



Ysgol Bryn Gwalia



Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

Last Review Date	September 2023
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Date Adopted by Governing Body	September 2025
Head Teacher – Mrs Lorraine Dalton	
Chair of Governors – Mrs Janiene Davies	



Challenging Behaviour and the use of Positive Handling and Physical Intervention

Introduction

These notes and guidance are for all staff working in Ysgol Bryn Gwalia. They should be read in conjunction with 'Framework for Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy and Practice' from the Welsh Assembly Government, March 2005 and Flintshire's Behaviour and Attendance Policy.

Schools and Pupil Referral Units must have a policy for managing difficult and challenging behaviour including the use of Positive Handling and Physical Intervention. This policy must be agreed by the whole school community.

The most effective way to manage challenging behaviour is to use whole school approaches to positive behaviour management in accordance to Trauma informed School practices. Each schools Behaviour and Attendance Policies should give guidance on providing preventative strategies, before there is a need to use physical intervention.

Flintshire LA has adopted the Team Teach training framework. Team Teach remains committed to the term 'positive handling' to describe a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies.

Values and Principles

The management of challenging behaviour is a difficult and sensitive aspect of work with pupils. These notes / guidance give paramount importance to the human and legal rights of pupils. They move from least to more interventionist alternatives and emphasise **prevention over intervention**.

Definitions

1. '**Positive handling** is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation. Restraint is only a small part of the framework'. (Taken from the Team Teach workbook.)

2. **Physical Intervention** is defined in the WAG Framework as: 'direct physical contact between persons where reasonable force is positively applied against resistance, either to restrict movement or mobility or to disengage from harmful behaviour displayed by an individual.'

3. **Challenging behaviour** describes behaviour of such frequency, duration or intensity that the safety of the person or others is placed in jeopardy.

Reasonable force

The appropriateness of the physical intervention must always be related to the age, maturity, understanding and capacity of the individual. Appropriateness will also be dependent on the risk factors associated with the individual, the staff and other individuals within the vicinity.

There is no legal definition of reasonable force, but three criteria are established for guidance:

- **REASONABLE**: where the action taken is reasonable in the context
- **PROPORTIONATE**: where the degree of force is in proportion to the circumstances;
- **NECESSARY**: if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it.
At all times, reasonable force must be the minimum necessary to prevent harm and/or reduce damage, in terms of both force and duration, and autonomy restored as soon as safe to do so.

Preventative Strategies

If a pupil is exhibiting difficult or challenging behaviour, our whole school's Behaviour Policy gives whole school guidelines on tackling the problem as does the theory and practice of Restorative techniques.

The vast majority of difficulties should be manageable without the need to resort to physical interventions.

A brief guide to de-escalation techniques.

These notes are intended as a minimum introduction to the use of de-escalation techniques and conflict resolution. As such they are neither definitive nor exhaustive.

Planning for behaviour

In the school setting things that might help to avoid challenging behaviour include:

- Adhering to the school's Behaviour Policy
- Adhering to Trauma Informed School practices
- Using Positive Behaviour Management
- Adjusting the environment (Seating arrangements etc)
- Adjusting teaching style
- Modifying curriculum delivery
- Using non-threatening facial/body expressions
- Diversions
- Use of space
- Using low, calm tones
- Physical reassurance and prompts

Defusing a challenging situation

Sometimes challenging situations can develop despite efforts to avoid them. When this happens staff must aim to do as much as possible to bring the situation under control as quickly and quietly as possible. Every attempt must be made to defuse a developing situation, responding early may avoid the need to use physical intervention.

The following are suggestions for defusing a challenging situation. They are by necessity broad generalisations. The list is not exhaustive and there will always be an exception to the rule. There is no substitute for knowing a person well and what works for them. Some of the strategies suggested stand alone, others work better in combination.

Mostly they involve the control of our own behaviour.

*Remember that everyone involved will be in a heightened state of arousal. Obvious changes such as increased heart rate and muscle tension are likely to be accompanied by less obvious changes, e.g. facial expression, eye contact, quickening of the reflexes.

