

Venture Learning

Positive Handling Policy

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Document Owner	Rhys Griffiths
Version	1.0
Effective From	21/01/2019
Next Review Date	21/01/2020

Introduction

This policy aims to give all staff at Venture Learning clear guidance so that any physical intervention that they undertake is carried out in a way that supports and protects the rights and interests of young people.

To use touch and physical support appropriately and effectively, staff will adhere to the following principles. It must:

- be non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain or injury;
- be in the best interests of the child and others;
- have a clear educational purpose (e.g to access the curriculum or to improve social relationships); and,
- take account of gender issues.

Venture Learning is responsible for ensuring that relevant staff are aware of any pupil who finds physical touch unwelcome. Such sensitivity may arise from the pupil's cultural background or their personal history and sensitivities.

In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to use restrictive physical intervention. This may arise if a person is at risk of harm to themselves or others, and physical intervention is necessary to remove or reduce this risk. This policy aims to describe the circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response and how staff at school will fulfil their responsibilities in those circumstances.

Key Staff and Contacts

Provision Based Contacts

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Section 1: Types of Positive Handling

Positive handling may occur as an emergency/unplanned intervention in response to unforeseen events. Where appropriate, positive handling will be implemented as part of a planned response in which staff employ a pre-arranged strategy based on a risk assessment and recorded in an individual plan for the management of the student.

1.1 Non-restrictive Physical Intervention

A physical intervention is considered to be non-restrictive where the young person's movement is not restricted or where they are held supportively but such that they will be released immediately should they so wish. An example of a non-restrictive physical intervention would be guiding a person away from a situation.

1.2 Restrictive Physical Intervention

A physical intervention is considered restrictive if it prevents, impedes or restricts movement or mobility. This includes:

- restraining;
- using force to direct; or
- blocking a person's path.

Restrictive physical intervention should never be used unless it is unavoidable to protect from harm. In all situations de-escalation and redirection strategies should be employed to reduce the likelihood of necessitated physical intervention.

When a restrictive physical intervention is justified, staff will use reasonable force. This is the degree of force warranted by the situation. It will be proportionate to the circumstances of the incident and the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used will always be the minimum needed for the shortest amount of time to achieve the desired result.

Section 2: Operation of this Policy

The use of positive handling will be the outcome of a professional judgement made by staff on the basis of this policy. It is avoided whenever possible and will not be used for staff convenience.

Positive handling will only be considered if other behaviour management options have proved ineffective or are judged to be inappropriate (or in an emergency situation).

Before deciding to intervene in this way, staff will weigh up whether the risk of not intervening is greater that the risk of intervening. Any actions will be carried out with the young person's best interests at heart. Positive handling will never be used to punish a student or cause pain, injury or humiliation.

Staff are not expected to intervene physically against their better judgement nor are they expected to place themselves at unreasonable risk. In such circumstances, they must take steps to minimise risks. For example, by removing other students and calling for assistance.

2.1 Staff Guidelines

Where staff need to take physical intervention, they will:

- work in a pair;
- use the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of time;
- avoid causing pain or injury;
- avoid holding or putting pressure on joints; and,
- never hold a student face down on the ground or in any position that might increase the risk of suffocation.

During an incident the members of staff involved will tell the student that his or her behaviour may lead to restraint. This will not be used as a threat or said in a way that could inflame the situation. Staff will not act out of anger or frustration. They will try to adopt a calm, measured approach and maintain communication with the student at all times.

In an emergency, staff must seek assistance from a nearby colleague or senior member of staff where possible.

2.2 Planning for Positive Handling

If it is determined that positive handling is likely to be an appropriate and necessary part of the young person's provision, a risk assessment will be carried out.

If appropriate, an individual management plan will be drawn up for that student. This plan will aim to reduce the likelihood of the need for positive handling as well as describing how such intervention will be carried out. This plan will be discussed with parents/carers.

Before the plan is implemented, any necessary training or guidance will be provided for the staff involved. Venture Learning will be responsible for establishing staff needs and for organising necessary training.

2.3 Post Positive Handling Procedures

After the use of unplanned positive handling, the following steps will be taken:

- details of the incident will be recorded by all adults involved immediately on the physical intervention record form;
- staff will be given the opportunity to consult with a senior member of staff;
- any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded following normal school procedures;
- the Head of Provision will check that there is no cause for concern regarding the actions of adults involved. If it is felt an action has 'caused or put a child at risk of significant harm' they will follow safeguarding and child protection procedures;
- parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible on the day of the incident. Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have regarding an incident; and,
- support/debriefing will be made available for adults and students who have been involved in any incident involving positing handling.

Venture Learning will use the records kept to analyse patterns of behaviour and so decide whether responses are being effective. At all times, Venture Learning aim to reduce the need for physical intervention and seek alternative solutions to addressing behaviour.