



Poplar Adolescent Unit Education Provision

Positive Handling & Physical Intervention Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Any policy on physical intervention is best placed within the Behaviour Policy; it will be part of a graded response, and needs to be agreed in consultation with staff, Management Committee, parents/carers, and students. It also connects to, and should be consistent with, policies on Health and Safety, Child Protection /Safeguarding, Equal Opportunities, and Pastoral Care.

This policy, therefore, should be read in conjunction with:

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [Behaviour and discipline in schools](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)

It is also based on the [special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) code of practice](#).

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- Sections 88-94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which require schools to regulate pupils' behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, and give schools the authority to confiscate pupils' property
- [DfE guidance](#) explaining that maintained schools should publish their behaviour policy online

Reducing Restrictive Practice Framework 2019 - 2021 'Working to improve lives' EPUT (NHS)
Therapeutic and safe interventions and de-escalations (TASID) April 2020 – MARCH 2022
5 Day Team Workbook & Journal

Essex County Council Guidance on the use of physical intervention, including other physical contact in all education establishments in Essex Local Authority Autumn 2018

Poplar Education Child Protection Policy (2020)

Poplar Education Behaviour Policy (2020)

Poplar Education Anti-Bullying Policy (2020)

Behaviour and safety at Poplar Adolescent Unit is outstanding. Staff, students and parents form very positive relationships and, in general, our students interact with others in a very positive manner. For the majority of our students physical intervention/restraint will never be required.

In Poplar Adolescent Unit we believe that students need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of students will the use of physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

The majority of students behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have a responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual students.

All school staff need to feel that they can manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicated. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, 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 student is the subject of a physical intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Whenever Restrictive Physical Intervention takes place it is logged on Datix, the Trust's incident reporting system.

1. DEFINITION OF "RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION"

"Restrictive Physical Intervention" is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a student's behaviour. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Head of Education has to use "reasonable force" to control or restrain students in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria:

- To prevent a student from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the student is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
- To prevent a student from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a student from causing serious damage to property (*including the student's own property*)
- To stop the student from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school.

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;

- 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 (eg splints on the student 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.

2. WHEN THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS MAY BE APPROPRIATE IN POPLAR ADOLESCENT UNIT.

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 handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain students 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 students are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

3. WHO MAY USE RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN POPLAR ADOLESCENT UNIT SCHOOL

Staff who have successfully undertaken the Trust's **Therapeutic and Safe Interventions De-escalation (TASID) Training** are authorised by the head of education to have control of students, and **must** be aware of this Policy and its implications. However, non-inclusion on this list does not mean that an adult is necessarily barred from using physical intervention. If the Head has lawfully placed an adult in charge of students then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other students and themselves from risky situations may be 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 students.

Names of Authorised staff:

All ward staff have completed TASID training.

Val Scott, Head of education, key teachers Charlotte Baulch, Clare Varley and David Lumsden, and HLTA, Laura Carter undertake TASID training.

All other education staff have yearly 'Personal Education' refreshers to ensure familiarity with de-escalation, safe 'breakaway' from dangerous situations and first aid.

4. PLANNING FOR THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS IN POPLAR ADOLESCENT UNIT

Staff will use the minimum force needed 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.
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met.
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the student's and/or other students' best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The student will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to 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 student 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.
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable.
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual student will always be considered.
- In developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each student's circumstance.
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing students 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.

5. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF INTERVENTION IN POPLAR ADOLESCENT UNIT SCHOOL

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

- To comfort a student in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
- To gently direct a student;
- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc);
- In an emergency to avert danger to the student or students;
- In rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.

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

- The student's age and level of understanding;

- The student'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, or to inflict pain. 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 student. [Should a student appear to **enjoy** physical contact this must not be sought via Restrictive Physical Intervention.]

6. DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND AUDITED NEED IN POPLAR ADOLESCENT UNIT

If a student is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then an individual risk management plan and audited need form will be completed. This Plan will help the student 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:

- Involving parents/carers and students 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** to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used.
- Techniques for managing the student's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used.
- Identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the student.
- Ensuring a system to summon additional support – use to be made of 'Pin Point' or mobile phone/radio.
- Identifying training needs through the 'lessons learnt' section of Datix.
- Advice on handling may be required for students with particular medical needs. This advice can be given by the Trust's TASID trainers

7. GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR STAFF

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. In Poplar Adolescent Unit. this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:

- Awareness of issues for Management Committee members, staff and parents,
- Behaviour management techniques for all staff
- Managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff.
- Training in practical techniques of physical intervention has not, until recently, been required for Education staff as their level of expertise in de-escalation and care has meant that it is not a significant risk within the Education Centre. On the rare occasion it has been needed then the Rapid team have been alerted by the Pinpoint alarm or else an early warning to ward staff

has enabled staff to assist in returning to the ward to pre-empt the need for physical restraint.

- The head of Education has been TASID trained as he currently spends a significant time on the ward where there is a higher risk of more challenging behaviour.
- All Education staff are trained each year in Personal Safety techniques to help keep themselves from physical harm and most recently all full-time staff are TASID trained.
- Such training is provided by an approved instructor.
- *(NB staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training; but they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).*

8. COMPLAINTS

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