*When in a challenging situation staff should make every attempt to appear calm and confident, to show self-control and control of the situation. Whether this is genuine matters less than the impression created. However, care needs to be taken to avoid appearing arrogant, challenging, aggressive or confrontational.

* The child or young person's self-esteem and dignity should be considered at all times.

- *Hesitation and sudden movements should be avoided. Movement needs to be slow and purposeful.
- *Allow the pupil to save face by giving them an escape route. Token concessions can work, admit they have a point.
- *Personal boundaries of approximately one to three metres should be respected, unless approaching the person seems helpful.
- *Speech and other forms of communication should remain as normal as possible i.e. quiet and clear.
- *Aggressive or overtly defensive postures should be avoided.
- *Avoid excessive eye contact and remember that the pupil may not want to engage in eye contact – do not make this an issue.
- *Nervous laughter should be avoided. Never suggest anger or disgust. A neutral or empathic facial expression is safest.
- *Take the discussion with the pupil to somewhere away from the peer group, but not away from a third party otherwise you may be vulnerable.
- *Deferring potential discipline and having time out to reflect can help to defuse situations.

Responsive Strategies

There are occasions when there is a need for immediate and direct interventions. For example to prevent a pupil from running across a busy road or to prevent self-injury. The Welsh Assembly Government Framework states

‘ Where emergency situations arise, the welfare, safety and health needs of both individuals and professionals need to be protected. Any action taken needs to be properly recorded for accountability and lesson learning purposes. The management of such situations must be open to scrutiny.’

For some pupils, who frequently display challenging behaviours, then the potential need for physical interventions can be planned for, and communicated, in an Individual Behaviour Plan, ensuring that staff, pupils and parents / carers are aware of the potential use. (Appendix A)

Circumstances justifying the use of Positive Handling and Physical

Intervention

Reasonable force (see definition) can be used in the following circumstances:

- violence directed towards others arising from panic, distress or confusion
- self-directed violence or self injury;
- where there is a developing risk of significant damage to property
- where a crime is being/likely to be committed

Acceptable use of Physical Intervention

Ideally this should only be used by staff who have had adequate and appropriate accredited training. Currently in Ysgol Bryn Gwalia there are 2 staff members, this is going to be rolled out to all teaching staff over the Academic year.

It is recognized that there may be situations where untrained staff need to act and use Restrictive Physical Intervention. Examples of this might be the use of:

- physically interposing between pupils
- standing in the way of a pupil
- leading a pupil away from an incident by the hand or by gentle pressure on the centre of the back

Forms of physical intervention that should not be used are:

- holding face down on the ground
- holding round the neck or any other hold that might restrict breathing
- kicking, slapping or punching
- forcing limbs against joints (e.g. arm locks)
- tripping or holding by the hair or ear
- any technique reliant on pain

Actions following the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention.

1. All incidents when Positive Handling or Physical Intervention techniques are used must be recorded as soon as possible. The following information (as a minimum) must be detailed on an incident sheet/CPOMS or book together with written statements of witnesses:
 - names of pupils involved
 - the time of the incident
 - the place where the incident occurred
 - the names of staff or other authorised adults involved

2. Where the incident has been prolonged, or where considerable force has been used, the following details must also be recorded. 'There must be a clear audit trail which is accessible to all involved, including pupils and their parents/carers and those agencies with a legal right to access such information.' (Welsh Assembly Government Framework)
 - a. names of all witnesses, pupils and adults
 - b. signed witness statements
 - c. the reason for physical intervention being used
 - d. a description of the way the incident developed;
 - e. details of the outcomes of the incident including injuries and damage
 - f. when the parent/carer was told and how
 - g. names of external agency officers who were informed

In Ysgol Bryn Gwalia these audit trail will be kept on CPOMS and then will be put in the

bound and numbered book which is kept in the Headteacher's room. A sample recording form can be found in Appendix B

3. A post incident de-brief should be held after all involved have had sufficient time to be calm. This should include the pupil so that lessons can be learned by pupils and staff. There should be a designated space and time allocated to a de-brief. Any such de-brief should be recorded. Pupils and their parents / carers 'must have clear information about how to make their views known, how to make a complaint and how to access the services of an advocate.' (Welsh Assembly Government Framework) The Young People's Partnership is developing guidance for young people on where and from whom they can receive support if they wish to make a complaint.

