

Green Lane School



Positive handling policy

Headteacher: Mrs Joanne Mullineux
Green Lane School
Woolston Learning Village
Holes Lane Woolston
Warrington WA1 4LS
Tel: 01925 811534

Reviewed in: September 2023

Introduction

Positive Handling refers to the range of positive behaviour support strategies employed by staff at Green Lane School which emphasise de-escalation, risk and restraint reduction.

We acknowledge that at times some of our pupils display behaviours that could put themselves or others at risk and that we need to intervene to reduce this risk.

Training

At Green Lane we have invested in training 4 staff as Team Teach tutors, two advanced and two intermediate. Having experienced Team Teach tutors on our staff ensures the highest level of proactive and reactive support for all pupils and staff. Having our own dedicated tutors allows us to offer training, refreshers and workshops at regular intervals throughout the year. We endeavour to provide training for all permanent members of staff as soon as possible when they start work with us. The training is updated every two years.

Team Teach tutors will offer workshops throughout the year for accredited staff who wish to update up on their physical and non-physical techniques. Physical intervention is rarely used, so this enables staff to up to date in case the need for physical intervention is required. There are also professional development opportunities through Teaching and Learning Clinics timetabled throughout the year.

The aim of the Team Teach training is to support adults' understanding and management of challenging behaviour teaching physical techniques within a holistic de-escalation approach, in order to encourage the promotion of socially acceptable behaviours for all concerned. Team Teach focusses on 95% de-escalation and 5% risk reduction/physical intervention. The Team Teach ethos of holistic behaviour support runs through Green Lane.

All staff on site have a duty of care to support and act appropriately to keep all children safe. Where physical intervention is required, a permanent, Team Teach trained member of Green Lane staff should be the member of staff who supports the pupil in question/crisis. We realise that at some points, pupils may be being supported by temporary contracted and or supply staff. Where a pupil is unsafe, all staff act within their duty of care. If a permanent Team Teach trained member of staff is not in the immediate vicinity, all members of staff should act under their duty of care, which may result in them having to support a pupil through physical intervention. Where this happens, a call for a Green Lane Team Teach

trained member of staff should be sent out immediately, with the member of staff taking over as soon as possible.

Team Teach Advanced techniques (Ground holds): We currently have two advanced Team Teach tutors. Previously we have delivered emergency training in advanced ground hold techniques to a small number of staff. This training is now out of date and is not required for any pupils currently at Green Lane. Should a positive handling situation arise where all other techniques have been exhausted and are no longer safe, only the Headteacher, Deputy Head or Head of Behaviour (advanced TT tutor) are permitted to authorise an official ground hold technique, which will only be delivered or directed by Advanced Team Teach tutors. In an emergency situation, other Team Teach trained staff (Intermediate Tutors and Level 2 trained) can support under the direction of advanced tutors. Should this situation ever arise, appropriate training will be delivered promptly following this.

Principles

At Green Lane we believe that the use of positive touch is a vital aspect of our nurturing role and that adult physical contact is not only inevitable but desirable. Some pupils will require positive touch as part of their everyday routines, such as holding hands, linking arms or being guided in the correct direction.

We understand that at times Physical Intervention is required as the last resort. This will usually be when other de-escalation attempts have been unsuccessful and physical intervention is required to keep people or property safe. All restrictive physical intervention is used as an absolute last resort.

Physical Intervention and restraint is an emotive topic and the experience of physical intervention can be stressful for all concerned. For this reason, key principles of any use of physical intervention should be that it is:

Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary.

Staff need to be clear why physical intervention and the type of intervention used were reasonable (ie: best interests of the child), proportionate (ie: was used as a last resort and not as a first point of call), and necessary (ie: to prevent people or property from coming to harm.)

Planning

Any child requiring positive handling should have a Positive Behaviour Plan (PBP) in the agreed school format. This should include information on:

- Background of the child – what information do we have about the child that could colour their feelings and emotions upon arriving in school and affect their ability to be a successful learner
- Warning Signals/Trigger behaviours – what behaviour or characteristics does the child display when they are unsettled or anxious – the early stages of a crisis
- Our responses – how do we respond to the child when they are displaying these initial behaviours? What de-escalation techniques do we try to attempt to calm the situation?
- Appropriate holds – what holds have proved effective in the past? Are there any holds inappropriate to use with this particular child for medical or other reasons?

