


**Behaviour and Positive handling policy at Cherry Lane Primary School SRP
Working with challenging behaviour, physical restraint interventions and the use of
sanctions policy.**

Cherry Lane Primary School		
Headteacher	N. Tranter	
Date policy formulated	January 2024	
Policy approved by	Governors	
Date of next review	Jan 2025 (subject to DFE review of procedure)	

Introduction

The SRP at Cherry Lane Primary School aims to keep children with ASD and complex needs in mainstream schools and return children to a mainstream setting within a limited time period. To enable this to happen the children need to feel safe enough both physically and emotionally to risk reacting, responding and relating in different ways to enable change. For low level behavioural concerns the mainstream behaviour policy is followed. Everything done in the unit (TEACCH, structure, simplified language, understanding particularly how autism affects each of our pupils, differentiation, social stories, SCERTS) is calculated to make understanding easier for our autistic pupils, alleviate their stress, bring them to calm-alert state, reduce stressed behaviours, this is then repeated as much as possible in their mainstream classes.

It may be decided that the school behaviour policy and matrix is appropriate for some of our pupils. This will be agreed with SRP staff and SLT on a pupil by pupil basis.

This policy is intended to help staff carry out tasks to create and maintain a safe environment. This includes working with challenging behaviour, maintaining a nurturing environment and ensuring good order and discipline. Staff are trained to apply the knowledge we have about autism to understand the behaviour as communication, in order to understand the anxiety a child may be experiencing, and how to learn from it.

The SRP staff have been trained in ‘Team Teach’ which is a system that promotes positive handling and follows the guidance of the ‘Use of reasonable force 2013 DoF’. This term is used to cover a wide spectrum of risk reduction strategies. It includes an integrative holistic approach involving training, policy and guidance, management of the environment and the deployment of staff. If reasonable force is deemed necessary only staff who have received the Team Teach training will become involved.

At the SRP we believe that all behaviour is a communication and we are committed to exploring and understanding the meaning of this communication for each child. We recognise the national figures of huge over representation in terms of autistic children being excluded and make every effort not to follow that trend. 95% of positive handling does not involve physical intervention but in some circumstances this is necessary to ensure the safety of the child and others. The preventative component of Team Teach is of paramount importance, encouraging staff to distract and discuss alternatives choices. This is done through:

- Adults showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.
- Follow each child's individualised behaviour risk assessment plan.

The underlying belief of the SRP is that children are most likely to behave well when:

- Expectations are clear and achievable;
- They feel valued and cared for;
- They receive regular praise and positive feedback;
- They feel they are being successful;
- They feel understood

We encourage good patterns of behaviour by using

- non-verbal signals
- positive verbal comments and praise
- positive discussions with parents at the end of the day
- giving children responsibility
- sharing positive aspects with others
- awarding certificates and stickers
- recognition at celebration assembly
- class privileges
- allowing movement breaks and OT intervention when deemed necessary

The SRP uses a reflective approach to supporting the child to learn to regulate their emotions and manage their own behaviour. Each child has a first chance and a second chance to make the right choice with their behaviour and dojos are awarded (with those who understand this) for positive behaviour choices and personal targets.

A visual traffic light system is used so the child can see their first and second chance go without the use of language, as the processing of language can be even more limited when they are highly anxious. If their behaviour continues or they have hurt, used swear words or damaged property, then they are expected to have a reflection time which can be in the POD should they choose this. Sometimes this choice is made for them due to the safety of other children or themselves. This is time to allow the child to stop and think about what they are doing and to calm down. The length of time is individual to the child and how much time they need in order to self regulate. Some children will need assistance with this and this will be offered.

Once the child has had calming time, and we recognise that scientific evidence shows that an autistic child is likely to take much longer to return to a calm-alert state once aroused than a non-autistic child, they have the opportunity to talk through events with an adult to help them understand what has happened and to hopefully take responsibility for their actions. The child is then expected to 'make it better'. This reparation is about rebuilding relationships and

fixing any damage where possible. The rationale for this is that children will learn that when something goes wrong we can make it better and feel better in themselves for doing so.