Access to counsellors is available for Y5/6 pupils.

Investigating Complaints about the use of Positive Handling and

Physical Intervention

Complaints procedures

1. After an incident in a school, there is always the possibility of a formal complaint. A number of persons might feel aggrieved by the incident, whether they are pupils, parents, teachers, other employees, or even visitors to the school and members of the public. Any of these persons can lodge a complaint and expect it to be investigated diligently and fairly. As a precursor to such a possibility, headteachers should be aware of the need to review and monitor the reactions of all parties involved in an incident, and to consider the effects on current school policies, and have a total awareness and understanding of all aspects of the case.

Receiving and noting a complaint

The general complaints procedure adopted by the governing body must always be followed and it must include the following elements:

- A pupil wishing to complain should be treated courteously and without prejudice and be requested to write the complaint in his or her own words. In the event that the pupil has difficulty with writing, or cannot write fluently, or where English is not the first language, a member of staff not involved in the incident should record the complaint, verify and read through with the pupil, and ask the pupil to sign and date the report where possible. The pupil must be given clear information on how to access the services of an advocate.
- If a complaint is received which alleges some form of abuse or injury, whether inflicted during the use of Positive Handling and Physical Intervention or not, the headteacher or designated person must record the complaint in writing. This recorded information must include where and when the incident occurred. It should include as much detail of the alleged injuries or abuse as possible.

Cases that do not involve allegations or suspicions of abuse

In these cases, the headteacher will need to ensure that all appropriate evidence is considered. If, having examined all the facts, the headteacher is satisfied that there are no child protection concerns, s(he)

must deal with the matter as part of the school's agreed policy on the use of Positive Handling and Physical Intervention.

If the headteacher concludes that the course of action taken during the incident complied with the school's policies as approved by the Governing Body, and the local authority guidelines and directives, and that in the circumstances there was no other reasonable course of action available, or no case to answer, then the following actions must be undertaken:

- notify the complainant of the outcome of the investigation
- notify the pupil's parents or guardians, or responsible person or agency, of the outcome of the investigation
- notify the Director of Lifelong Learning and Chair of Governing Body
- record the outcome of the investigation, sign the record of the incident, ensuring a copy is placed on the appropriate file
- consider whether any disciplinary action is required against the member of staff or pupil involved. If so, this will be pursued in accordance with approved school policies on discipline and behaviour

Cases involving allegations, or suspicions, of abuse

In those cases where there is an allegation, or suspicion, that a member of staff has abused a child or young person, referral must be made to Social Services or the Police.

In these cases, headteachers should avoid carrying out their own investigation into complaints, other than those essential to determine whether or not the matter should be dealt with under the Child Protection Procedures.

Children Looked After

The Welsh Assembly Government Framework gives the following guidance.

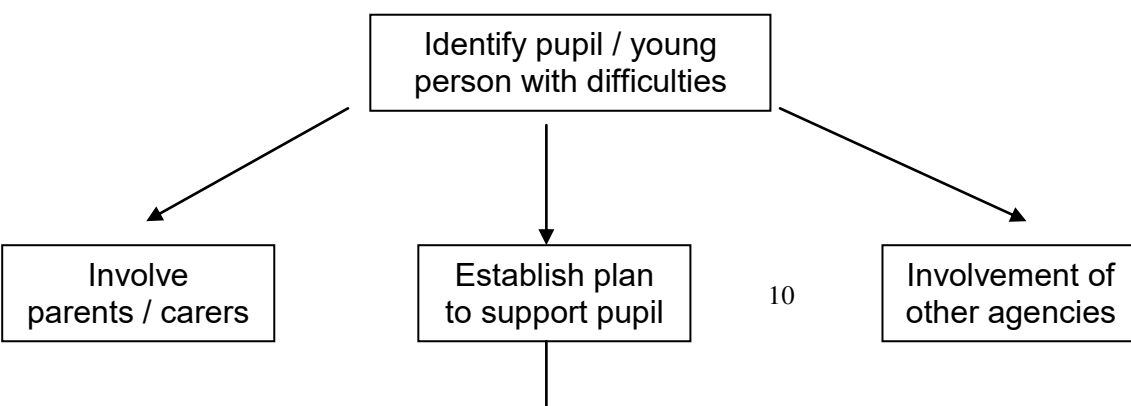
‘Any child looked after should have relevant information around the possible use of restrictive physical intervention made available to them as well as information about the complaints system and the support available from an

advocate.

