



Serenity School

Positive Handling Policy

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Definition of Physical Restraint

In this policy physical restraint is defined as any method of responding to challenging behaviour of a pupil that threatens their own personal safety, or safety of others, where some degree of physical force is applied against the pupil's resistance to controlling his or her own behaviour by limiting or restricting his or her movement or mobility.

Introduction

Serenity School is committed at all times to the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the welfare of young people entrusted to its care.

In our provision of SEMH Schools that form part of Serenity School, there are some young people who may not be able to control their reaction to events and who may place themselves or others at risk through their uncontrolled behaviour. This may necessitate the use of restrictive physical interventions to prevent injury, damage to property, or the breakdown of discipline.

Serenity School Expectations

The use of physical restraint is not part of the disciplinary management process – it is a response, albeit a considered one, to an exceptional situation. The use of restrictive physical interventions should always be considered within the wider context of other measures; these include:

- i) establishing and maintaining good relationships with young people
- ii) using diversion, diffusion and negotiation to respond to difficult situations
- iii) Non-physical, non-threatening and aggression free strategies should always be tried first.

Positive Behaviour Management

All staff should adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem. Serenity School work with young persons who might be at risk and therefore we look to understand the factors that influence their behaviours when they join us. A Positive Handling Plan (Appendix 1) should be used when it is apparent that physical intervention may be necessary to use with a specific student which can then be shared with all staff. This approach will help to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm, and formal risk assessments (Appendix 4) can also be drawn up if and when required. These should reduce the incidence of extreme behaviours and make sure that the use of physical force is rare.

General individuals

Our schools should acknowledge that some young people behave in ways that make it necessary to consider the use of restrictive physical intervention.

Use of restrictive physical interventions in unforeseen and emergency situations

Serenity School acknowledges that, on occasion, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations with pupils.

Staff should assess situation and try to use diversion or diffusion to manage the situation. Verbal comments should be tried to calm pupil. If this fails they should immediately send for help.

Ensure all other pupils are removed from the situation as quickly as possible.

Remove if you can any objects, equipment, furniture that you feel might pose a danger.

Use of Force or Restraint

Even trained and named persons who could intervene should not do so if they put themselves at an unacceptable risk or where they believe that attempts to restrain will exacerbate the situation.

Key point

'To be judged lawful, the force used would need to be proportional to the circumstances it is intended to prevent'. The degree of force used must be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Pupils with SEN

Those exercising the power to use force must also take account of any particular SEN and or disability that a pupil may have. Schools have 2 key duties:

- Not to treat a disabled pupil less favourably for a reason relating to the disability.
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage to pupils who are not disabled.

Common Law powers

The statutory power conferred by section 93 is in addition to the common law power of any citizen in an emergency to use reasonable force in self-defence, to prevent another person from being injured or committing a criminal offence.

On preventing injury or damage to property, the statutory power is similar in scope to the common law power except that it is only available to people authorised to have control or charge of pupils.

Reducing the likelihood of situations arising where the use of force may need to be used

Although preventative measures will not always work, there are a number of steps that are recommended to try before the use of force:

1. Create a calm and orderly school climate that minimises threat of violence of any kind
2. Develop effective relationships between pupils and staff
3. Adopt a whole school approach to developing social and emotional skills
4. Take a look at staff development that helps staff to develop skills of positive behaviour management
5. Recognise that challenging behaviour does sometimes exist
6. Effectively manage individual incidents

Deciding if the use of force is appropriate

The judgement on whether to use force and what force should be used will always depend on the circumstances of each case.

Decisions on whether the precise circumstances of an incident justify the use of significant force must be reasonable. Typically, such decisions have to be made quickly with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, staff will need to make the clearest possible judgements about:

- The seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder
- The chances of achieving the desired outcome by another means. The lower the probability of achieving the desired result by another means the more likely use of force will be justified
- The relevant risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies

Before using force

Before using force, staff should, wherever possible tell the pupil to stop misbehaving and communicate in calm and measured manner throughout the incident. The types of force necessary may be:

- a. Passive physical contact resulting from standing between pupils.
- b. Active physical contact such as:
 - leading a pupil by the arm
 - ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the middle of the back
 - In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds, which may require specific expertise.

Staff must always ensure that every measure has been taken to reduce risk of injury. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

The behaviour of the pupil represents a physical danger to themselves

The behaviour of the pupil represents a physical danger to others

The behaviour of the pupil represents a significant physical threat to property

The behaviour of the pupil represents a serious threat to the good order of the school

Schools cannot:

- Use force as a punishment – **it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.**

Working positively – all staff must work positively to ensure no escalation of the incident occurs, so...

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make clear, simple statements to pupil
- Keep voice quiet, firm and assured
- Lessen threat of your presence by sitting down or allowing pupil space (don't stand too close or corner pupil)
- Talk to pupil all the time
- Offer comfort, reassurance, and security
- Maintain eye contact
- Where possible have help at hand
- Allow pupil to 'save face'
- Throughout restraint process tell pupil precisely what you are doing and why and remind pupil continuously that physical restraint will cease the moment they become calm and in control

What not to do

Methods or techniques that control by pain are forbidden. Use of pressure against joints e.g. fingers, wrists, elbows are dangerous and should not be used. Avoid the breast, upper thigh area when holding a pupil. Forcing a young person's arm up his/her back is forbidden as is squeezing the windpipe or lifting the person off the floor to intimidate, pulling hair, striking the pupil or causing actual injury

Safe Techniques

All Serenity School, staff have been trained to use PRICE Techniques.

PRICE training leads the way in ensuring organisations and individuals have the skills needed to keep themselves and those in their care safe. PRICE is accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities, and we believe it offers the best knowledge, understanding and skills for

staff to be confident in recognising when behaviour is likely to escalate so that the risk of harm or injury can be minimised through de-escalation strategies and preventative tools.

This positive behaviour support training is designed to help staff manage physically challenging behaviour in the least restrictive way, focusing heavily on de-escalation and diversion techniques and approach ensures staff fully acknowledge the rights of the students and consider physical restraint only as a last resort.

<http://www.pricetraining.co.uk/about-us/>)

Post-incident support

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be emotionally upsetting to all concerned and may result in injuries to the pupil or staff. After any incidents staff and pupils should be allowed time to regain composure before they engage in the process of counselling, analysis and report writing. Basic first aid treatment should be given for any injuries. For serious injuries pupils and staff should be taken to hospital or an ambulance called. Parents / carers and relatives should be immediately informed. All injuries should be reported, and an accident form filled in, this is done using Citrus HR.

Reporting and recording use of restrictive physical interventions

All incidents requiring the use of physical intervention should be thoroughly and systematically documented on BROMCOM. The Headteacher will also be informed as soon as it is possible to do so.

That report should include:

- The name of the pupils involved, and when and where the incident took place
- The names of any staff or pupils who witnessed the incident
- The reason that force was necessary
- How the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupils behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to diffuse the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied and for how long
- The pupil's response and the outcomes of the incident
- Details of any injuries suffered by the pupil, other pupils or staff members and any damage to property
- The time parent / carers / police / other agencies were alerted and notes of the telephone conversation

Complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. In the event of a complaint being received by the Executive Headteacher in relation to use of force by the trained staff member the matter will be dealt with following Serenity School personnel procedures for handling allegations against members of staff.

