



**CALLINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**ACADEMY TRUST**

# Positive Handling Policy

The use of Positive Handling to manage physically challenging behaviour

## **Rationale**

The policy has been developed in response to Circular 10/98 "The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils", issued following the enactment of Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act. It also takes cognisance of recent DFSC and DOH letters of guidance and follows the guidance for 'The Use of Reasonable Force To Control or Restrain Pupils' issued by Cornwall Council.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other college policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the college to explain the college's arrangements for care and control. Its contents are available to parents and pupils via the College website and VLE.

## **Purpose of policy**

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our college. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our college respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in Callington Community College. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. Callington Community College acknowledges that physical techniques are only part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this college clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

## **Implications of the policy**

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550 A) stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the college or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within the college (this includes authorised out-of-college activities).
- self-injuring
- causing injury to others
- committing an offence

Individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical restraint. However, teaching and non-teaching staff work in 'loco parentis' and should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care', they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy.

The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

### **Definitions of Positive Handling**

No legal definition of reasonable force exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in Callington Community College:

- Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause. (para. 3.4 page 10 DfES Guidance ref: LEA/0242/2002 – contact DfES SEN Colleges Team)

#### **1 Physical Contact**

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, eg: in the care of pupils with learning disabilities; in games/ PE; to comfort pupils.

#### **2 Physical Intervention**

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

#### **3 Positive Physical Intervention**

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and stored in an accessible way.

The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a method of physical control.

### **Underpinning values**

Everyone attending or working in this college has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- 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 attending this college and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the college's policies;

- be informed about college rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in college;
- be informed about the college's complaints procedure.

The college will ensure that pupils are given support to understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the college.

### **Authorised staff**

In this college it is the Principal's responsibility to authorise named staff to use reasonable positive physical interventions with pupils within the context of Circular 10/98.

The college must provide training for all staff authorised by the Principal and retain a list of all those staff trained and authorised. The list is reviewed on an annual basis (or more frequently if the context requires it).

Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students or parents.

The Principal is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Principal will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those whom the Principal has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where positive physical intervention with a pupil is required.

### **Staff from the LA working within the college.**

Support Services will have their own policies for care and control of pupils. When working within college it is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that colleagues from Support Services are aware of college policy and practice.

### **Training**

It will be the responsibility of the Principal to arrange suitable training. Training for nominated staff will be made available. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of positive physical intervention without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.

Following a review of existing college practice(s), in consultation with governors/ staff and the LA, the college is committed to using Team Teach providing this approach continues to adopt the BILD Code of Practice on physical intervention.

Callington Community College acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management. The governors of the college are committed to working within the LA's framework for accessing training in that:

1. It will review its Behaviour policy on at least a two-year cycle.
2. Negotiation will take place between the Vulnerable Children's Services (including Behaviour Support Services) and the Principal and agreement will be reached in relation to the standard of behaviour management within the college before a formal application for training is made.
3. Training will be delivered on a needs based approach and procedures are in place to monitor incidents, following a behavioural audit and implementation of appropriate risk management procedures.

4. All training will include theory on at least the following:

- De-escalation
- Causes of challenging behaviour
- Prevention strategies
- Positive behaviour management
- Risk Assessment
- Behaviour Support Planning
- De-brief following incidents

Physical techniques are not treated in isolation and the college is committed to ensuring that as a result of incidents learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their behaviour.

In addition, procedures are also in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and that following an incident pupil/ staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

All the techniques used take account of a young person's:

- age,
- gender,
- level of physical, emotional and intellectual development,
- special needs,
- social context.

Also, they provide a gradual, graded system of responses.

Where appropriate, Positive Handling Plans are written for individual children and where applicable these should be in addition to any Pastoral Support Plans/IEPs.

Risk Assessments need to be completed against each child when positive handling strategies may need to be used, in the context of the identified target behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the strategies being proposed.

### **Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour**

As endorsed in the college's Behaviour Policy, staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order.

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident and in association with Circular 10/98.

Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; (this includes negotiation, care and concern).

Further verbal reprimand stating:

- that this is the second request for compliance;
- an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable;
- an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues;

- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies, if possible summon assistance from the Principal, or other staff as appropriate, by using the behaviour points system, in place throughout the college
- Physical intervention: reasonable force being used to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

### **Types of Incident**

The incidents described in Circular 10/98 fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary, in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations that fall within one of these categories: -

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;

### **Acceptable measures of physical intervention**

The college will put in place systems for managing and reviewing the following:

- Strategies for preventing the occurrence of behaviours that precipitate the use of a physical intervention.
- Strategies for 'de-escalation' or 'de-fusion' that can avert the need for a physical intervention.
- Procedures for post incident support and de-briefing for staff, children, service users and their families.

The concept of reasonable force where 'reasonableness' is determined with reference to all the circumstances, including:

1. The seriousness of the incident:
2. The relative risks arising from using a physical intervention compared with using other strategies
3. The age, cultural background, gender, stature and medical history of the student concerned
4. The application of gradually increasing or decreasing levels of force in response to the person's behaviour
5. The approach to risk assessment and risk management employed
6. The distinction between:
  - **seclusion** where an adult or child is forced to spend time alone against their will in a locked room or room which they cannot leave (NB: this is not a permissible form of control);

- **time out** which involves restricting the student's access to all positive reinforcements as part of the behavioural programme;
  - **withdrawal** which involves removing the person from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities.
7. The distinction between **planned** physical interventions (where incidents are foreseeable in that they have occurred previously and a response planned following a risk assessment) and the use of physical interventions in **emergency** situations (which cannot reasonably be anticipated)
  8. First aid procedures to be employed and those responsible for implementation in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention
  9. **Unacceptable** practices that might expose students or staff to foreseeable risk of injury or psychological distress (para 10.8 page 19 DfES Guidance. Ref:LEA/0242/2002). Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff.

Positive Handling at Callington Community College is seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the college, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

## Recording

Where positive handling strategies and/or physical control has been used a record of the incident **must** be kept. This is recorded in the Cornwall Council Team Teach incident book.

The Positive Handling Form will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, normally prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved and the Principal.

After the review of the incident, copies of Positive Handling Form will be placed on the student's file.

A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form (RIDDOR) will be completed and returned to the Local Authority in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils. Where staff have been involved in an incident involving Positive Physical Intervention with pupils they should have access to counselling and support.

## Monitoring incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive physical interventions, this will always be recorded and documented following agreed procedures. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Principal to the needs of any student(s) whose behaviour may require the use of a Positive Handling Plan and further positive handling strategies.

Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis and the results used to inform planning to meet individual pupil and college needs.

To support the Principal and the college and ensure objectivity the LA Lead officer for Positive Handling (via Vulnerable Children's Services) to the college will be involved with the monitoring process.

## **Action after an incident**

The Principal will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Review of Behaviour Programme
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- College Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff

The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/ union.

## **Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the College's Complaints Policy. If necessary, the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Procedures and/or Child Protection Procedures.

Other relevant Policies

Other relevant policies that cross reference with this one are:

Anti-bullying Policy  
Behaviour Policy  
Child Protection Policy  
Complaints Policy  
Health and Safety Policy

