inappropriate behaviour, or running any risk of staff actions being seen as exploitative in any way. To ensure that the reasons for our actions are always properly understood, we have produced a policy and guidance document relating to handling and relationships.

Keeping Proper Records about Positive Handling Strategies

Good record keeping is important. It serves several purposes:

- Monitoring trends in behaviour and identifying problems
- Informing decisions about appropriate strategies
- Communicating the most effective approaches to all staff
- Protection of staff
- Informing parents
- Prevention of abuse
- Identifying organisational and training issues

In order to provide useful information, records must be kept consistently. This will happen only if the systems and formats are user-friendly and their purpose is clearly understood. In addition to general school policies, there are three key documents in our recording and reporting system:

- Behavioural incident reports. There are three reporting forms. Level 1 is to document low level, low risk behaviour. Level 2 is to document a lower risk incident where some physical intervention may have been necessary. Level 3 is a serious incident requiring intensive, high risk behaviour or intervention. All are logged together in the incident file kept in the general office. **Serious incidents (Level 3) should always be signed by either the Head or Deputy prior to logging.**
- Threat to staff safety form
- Positive Behaviour Care Plan (incorporating individual risk assessment)

Sample copies of these forms are available, together with a short document summarising the use of the different forms. Further support and guidance are available from members of the Leadership Team or Team Teach Tutors if required.

The Headteacher (along with the Deputy Head) reviews threat to staff safety forms and incident reports, and decides on actions to be taken to minimise future risks. Copies of threat to staff safety forms are forwarded to relevant officers in the LA. The Headteacher will share summary information with Trade Union representatives or other appropriate bodies on request.

Injuries to staff or students in Positive Handling Situations

As with any other concerns about injuries occurring at school, advice and help is available from the designated first aiders. In addition to the forms listed above, which require staff to give information about injuries, the accident book should also be completed.

Students should be encouraged to communicate about their feelings following restrictive physical intervention, and their views must be taken seriously. If there are concerns about possible child protection issues, this should be followed up through recognised child protection procedures.

Security and Safety Precautions

Students who lack an awareness of danger may present a risk to themselves or others if they leave the school. We also need to prevent unauthorised people entering the school. Given that our students are always well supervised, our use of double catches, high handles and entry control systems does not infringe students' rights, and is consistent with the most recent guidance.

Staff Training on Positive Handling

All contracted classroom staff complete the 12 hour Team Teach Training, although if they join at a time of year when a 12 hour course is not scheduled, they will have an overview until a 6 hr course can be run. We offer all Lunchtime Supervisors an overview of positive handling and de-escalation techniques. All staff who have completed these courses are authorised to use the techniques they have been taught, strictly in accordance with Team Teach principles and our school policy, and within the framework provided by legislation and the LA policy.

Where required, briefings on selected "low level" physical interventions are provided to staff who have not yet been able to access full courses. Staff are specifically authorised to use the techniques covered in these briefings.

Issues relating to positive handling are addressed in staff and team meetings.

Refresher courses are provided in accordance with Team Teach schedules. These will be tailored to the needs of the staff concerned. Refreshers may be cumulative (i.e. consisting of a series of short focused sessions). Any training needs identified through analysis of incident records will be addressed as quickly as practicable.

Parents and visiting professionals are welcomed as observers during Team Teach training. Some training occurs during the school day, and we are open and honest with students about the nature and purpose of demonstrations and practice they may see. Governors have an important role in ensuring accountability in this potentially controversial area of the school's work. To ensure that Governors are well placed to carry out this role, Governor representatives have been, and will continue to be, invited to observe the training programme.

Advice for staff

When faced with a confrontational situation, adult behaviour will influence the situation by either reducing or inflaming the incident. Staff should consider the consequences of blocking the exit of a child or young person and avoid doing so unless it will be clearly more dangerous for the young person involved. Try to remain calm or give the appearance of being calm. Adopt a non – threatening **CALM** stance ie side ways stance, palms open and facing down. Avoid standing upright with arms crossed.

Be aware of space. Try not to step into personal or intimate space. Step outside the circle of danger.

Avoid mirroring of behaviour – if a student is pacing, avoid pacing with them. Stand still. Sit down or lean if possible. Speak slowly and calmly.

Help script: use the student's name, acknowledge their feelings and tell them that you are there to help. You talk and I will listen.

In the event of a serious incident; you may;

Give clear instructions, send for help, remove the audience if possible, be a witness, intervene physically with consideration to the above information.

Other policies to refer to: Anti-bullying and Safeguarding & Child Protection