



Non-Physical Restraint and Restrictive Intervention Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out how the provision prevents, manages and reviews the use of non-physical restraint and other restrictive interventions. It is written for an alternative education setting where learners may present with dysregulated, unsafe or dangerous behaviour. The policy aims to keep learners, staff and visitors safe while protecting dignity, rights and relationships.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including agency staff, working with learners on site, off site, during transport, educational visits and any provision-arranged activity. It should be read alongside the safeguarding and child protection policy, behaviour policy, SEND policy, health and safety policy, risk assessment procedures and complaints procedure.

Key Principles

- Non-physical restraint and restrictive interventions must only be used when necessary, proportionate, reasonable and in the learner's best interests.
- Staff must seek to prevent escalation through positive relationships, trauma-informed practice, reasonable adjustments and de-escalation.
- Any restriction must be the least restrictive option available and must end as soon as the risk has reduced.
- Interventions must never be used as punishment, to cause humiliation, for convenience, or as a substitute for adequate staffing, planning or support.
- Learners must be treated with dignity and offered support to recover, reflect and repair following an incident.

Definitions

Non-physical restraint means any action that restricts a learner's freedom of movement without staff using physical force or holding. This may include staff positioning themselves to prevent access to an unsafe area, temporarily blocking a route, closing or securing a door in line with safeguarding and fire safety requirements, or by giving clear boundary instructions.

Blocking pathways means a staff member intentionally positions themselves or uses the environment to prevent a learner moving towards a person, hazard, exit, road, restricted area, or object where there is an immediate risk of harm. Blocking pathways

is a restrictive intervention and must be risk assessed, brief, proportionate and recorded when significant.

Dangerous behaviour means behaviour that presents an immediate or foreseeable risk of serious harm to the learner, other learners, staff, visitors or the wider community. Examples include attempting to leave site into traffic, moving towards a weapon or hazardous object, serious aggression, throwing dangerous items, climbing unsafe structures, attempting self-harm, damaging property in a way that creates risk, or entering unsafe or restricted areas.

Prevention and Planning

- Each learner with known risk factors will have an individual support plan, risk assessment or behaviour support plan that identifies triggers, early warning signs, preferred regulation strategies, communication needs and reasonable adjustments.
- Staff will use proactive approaches including calm scripts, reduced language, choice, time away, sensory supports, restorative conversations and planned safe spaces.
- The environment will be regularly reviewed to reduce hazards, including access to sharp objects, unsafe exits, climbing risks, ligature risks, blind spots and overcrowded transition points.
- Staff deployment will be planned to reduce predictable flashpoints such as arrival, breaks, transitions, transport and end-of-day movement.

Use of Non-Physical Restraint

Staff may use non-physical restraint only where there is a clear and immediate safety reason and where less restrictive approaches have been attempted or are judged unlikely to prevent harm. Staff must use calm communication, explain what is happening where possible, maintain a safe distance, avoid confrontation, and continue to offer the learner a safe alternative route or choice whenever this can be done safely.

- **Blocking Pathways**
 - Blocking a pathway must only be used to prevent immediate danger, not to control ordinary non-compliance, refusal, avoidance or low-level disruption.
 - Staff must avoid trapping a learner in a confined space unless there is no safer alternative and the risk of not doing so is greater.
 - Staff must not use threatening body language, cornering, intimidation, ridicule or crowding.
 - Where possible, a second member of staff should observe, support de-escalation and ensure that the learner has a safe and dignified way to reduce risk.

- Pathway blocking must end as soon as the immediate risk has reduced or a safer alternative is available.
- **Dangerous Behaviour**
 - When dangerous behaviour occurs, staff must prioritise immediate safety.
 - This may include clearing other learners from the area, removing hazardous objects if it is safe to do so, using clear and brief instructions, calling for senior support, placing a safe barrier between the learner and the hazard, or contacting emergency services where there is a serious and imminent risk that cannot be safely managed by staff.

Prohibited Practice

- Non-physical restraint must not be used as punishment, retaliation, humiliation or behaviour management convenience.
- Staff must not deliberately block access to toilets, drinking water, medical support, emergency exits or safeguarding support, except for the shortest possible time where there is an immediate and greater safety risk.
- Staff must not isolate, seclude or contain a learner in a locked room unless this is specifically covered by lawful procedures, senior authorisation and risk assessment.
- Staff must not create a situation where a learner feels trapped without explanation, support or a safe route to de-escalate.

Recording, Reporting and Review

All significant incidents involving non-physical restraint, pathway blocking, dangerous behaviour, seclusion, or any related use of force must be recorded as soon as practicable and before the end of the working day wherever possible. Records should include the learner's name, date, time, location, staff involved, antecedents, risks identified, de-escalation attempted, the intervention used, duration, outcome, any injury or distress, learner voice, parent or carer communication, and follow-up actions.

Parents or carers will be informed of significant incidents in line with statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations and the learner's individual plan. Directors will review incident records to identify patterns, reduce future risk, improve support plans and ensure practice remains lawful, proportionate and child-centred.

Support After an Incident

Following an incident, the provision will offer support to the learner and staff involved. This may include first aid, emotional support, safeguarding checks, restorative work, review of the learner's support plan, staff debrief, parent or carer discussion, and

referral to external agencies where required. The aim is to understand what happened, reduce future risk and repair relationships.

Training and Responsibilities

- The Directors are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- The Director of Operations is responsible for ensuring staff understand the policy, receive appropriate training and have access to learner risk information.
- All staff are responsible for using preventative and de-escalation approaches, acting within this policy, recording incidents accurately and reporting safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Training will include behaviour support, safeguarding, SEND, trauma-informed practice, de-escalation, dynamic risk assessment, safe use of space, incident recording and post-incident support.

Equality, SEND and Safeguarding

The provision will make reasonable adjustments for learners with SEND, disabilities, communication needs, trauma histories, mental health needs or medical conditions. Staff must consider whether behaviour is linked to unmet need, distress, sensory overload or communication difficulty. Any safeguarding concern arising from an incident must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead without delay.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following a serious incident, change in statutory guidance, safeguarding concern, complaint, pattern of incidents, or significant change in learner need. Incident data will be reviewed to identify disproportionality, repeated use of restrictive approaches, training needs and opportunities to reduce restrictive practice.



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