

YSGOL RHIW-BECHAN



Ffrindiau Yn Cyd Ddysgu
Friends Together, Learning Together



Bechan Bach

Keeping Learners safe & Positive handling Policy

Reviewed: October 2024

	Name	Signature	Date
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Review Date	Oct 2025
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Policy Statement

Staff at Ysgol Rhiw-Bechan are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene 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 have received the appropriate Team Teach training and will follow this policy.

Introduction

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 that 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 (DfES/DoH 2002). 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 Local Authority 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 necessary.

School Expectations

The management takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

- 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.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors that may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils and parents are encouraged wherever necessary to contribute to Positive Handling Intervention Plans (PHIP) to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur. However, the school will protect/care for all children in the same manner whether a PHIP is in place.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk by using a range of de-escalation strategies. 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 that 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.

Modifications to Environment

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used.

Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. In certain circumstances a change of face is needed, it is important that staff realise that this is not a failure. 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. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They agree scripts during Team Teach training so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

Well Chosen Words

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

The Last Resort Principal

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 dynamic risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to have a bank of de-escalation strategies ready to be used.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous if it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. 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 best interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

At Ysgol Rhiw-Bechan we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to risk assess and choose the safest alternative. This 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 him/herself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- 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 applying restraint. 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 never be used 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#

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, proportionate and necessary 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? What will happen if we don't 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 reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

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. Force should also not be used for any longer than required. 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).

Team Teach

It is the policy of Ysgol Rhiw-Bechan that the majority of staff working closely with pupils are trained in the pre-emptive 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 on the Team Teach website (www.team-teach.co.uk).

Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible.

As a minimum requirement, to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school, policy, and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important to.

Risk Assessment

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

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?

Factors that might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. 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 extreme 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:

- PHIPs are kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.

- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including changeovers of staff during a crisis with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions are held each time 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.

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 triggers that have previously been identified, any strategies that have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses that 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/LA IDP/School IDP and any other planning documents that 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 a 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 emergencies 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 principles 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 that are likely to be effective.

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. If staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable, proportionate and necessary 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 will be given the time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided, the only priority is to reduce risk, calm the situation and support the recovery so that the young person does not loop back into crisis. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries that 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 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 another 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.

Listen – listen to the child's view

Link – link the child's' feelings to the behaviour shown.

Learn – learn better ways for next time.

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 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. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

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. Qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines always provide positive handling training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our pupils.

Recording

Whenever overpowering force is used, the incident must be recorded using the approved forms (see appendix A). The Incident/Concerns paperwork is kept in the office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record that must be completed within 24 hours.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Be honest. If you don't remember something then don't make it up.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for 75 years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher 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 policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

References:

Physical Contact – Care, Comfort, Reassurance and Restraint by Bernard Allen
Team Teach Work Book V 2021 www.teamteach.co.uk

APPENDIX A

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Record of Physical Intervention

Section A: Details of people involved

Date	
Name of Pupil	
Staff	
Time	
Location	

Section B: Reason for 'Physical Intervention'

Please tick appropriate box

To avert an immediate danger of personal injury to the pupil	
To avert an immediate danger of injury to another person	
To avoid serious damage to property	

Section C: Participants - The action was taken in the presence of:

Other Staff Name(s)

Section D: Distraction and Diffusion techniques used – Tick boxes below

Humour	
Quiet Voice	
Friendly Body Language	
Step Away	
Verbal Advice given	
Reassurance	
Time Out Offered	
Time Out Directed	
Distraction	
Transfer adult	
Tactical ignoring	
Consequences	

Other – give details _____

Section E: Description of the Incident – Continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Section F: Method of Physical Intervention

List the Team Teach hold(s) that were used

Reporting Injury

Was anybody hurt during a physical intervention? Yes/No

(Tick boxes below if yes)

<i>Following injury</i>	<i>Tick</i>
A pupil was Injured	
SLT informed	
School nurse informed	
A member of staff was injured	
Accident report form completed	

Signature: _____ Name in block capitals _____

Date: _____

Team Teach Tips

- Know your individual.
- Make a link – build a bridge.
- Start where they are – describe what they are doing.
- Find something to praise – what have they shown potential to be good at?
- Use reminders about former relationships and success.
- Remind people about Rules, Rights Responsibilities
- Offer limited choices with guided help.
- Divert away from confrontation.
- When safety allows provide a 'get out with dignity' – 'I'll come back to speak to you when things have cooled down a bit.'
- Start sentences with 'I' rather than 'YOU'. We can avoid unhelpful remarks that imply blame. Giving our reasons and saying how they felt will model to others how they express anger or frustration.
- Express honest feelings in a calm and constructive manner – 'when you spit and swear it upsets me.'
- Repeat clear simple instructions.
- Take time out and use the support of colleagues. Take time to consider a considered response rather than a sudden reaction.
- Know and share your triggers with your colleagues. By knowing and sharing triggers we are less likely to respond when provoked.
- Try to stay focused and objective.
- Try not to overreact or take the behaviour personally.
- See beyond the behaviour – 'Where is this coming from?'
- Think – 'What function does this behaviour serve?'
- Stick to the most important issue and deal with one issue at a time.
- Avoid the spiral of the power struggle.
- Stay in control in order to help others control their feelings we must first accept the need to control our own.
- Take a step back, both physically and mentally.
- Think of CALM images ('scream savers')
- Remember the Pepsi Challenge.
- Practice the scripts!

