Cranham Church of England (VA) Primary School

Positive Handling policy

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Introduction and key principles

Behaviour is always a form of communication. Understanding that children are communicating through their behaviour gives adults the opportunity to respond differently. When children feel valued, respected and have their needs met, this reduces the need to use challenging behaviour to communicate. Punishing a child for a behaviour may stop the behaviour for the moment, but it does not give the child support or provide alternate ways to act in difficult situations. When adults help children find positive ways to communicate their needs to others, children learn important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their life.

At Cranham Primary we are committed to a positive Behaviour (and Conduct) Policy which encourages children tomake positive behaviour choices, based on our Christian values. On rare occasions, circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention from staff.

Our policy for physical intervention is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed;
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required;
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned;
- Ideally, only those who have received appropriate training will use physical intervention;
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible;
- Parents/Carers will be informed on the day of the incident.

Purpose of policy

At Cranham Primary, we believe everyone has a right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity;
- Learn and work in a safe environment;
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils and their parents have a right to:

- Individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their careand protection;
- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- Be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school.

Managing challenging behaviour

Cranham also recognises that there is a need, reflected in common law, to physically intervene when there is an obvious risk to the safety of children, staff and property. This applies both on and off site. If used at all, the use of force to control or restrain pupils will be used in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the child in order to ensure minimal risk of injury to children and staff.

The Legal Framework Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows 'teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Headteacher who have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Causing injury to his/herself or others;
- Committing an offence;
- Damaging property;
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention. Staff should understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm and supportive, especially when dealing with children who may have emotional and behavioural needs, which may increase their aggression. All staff should understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour, as well as the behaviour itself.

If a child is behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every non-physical strategy will be used to manage the behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation. Staff should view physical intervention with a child as a 'last resort' and for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment.

Use of physical restraint

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allows the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. Teachers should apply the training they receive to de-escalate where possible then use the appropriate holds as practised in the training. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

When physical restraint becomes necessary:

Do:

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why;
- Use the minimum force necessary;
- Involve another member of staff if possible;
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition);
- Use simple and clear language;
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow;
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance.

Do Not:

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control);
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil;
- Involve other pupils in the restraint;
- Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct;
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint;
- Bend fingers or pull hair;
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck;
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil;
- Use physical restraint or intervention as a punishment.

Further Guidelines

Refusal of a pupil to remain in a particular place is not enough on its own to justify force. It would be justifiable where allowing a pupil to leave would entail serious risks to the pupil's safety (taking into account age and understanding), to the safety of other pupils or staff, or of damage to property.

- The procedure for restrictive physical intervention set out below must always be followed: Give the child clear warning.
- Offer an escape route from the situation, for example, through calming or following instructions;
- Once the restrictive physical intervention is judged necessary it should happen quickly, smoothly and confidently;
- Always remain calm and talk in a conciliatory tone. Ignore any abuse and let the high emotional state run its course;
- Once things begin to calm, it can be coupled with significant changes in restrictive physical intervention, this should be on staff terms, not when demanded by the child;
- The aim is to talk through the situation and discuss the behaviour that caused the wholeepisode;

The extent of force used should be no more than necessary to control the situation.

Actions after an incident

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Headteacher should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and willtake responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved, and any victims of the incident should be offered support. The parents/carers will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies. This may require additional support from other services. In some circumstances a My Plan or My Plan+ may be appropriate to help identify an additional need for a particular child.

Reporting

All incidents should be recorded immediately on the school's safeguarding system, My Concern. The report should be sufficiently detailed, so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed. For example, details of the events leading up to the incident should be included. In the event of any future complaint or allegation, this record will provide essential and accurate information. This may also be used in order to inform individual and school risk assessments.

Contact with parents

A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why,and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

Follow-up with pupil(s)

The child/young person and the member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered to anyone who requires it, or medical treatment obtained. The child or young person will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise them. When the child regains complete composure, a senior member of staff will discuss the incident with the child and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence.

The child will be given the opportunity to explain things from their point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the child and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident. In cases where it is not possible to speak to the pupil on the same day as the incident occurred, the debrief will take place as soon as possible after the child returns to school.

The circumstances and nature of the physical intervention will be held on the record of the student involved. The DSL will inform any necessary agencies/authorities (eg. LADO) of the physical intervention in accordance with DFE and LA guidance. It is also expected that the child's Social Worker be informed if they are being supported by Social Care. For the safeguarding of both staff and student, any subsequent investigation of the situation/incident should be undertaken by a member of staff other than the one applying the physical intervention.

Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive and/or challenging way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

• Strategies to be used prior to intervention;

• Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known;

• Involvement of parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;

• Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking;

• Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

Parents/carers should be informed of the school's policy regarding positive handling and their behaviour policy. Staff who work with particular children who have learning or physical disabilities (and who have Individual Education Plans, Individual Behaviour Plans and/or Pastoral Support Plans), may need to use specific techniques routinely to manage challenging behaviour. Such arrangements must be discussed with parents/carers in advance on an individual basis using positive handling plans. All interventions will be routinely recorded and monitored with the expectation that steps are taken to reduce the number of restrictive physical interventions year on year.

Complaints and Allegations

A clear restraint policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. In the unlikely event of a dispute about the use of force bya member of staff, a full investigation will take place, either under the complaints policy, or through the allegation management procedures.