All behaviour plans are regularly reviewed by class teams and is a 'working document'. In addition to this:

- Class teams and other relevant staff will have read this document.
- These plans are reviewed by M. Gaskell (Head of Behaviour), as well as other relevant members of SLT.
- After any 'crisis' incident or use of any physical intervention, plans are reviewed immediately, including any updates.
- These plans highlight how positive behaviour support is implemented and how a 'crisis'/physical intervention should be supported and avoided.
- If appropriate to the individual, these plans state how any physical or restrictive intervention is an absolute last resort and how supports should be followed to prevent this from being needed.
- Staff are trained to follow Team Teach principles and protocols, with a focus on de-escalation.
- The 'Regulate, Relate, Reason' approach is followed by all staff.
- Incidents are recorded on Behaviour Watch and monitored and analysed by M. Gaskell (Head of Behaviour), as well as other relevant members of SLT.
- Incidents are discussed with parents/carers, including any physical or restrictive intervention.

We also need to consider what happens after physical intervention. We need to:

- Outline strategies to help the child recover
- Record what we should do if the child is depressed or worried following an incident – how can we support them through this stage?
- Rebuild the relationship – relationships can be improved, damaged or stay the same after physical intervention. We want to improve the relationship so it is vital that we take the time to explain why physical intervention was necessary and help the child to find more appropriate ways of expressing their feelings in future.

Use of the Quiet Room

The use of the Quiet Room is to be treated as seriously as the use of other restrictive physical interventions. Its use should be assessed against each individual pupil, as pupils may respond differently to these types of supportive spaces. A pupil's past experiences should also be explored/discussed prior to its planned use to avoid any previous or new traumas. With that in mind, any pupil making use of the Quiet Room should have that information recorded on their Positive Behaviour Plan (PBP) and or Behaviour Support Profile (BSP). It should also include clear information on how this room is to be used with the pupil in question, including timings, how to monitor, de-escalation strategies, and how to avoid getting to the point where the room's use is needed.

When considering the use of the Quiet Room, important legal definitions include:

- Seclusion – forcing individuals to spend time alone against their will;
- Time out – restricting positive reinforcement as part of a planned behavioural programme;
- Withdrawal – removed from the situation but observed and supported until they are ready to resume.

The Quiet Room at Green Lane is part of a holistic approach to behaviour management. Its use should always be planned for and the aim is to support pupils in learning to regulate their own behaviour. Its use in this way, should be explicitly taught proactively through co-regulation strategies and in a positive way. It is a space where pupils can withdraw themselves to, or be directed to in order to self-regulate. Pupils using the Quiet Room must be closely monitored at all times. A member of staff should be present at all times. Although there is no door on the school's quiet room, this guidance also applies to other classrooms and spaces in and around the school site. A member of staff should always be present in the immediate space/room, unless it is unsafe or jeopardises the regulation of the pupil in question. No pupil should ever have a door or gate closed on them, so that they are then forced to be secluded in a room or space, unless it is an absolute emergency. In any such emergency, the PH co-ordinator and or another member of SLT should be notified immediately. Pupils may choose to close a door or gate to support their own regulation, which should be monitored at all times, however this should be avoided. No pupil should be forced to stay in such a room or space, unless in an emergency and or if they are at risk of harm to themselves, others, property, and or 'good order' of the school.

Due to its location on the corridor, the Quiet Room is sometimes a suitable place to withdraw a pupil who is posing a significant risk of harm to themselves or others, where they can be safely supported using PH techniques. The Quiet Room should not be the "go to" location for this, but it may be the nearest available space other than supporting the pupil on the corridor. In such situations staff should remain with the pupil in the Quiet Room throughout the course of the intervention and beyond. Any repeated or prolonged use of this room should be reported immediately. The Headteacher or PH co-ordinator should be informed if the Quiet Room is being used in this way so that they can monitor its use.

Recording

All incidents where restrictive Physical Intervention and quiet room use is used, must be recorded on the school's Positive Handling Incident Form on Behaviour Watch. This should detail exactly why and how positive handling techniques were applied with specific reference

to the holds used. Staff involved should be tagged and sent a copy (via automated email) of the form on Behaviour Watch and the form is to be kept indefinitely in school records.