Important Statement:

As a general rule nobody has the right to touch, move, hold or contain another person. **However**, people with a duty of care (such as staff at the SRP), operate in exceptional circumstances where it is sometimes necessary to act outside the norm. Whenever they do so they should be clear about why it is NECESSARY. The best legal defence if ever challenged about an intervention is to show that any actions taken were in the clients BEST INTEREST and that they were REASONABLE AND PROPORTIONATE, which is in line with Team Teach training and DofE document.

Definitions of terms used in this policy:

- Positive handling is the range of strategies used to defuse, avoid or intervene in challenging behaviours
- Physical intervention is any physical engagement with a child that is made by a staff member in order to establish the safety of the child, of others or to establish order.
- Restraint is 'the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance; **completely directing, deciding and controlling** a person's free movement'. The purpose of the application should be to safeguard the person, other people or prevent significant damage to property. (Team Teach 2003)
- Risk Assessment behaviour plans are documents prepared for each child detailing the agreed and recommended strategies that are most effective when working with that child and are found in the SRP office in each child's individual folders.
- Seclusion is 'forcing a person to spend time alone'. At the SRP no child is forced to spend time alone as a consequence of challenging behaviour or as a punishment. Any separation from the child group would be in the company of or close proximity of an adult.

GENERAL GUIDANCE ON WORKING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

I. Anticipate and prevent

Get to know each child well: a strong relationship based on trust and respect is one of the most effective preventative measures – know their background information contained in their files and their positive handling plan;

Involve the children: in decisions about their treatment and about reasonable limits appropriate to each child's age and understanding;

Teach by example: model respect for the children and for each other in all of our work;

Encourage age appropriate behaviour: notice and respond when children are being helpful or constructive, friendly or just quiet and co-operative;

Be consistent: as far as you can maintain consistent limits within the team and find out about the limits the child is used to at home and elsewhere;

Be clear: children need to be aware of what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour and responsibilities. Problems often occur when expectations are unclear or unreasonable.

Work as a Team: make use of your team to avoid unnecessary conflict and engage in ways that help the child think

Praise and positively reinforce behaviour whenever possible: remember you generally 'get more of what you talk about'.

II. When things become difficult, what helps:

Try and avoid head on conflict: try distraction or compromise - defuse the situation wherever you can and stop it escalating. Relaxed humour is not out of order on occasions.

Use the opportunity for the child to learn: try and teach a positive alternative to an unacceptable behaviour - i.e. "let's do this" rather than "don't do that" – always aim to increase the child's own self-control, at least until they demonstrate that they have really lost it.

Make a distinction between the child and the behaviour: make it clear that you will go on caring for the child whatever he or she might do and recognise yourself that the behaviour is not really a personal affront to you.

Encourage children to find a way out of difficult situations: offer alternatives, make sure the child has a way out of the confrontation without losing face and make sure there are gains in getting out of the conflict.

If you have to use sanctions, make them immediate, fair, reasonable and try to ensure that the child understands why. If it does not make sense and means nothing to the child there is probably no point in doing it.

Recognise the child's feelings: it may be unreasonable for the child to kick, bite or scream but it is not unreasonable for them to feel cross or unhappy. Confirm the feeling with/for the child and help find acceptable ways to express the feelings. Many of our children struggle to label their feelings!

Keep your own self-control: get help and do not be afraid to go away and hand over the situation to others if you feel you are losing your own self-control.

Move confidently but calmly

Make simple clear statements to the child

Make sure your voice is quiet, firm and assured

Reduce the threat of your presence by sitting, kneeling or giving space for the child to move about. If you are challenging the child it can help to avoid direct eye contact.

Talk to the child even if it appears he/she is not listening - try to maintain eye contact and focus on being reassuring, offering comfort and security through staying with the child when distressed and out of control. Don't try to sort things out in the heat of the moment; leave that for later when the child is calmer. Together you can agree what needs to happen next in order to resolve the entire situation.

