



Positive Handling Policy

Version Number: 1

Applies To:

- APTCCO Charity Services
- APTCCO Independent Special School
- APTCCO Short Breaks
- APTCCO Out of School Activities

Associated Documents:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health & Safety policy
- Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Relational Support Policy

Related Regulations:

- › [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- › [Independent School Standards](#)
- › [Nottinghamshire Knives and Weapons Guidance 2022](#)
- › [Behaviour and discipline in schools](#)
- › [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- › [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- › [Supporting students with medical conditions at school](#)

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Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

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Chair of Board of Trustees/Governing Board

Date 5/12/24

Touch and the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention for all Staff working with Children & Young People

Policy and Guidance for Staff at A Place To Call Our Own

Context

A Place To Call Our Own (APTCOO) is an independent special school for young people aged 5 to 19. Our school offers a warm and welcoming environment where a positive education allows our young people to experience success. Our ethos is the belief that a positive, supportive, and nurturing culture is essential for creating a thriving school that meets the needs of the young people that it serves. We believe children and young people need an understanding environment in which to rediscover success, self-belief and re-engage with learning.

Prior to coming to APTCOO it has been identified that our young people have not been able to make progress in either mainstream or special schools and need the specialised nurturing environment that APTCOO provides. These are often young people at the highest level of need, who will have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that identifies but is not limited to neurodiversity, social, emotional, and mental health needs and/or early life trauma.

Introduction

At A Place To Call Our Own we believe that children and young people need to be safe, know how to behave, and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of children and young people the use of restrictive physical intervention may be needed, and, on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention will be used.

The majority of children and young people behave well and work collaboratively to meet the expectations of our school. We have a responsibility to operate an effective relational (behaviour) policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in regard to the whole school, each class, and individual children and young people.

All of our school staff need to feel able to manage inappropriate risk and behaviour, and to have an understanding of what and how challenging behaviours might be communicated. They need to know what the options open to them are, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Definition of 'restrictive physical intervention'

The Law allows for staff and other persons authorised by the Head teacher to use Restrictive Physical Intervention to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following: -

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at APTCOO

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Head teacher has to, in specific circumstances, use “reasonable force” to control or restrain children and young people. There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

1. the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident make it necessary to intervene.
2. the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self- injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

It is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order except in an emergency, for example where the use of a locked room is a temporary measure while seeking assistance. Where there is significant danger in a situation, if possible, contain rather than restrain.

When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate in A Place To Call Our Own

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical management may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain children and young people may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and children and young people is an important consideration. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

Who may use restrictive physical intervention at A Place To Call Our Own

The staff are authorised by the Head teacher to have control of children and young people and must be aware of this Policy and its implications.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing children and young people and themselves is the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify

what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the children and young people.

Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions in A Place To Call Our Own

Staff will use force which is reasonable in the circumstances that is believed to be necessary to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows: -

Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions

Staff will only use it when there are reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary. The safety of all children at APTCOO and the staff team will be balanced with the best interests of the child.

Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child or young person

Force will only be used where it is necessary as a last resort and then in a way which is proportionate to the risk in the immediate circumstances.

Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was in keeping with the incident

Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses

As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control

A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy or an Individual Education/Behaviour Plan

Escalation will be avoided, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable

The age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account

In developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance

procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing children and young people and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times

Acceptable forms of intervention at A Place To Call Our Own

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children and young people for a variety of reasons, for example:

To comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age) - to gently direct a pupil- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc)- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or children and young people.

In rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

In all situations where physical contact between staff and children and young people takes place, staff must consider the following:

- The pupil's age and level of understanding
- The pupil's individual characteristics and history
- The location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

Physical contact is never made as a punishment. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil.

Elevated levels of risk are associated with:

- Holding someone who is lying on the floor or forcing them onto the floor
- Any procedure which restricts breathing or impedes the airways

Developing a positive handling plan at A Place To Call Our Own

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.

The plan will include:

- Any medical conditions or known injuries which the child has which could preclude the use of certain physical interventions or inform a team about decisions they make during an incident.
- Involve parents/carers and children and young people to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- A risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- A record needs to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- Managing the pupil, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention is to be used
- Identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil

- Ensuring a system to summon additional support
- Identifying training needs

Guidance and training for staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. In A Place To Call Our Own this is arranged at a number of levels including:

- Awareness for governors, staff and parents
- Behaviour management for all staff
- Managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff
- Specific training on Restrictive Physical Intervention techniques - relevant staff

Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we could avoid the need for complaints. All disputes that arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to the published Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Physical Intervention: Procedures for Planned Interventions

1. The person responsible for authorising staff to use restrictive physical intervention as part of a structured and planned intervention within this school is the headteacher.
2. The person responsible for ensuring that all planned use of restrictive physical intervention is risk assessed is the headteacher.
3. Copies of all individual risk assessments are held in the learners' files and are reviewed after every use of positive handling and termly.
4. As of 30th of August 2024, the staff who are authorised to use reasonable force in planned restrictive physical interventions are listed on APTCOO's training matrix. No other person should engage in a planned intervention unless trained.
5. Only those trained in appropriate techniques within the last twenty four months may be authorised. The person responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided, including regular updates, is the Headteacher.
6. Training records are held on the training matrix that can be found on SharePoint.
7. Those not involved in risk assessment but whose roles include the supervision of children may use reasonable force in an emergency unplanned intervention where it is necessary to prevent a serious injury from occurring, but only ever as a last resort and in order to maintain safety for all.
8. Every use of restrictive physical intervention is to be reported the same day to the Head teacher or a member of the SLT if the Head teacher is off- site. The Head teacher or SLT will ensure that a parent of the child who has had force used against them is notified that day.
9. In addition, the details of each use of physical intervention must be recorded on the Pupil Incident Report Form that is held on SharePoint. The person leading the planned or unplanned intervention must complete this form. The head teacher will review every use of physical intervention.
10. Where an injury needs reporting to the HSE this will be the responsibility of the Headteacher
11. Any positive handling reports will be shared with the board of trustees on a termly basis to ensure full transparency and to identify any trends and concerns.
12. Concerns will be investigated by the Headteacher, the SLT and the board of Trustees.

****This policy has been adopted following on from the Dynamis Positive Handling Training for staff (30th of August 2024) ****