Communication with parents

We believe our communication and transparency with parents / carers is outstanding. After all positive handling / restrictive physical intervention incidents, parents will be informed by a member of the class team either; in person, via telephone or through the pupil's home school diary. Where an RPI incident is more serious, this communication will be supported by or had by the Head of Behaviour (Advanced Team Teach tutor) or another member of the school leadership team. These actions will be documented on all positive handling forms.

Reporting of Injuries following extreme dysregulation / physically challenging behaviour

It is good practice for a member of staff to check the pupil in question for any injuries, marks or scratches after extreme dysregulation, physically challenging behaviour incident or PH incident. Any marks, scratches or injuries sustained during the course of a Positive Handling incident or physically challenging behaviour/dysregulation incident, should be recorded and the injured party should be seen by a first aider once calm. At Green Lane the care and safety of pupils is our paramount concern however we recognise the working realities when individuals are involved in incidents involving the use of force. "Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent "side-effect" of ensuring that the service user remains safe." (George Matthews, Team Teach Chairman).

Monitoring

Once a positive handling incident form has been completed it automatically alerts the pupil's key stage leader and the senior leadership team. Senior Leaders and Team Teach co-ordinators will then monitor incident forms and instigate further action as required. All positive handling forms will be electronically signed off by the Head of Behaviour, Headteacher or Deputy Head.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

The school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations which may cause the need for a physical intervention. The key principles are that any physical intervention should follow a dynamic risk assessment and be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Following any emergency responses, a positive handling incident form must be completed in the usual way. Following this, the positive behaviour plan should be created or adapted to respond to the new intervention, and a review meeting may be called to review health and safety.

Our previous response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge to settings requiring the use of physical intervention. Physical intervention has always been a last resort at Green Lane, used when all other options have been exhausted and when the safety of everyone is compromised. For this reason, the outright banning of physical intervention and a “no touch” policy are out of the question. Staff are highly trained in dynamic risk assessment and to take away the option of physical intervention could put everyone at risk of harm.

During the crisis however, a number of important safety considerations were considered. With this in mind, an emergency review of all Positive Handling Plan’s took place involving teachers, behaviour lead and SLT. These emergency reviews were conducted prior to the return of more children to school on June 8th 2020.

The reviews had a number of aims:

1. To identify pupils at high risk of restraint;
2. To identify additional safety measures required for those classes containing high risk pupils. (e.g. Visors for classes where there is an identified spitter);
3. To identify additional de-escalation options to try and further decrease the need for physical intervention;
4. To provide an opportunity for staff to review and prepare for the return of more children to school.

Pupils were based within small class bubbles with the same members of staff as much as possible. As the children are likely to be class based for the majority of their time in school, staff within class bubbles were most likely to needed to restrain. If support was required, a member of the behaviour support team was called. (Members of this team were also provided with PPE.)

Positive Handling Plans were reviewed regularly and additionally after any incident of positive handling, also involving the behaviour co-ordinator and Headteacher, making particular note of any additional risks pertaining to the spread of COVID-19.

During the review process, thought returned to our key planning principles:

- Background of the child – what information do we have about the child that could colour their feelings and emotions upon arriving in school and affect their ability to be a successful learner – is there anything specific to be aware of in the current climate?
- Warning Signals/Trigger behaviours – what behaviour or characteristics does the child display when they are unsettled or anxious – the early stages of a crisis
- Our responses – how do we respond to the child when they are displaying these initial behaviours? What de-escalation techniques do we try to attempt to calm the situation? Are there other options? Eg. evacuating rooms, making use of outdoor areas to let off steam without the need for physical support)
- Appropriate holds – what holds have proved effective in the past? Are there any holds inappropriate to use with this particular child for medical or other reasons? Would particular holds be more appropriate to protect the health and safety of all concerned – considered on an individual basis?

We also need to consider what happens after physical intervention. We need to:

- Outline strategies to help the child recover
- Record what we should do if the child is depressed or worried following an incident – how can we support them through this stage?
- Rebuild the relationship – relationships can be improved, damaged or stay the same after physical intervention. We want to improve the relationship so it is vital that we take the time to explain why physical intervention was necessary and help the child to find more appropriate ways of expressing their feelings in future. (Consideration ought to be given to any situation involving staff wearing PPE. This needs to be explained to the child so it isn't viewed as threatening.)

Reviewed and updated by: M. Gaskell

Date: September 2023

To be reviewed: September 2024