Use physical intervention only after other alternatives have been tried: if a child is presenting a risk to themselves or others, physically intervene, with the minimum force necessary and for just long enough to calm the child down. Never use physical intervention or restraint as a form of punishment. Know and believe that physical intervention and restraint can be used positively. Don't leave a child alone when upset unless you are sure the child is safe and only use "time out" where this has been agreed as appropriate for that child. Remember, physically intervening or restraining a child who is out of control can offer a sense of security and can help the child feel you are able to control with care and concern, but this is only when your restraint is of a nonaggressive nature, however firm you must be.

III. When things become difficult avoid further unnecessary problems:

- Don't take it personally or make it personal
- Don't go it alone if you feel out of your depth: ask for help or ideas or advice;
- Don't throw your weight around and make alarming, woolly or unrealistic threats you cannot carry out
- Don't corner and overcrowd or inhibit a child's movement unless the child or others are at risk
- Don't use sarcasm: or tease or belittle or shame a child into obeying you
- Don't EVER shout, or give complicated garbled messages with a high-pitched voice
- Don't try to sort things out by bombarding the child with statements and questions, loudly or harshly put
- Don't leave the child in order to look for the help/containment that should be available
- Don't use physical interventions or restraint as such a regular feature of practice that it comes to be seen by children as such an everyday method of control and one which they will come to demand/expect before accepting adult authority. Children should be involved in discussing and identifying behaviours that might require adult intervention and physical intervening/restraint. This should occur at calm times, both prior to the need for any such intervention and as part of talking through occasions of restraint.
- Do use strategies included in the child's Risk Assessment Behaviour Plan
- Do ensure that one person takes the lead in talking to the child during the interventions, this person should talk as little as possible. This can avoid creating further confusion

IV. Managing very challenging situations

When managing situations where there is a high risk **it is most effective for just one person to be in dialogue with the child**, whilst other members of staff support that adult in any way that is appropriate. This support might be to get someone else who has more experience of managing this type of situation, or has a stronger relationship with the child, to take over to talk with the child.

It is often unhelpful to have a series of adults giving the child attention at these times, as this can prolong the incident or intensify it.

Finally, always record incidents of physical intervention/restraint in the child's folder and ensure that any appropriate amendments are made to the child's Risk assessment Behaviour Plan

THE USE OF PHYSICAL ENGAGEMENT AND RESTRAINT

It cannot be stated too often that when working with challenging behaviour, interventions of any nature should be: in the best interests of the child, **reasonable, proportionate and necessary**

Using reasonable force – the legal position (Use of Reasonable Force advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies)

What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables all school staff to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from:

- a) Committing a criminal offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- b) Causing personal injury or damage to property; or

During school only

c) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise. The staff to whom this power applies are:

- a) Any member of staff at the school;
- b) Any other person whom the head has authorized to have control or charge of the pupils. This can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school organised visits); agency staff with appropriate training and
- c) Does not include any pupils

The power may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on the school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of the staff member (for example on a school visit). (*DCSF – The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils - 2010*)

MONITORING INCIDENTS, PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS AND RESTRAINTS

All incidents physical interventions and restraints are recorded in the child's individual folders.

Records should:

- Be completed after everyone has recovered but within 24 hours
- Use the systems, structure and pro forma identified in the Bound and Numbered Book
- Be factual and objective
- Be signed and dated
- Parents informed by email or in person
- Inform positive handling plans

Incident Debriefs:

Debriefing after a serious incident is a valuable way of reviewing practice. Parents will be informed of any physical contact. Learning from these opportunities should inform practice and this learning incorporated in children's de-escalating plans.

Position statement – use of pain

Team Teach does not advocate the use of pain or locks.

However, Team Teach recognises that with regard to personal safety responses, getting away from bites, hair grabs, etc... There may be some slight and momentary discomfort and surprise, experienced by the service user, but the intention of the person applying the taught response is not to deliberately hurt the person who is holding or biting them, but to affect a release from a situation with the potential for significant injury in which they are experiencing pain themselves.

