Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

Sandal Castle Primary School staff are trained to look after pupils in their care and have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy.

In all but crisis situations, only staff trained in the pre-emotive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques of TEAM TEACH will use physical intervention techniques with children when necessary. A crisis situation is one in which the child is showing extreme dysregulation and is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or others.

Further details of the TEAM TEACH [approach can be found on the TEAM TEACH website. The website address is www.team-teach.co.uk.

The term positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. 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.

The school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables a school's staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force.

Team Teach

The TEAM TEACH system is recognised by the Local Authority and accredited through BILD – British Institute of Learning Disabilities. Staff undergo a one- or two-day course (depending upon the severity of behaviour of the children they are working with) led by qualified trainers with a single day refresher course undertaken every year. Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.

Before using physical intervention, we take effective action to reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging dysregulated behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop
- Reminding them about rules and likely outcomes
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place
- Making the environment safer by removing furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and requesting help.

Restraint

At Sandal Castle Primary School, we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. 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 alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming itself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing there is an imminent risk or danger
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before physical intervention. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment
- Physical restraint should not usually be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.
- In addition, whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. I am doing this to keep you safe.

Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. An unforeseen event may require an emergency response. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a risk assessment.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit extreme challenging behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate triggers and reactions. When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff will think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

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. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with the child's EHCP/SEND need and any other planning document relevant to the pupil. They should take account of age, gender, level of physical, emotional and cognitive development, special needs and social context.

Post Incident Debrief

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of the school to offer support for all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future, appreciate other people's perspectives and repair relationships. It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the need of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an upsetting incident. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the SLT will make arrangements for the class group to be supported and mental health first aiders will be available.

Recording

- All incidents of challenging behaviour should be recorded
- All serious incidents or incidents involving positive handling will be recorded on the appropriate form.

Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded and signed by witnesses within twenty-four hours. The Head Teacher must always be informed.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The Head Teacher / Deputy Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

Parents

When there is a possibility of physical intervention with a child, parents will be invited to contribute to a risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan. Written parental agreement will form part of this. Parents will be informed of the school's policies. Parents will be informed following serious incidents.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints will follow the school's complaints procedure.

Review and monitoring of the policy

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or earlier if the legislation should change.