If restrictive physical intervention has been used, it should be discussed during any statutory review process when considering if a placement is able to meet a child's needs and this discussion should be reflected in the child's care plan. There should be a clear written record of these events in the social work file in accordance with the authorities recording procedures.'

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually or before if there is a change in legislation.

Positive Handling and Physical Intervention



APPENDIX A

Behaviour Plan

Name _____
Group _____

Year

Date of Plan _____ Review Date _____

Risk

Disruption Aggression Damage to property Fighting Violence and
 Absconding Impulsive / Dangerous Self Harm

Additional information (include any information relating to the safety of the individual and others)

What might happen? (Describe any triggers and behaviour seen)

Preferred supportive and intervention strategies.

Verbal Advice and Support		Distraction		Time Out	
Take Up Time		C.A.L.M.		Supportive Touch	
Negotiation		Withdrawal		Planned Ignoring	
Limited Choices		Humour			
Reminder of Consequences		Change Face			
Success Reminders		Reassurance			

Other

(it is preferable to divert negative attention please note here any proven strategies / subjects of conversation which build bridges with the student).

APPENDIX B

**Ysgol Bryn Gwalia
Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Form**

Log No:

Name _____

Year

Date _____

Time _____

Time Span (mins)

Location _____

Activity

Report compiled by _____

Name(s) of staff involved:

Name(s) of witnesses (staff)

Name(s) of witnesses (pupils)

Incident book completed yes/no

Reason for intervention

Immediate danger to: pupil other pupil(s) Member(s) of staff

To avoid damage to property To prevent or disrupt a criminal act

Behaviour prejudicial to good order In response to a known trigger

Antecedents (a brief description of events leading up to the incident / behaviour)

Behaviour

persistent refusal verbally abusive disruption to lesson

property damage pushing kicking hitting spitting

head butting self-harm biting other (give details below)

.....

De-escalation techniques used:

Help Script/ verbal advice and support reassurance distraction
changing face option/get out with dignity offered
limited choices offered time out planned ignoring
choices boundaries and consequences other

.....

Can you explain why the above did not have a positive effect?

.....

Intervention strategies used:

None Escort Help Hug Friendly hold Single elbow
Figure 4 Double Elbow Shield other strategy

.....

Total duration of all holds (mins):

Effectiveness of holds:

.....

Who held which body
part.....

Were de-escalation techniques used prior to hold yes/ no

Has a debrief taken place for the student(s) involved yes/no

Medical Intervention

Checked by first aider yes / no

Details

.....

Injury to student yes/no

Nature of injury

.....

Is referral to GP necessary? yes/no

Injury to others

Checked by first aider yes / no

Details

.....

Nature of injury

Is referral to GP necessary? yes/no

To whom was the incident reported?

Reported to Time

Where physical intervention strategies have been used the compiler should record the incident in the bound and numbered book. This book is to be found with Headteacher or Deputy. Parents should be informed at this stage.

Monitoring by appropriate personnel—Head, Deputy, Assistant Head

Was sufficient/appropriate de-escalation undertaken? []

Were there grounds for use of physical control? []

Were approved physical controls used? []

Has appropriate/sufficient post incident action been taken? []

Is the record keeping comprehensive and complete? []

Were all relevant people informed? []

Were there any staff/pupil complaints about the incident? []

Other comments:

Signed: _____ Date:

Head Teacher's monitoring

Parents informed Name: _____ Time: _____ Date:

Parental comments: _____

Any further action taken :

Head Teacher to sign that the above is completed appropriately and that appropriate action/consequence has been taken.

Signed

****Incidents of use of restrictive physical intervention should be monitored to check whether regular patterns of the particular intervention techniques are emerging. Continued use of any interventions should be subject to review.**