Role of Pupils

It is intended that, through participation in the SRP curriculum and nurturing environment, as well as through the reflective process, children should come to understand their own challenging behaviours and develop their capacity for verbalising feeling. This increased understanding and ability to verbalise should lead to reduction in acting out behaviour.

Role of Parents / Carers

We know children make most progress when we are working well with the parents and carers. This means good clear communication and the parents and carers understanding the ways in which are working with behaviour. It also requires common expectations to have been agreed and understood.

REWARDS

Staff should take every opportunity to reward children for effort and achievement. This can be done informally through verbal feedback, encouragement etc. as well as more formally through daily assessment of their targets.

SANCTIONS

The SRP is governed by regulations under the Children Act 1989 which has the force of law. Amongst the sanctions prohibited are those specified in the Department of Health, Education Act 1996. These are set out in detail below. In addition, the range of sanctions used in any establishment for children must be approved by the National Care Standards Commission. Any sanction imposed beyond those approved will be unacceptable and possibly illegal. All sanctions permissible at the SRP are set out in this section.

PROHIBITED SANCTIONS

The following sanctions are those prohibited by law and may never be used on any child in the School:

I Corporal Punishment - Regulation 8 (2) (a)

II Deprivation of Food and Drink - Regulation 8 (2) (b)

III Restriction or refusal of visits / Communication from family and/or external authorities - Regulation

8 (2) (c) and 8 (3) (d)

IV Requirement to wear distinctive or inappropriate clothes - Regulation 8 (2) (d)

V Withholding or Use of Medication - Regulation 8 (2) (e)

VI Restriction of liberty of children in care

The Children Secure Accommodation Regulations 1991 defines secure accommodation as "accommodation provided for the purpose of restricting the liberty of children".

Under this regulation the Secretary of State's approval is required before accommodation may be used for the restriction of a child's liberty.

The SRP has no such approval and therefore the following are not permitted:

The locking of a child or children in a single room at any time, even when accompanied by a responsible adult or adults;

The locking of internal doors to confine a child or children in certain sections, even when accompanied by adult or adults; (locking of external doors in order to provide safety for the children and prevent unauthorised persons from accessing the building is permitted)

VIII Intimate physical searches – Regulation 8 (2) (h)

IX Seclusion is 'forcing a person to spend time alone'. At the SRP no child is forced to spend time alone as a consequence of challenging behaviour or as a punishment. Any separation from the child group would be in the company of or close proximity to an adult.

In addition to these sanctions proscribed by law, the SRP itself prohibits the use of the following:

- threats of unacceptable punishments;
- any verbal abuse intended to humiliate or degrade a child, his/her family or other important person
 - whether in relation to race, sex, religion or any other respect;
- removal of curriculum entitlement for any reason other than health and safety;
- removal of rewards that have already been earned;
- the whole group being sanctioned as the result of individual children's behaviour.

Permitted Sanctions

Staff teams should regularly review the use of sanctions for individual children to ensure that they are helping them to learn and become more responsible. If a sanction is not appropriate or effective it should not be used.

Sanctions should:

- fit the inappropriate behaviour.
- be seen to be fair in the eyes of children and discussed with them so that they know clearly what sanctions are and are not permitted.
- not be seen as revenge or getting even.
- be for a specific period where applicable.

- be used with thought/consideration.
- be tailored to the individual.
- be discussed with the staff team.
- be applied as soon after the event as possible.
- be reviewed periodically; if seen to be unworkable other methods applied.

Sanctions used include:

1. Staying in during playtimes or lunch, to catch up on missed school work
2. School work being sent home for completion
3. Not being allowed to use specific pieces of equipment following their misuse e.g. computer ban.
4. Internal exclusion during the school day – This means being supervised 1 to 1 in a place away from the other children following a very serious incident e.g. setting the fire alarm off, absconding, continuous aggressive or disruptive behaviour for a prolonged period of the day.
5. Fixed term or permanent exclusion (see Exclusion Policy).