

CRESSEY COLLEGE

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

2017-18

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Amendment Record

This Physical Intervention policy is reviewed to ensure its continuing relevance to the direction and processes that it describes. A record of additions, admissions and amendments is given below:

Version	Amendments	Date
1	Annual update to Policy. Approved at Management meeting dated 31 Aug 16. Authorised by JH, approved by Headteacher - AB.	1 Sept 16
2	Annual review of Policy Approved at Management meeting dated 30 Aug 17. Authorised by AP, approved by Head Teacher – AC.	01 Sept 17

Introduction

1. Students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) and behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Head Teacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain students. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are: to prevent injury to others; damage to property or the breakdown of discipline, or harm to self. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's policy.

2. This policy refers to the DFE 'Use of Reasonable Force in schools' guidance (July 2013); our procedures are in line with guidance issued by BILD (British Institute of Learning Difficulties) and should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management Policy, Nurture Policy and Safeguarding Policy. This policy details how we implement the guidance at Cressey College and is designed to help staff ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

School Expectations

3. The school takes seriously its duty of care towards students, employees and visitors to the school.

4. This policy has a clear focus:

- a. The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- b. The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Positive Behaviour Management

5. All physical interventions at Cressey College are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage students to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all students when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

6. Staff may decide not to physically intervene but can still take effective action to reduce risk. They may:

- a. Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- b. Give clear directions to the students to stop.
- c. Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- d. Remove an audience or take vulnerable students to a safer place.

- e. Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- f. Use positive touch to guide or escort students to somewhere less pressured.
- g. Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help¹.

Help Protocols

7. The expectation at Cressey College is that all staff should support each other. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

Well Chosen Words

8. A well chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When students are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument (you will never win an argument with an agitated or distressed student). Telling people to calm down can actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. **It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.** It is not appropriate to try to talk through the incident, or discuss consequences with the student whilst they are still being held. This should always be conducted at a later time, sometimes the following day, where this is appropriate.

The Last Resort Principle

9. At Cressey College we only use physical restraint when there is no other realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point:

- a. "if necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predicted future."
Para 10 p.4 Dept of Health 1997 "The Control of Children in The Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989 – London HMSO

10. It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Proactive Physical Interventions

11. It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed strategy. Examples of this are where a

¹ More details can be found within the Behavioural Management Policy.

student has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

Reasonable and Proportionate

12. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. **It is not a failing to hand a situation over to someone else who may be better placed to support a student.** Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate they will be supported.

13. When physical controls are considered, staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- a. How is this in the best interests of the student?
- b. Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- c. Why do we have to act now?
- d. Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- e. Why is this absolutely necessary?

14. If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

15. There is no legal definition of reasonable force; therefore its use is dependent upon several considerations:

- a. Use of force can only be considered reasonable if the circumstances warrant it.
- b. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant it i.e.: physical force is not justified in preventing young people from committing trivial misdemeanours.
- c. The degree of force used must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident it is intended to prevent.
- d. It is not permissible to use force, or act in a way which might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for instance:
 - 1) Holding a young person by the neck, collar or in any way which might restrict their breathing.
 - 2) Slapping, punching or kicking a young person.
 - 3) Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint.
 - 4) Holding or pulling a young person by the hair or ear.
 - 5) Pulling a young person along by their arms.

- 6) **It is NEVER permissible to hold a young person in the prone position i.e. face down on the floor.**

Unreasonable Use of Force

16. It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted nor should students be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a student secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at Cressey College.

Health & Safety

17. If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health & Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health & Safety in the school. We all have a shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk.

18. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try to think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action seems to involve the least risk. As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with Health & Safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with the school policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. Physical Intervention training is mandatory for all staff employed at Cressey College. The non physical aspects of behaviour management/physical intervention training are crucially important too.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

19. Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences.

20. The key principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- a. In the best interest of the child.
- b. Reasonable and proportionate.
- c. Intended to reduce risk.
- d. The least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.
- e. Maintain the dignity of the person being held.

21. Whenever a physical intervention has to be made, there should be a verbal warning. Where possible staff should always attempt to use diversion or defusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the taught techniques and methods approved for use in Cressey College.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Students and Staff

22. Following a serious incident, it is the policy of Cressey College to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything that could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries that require more than basic first aid. It is important to remember, even when staff attempt to do everything right things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that students have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure, the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Complaints

23. It is not uncommon for students to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal complaints procedure. Students should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of students and staff alike.

Training

24. Teachers, Teaching Assistants and anyone authorised by the Head Teacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques must be trained. Once trained, staff should practice regularly under the guidance of our trainers or Senior Teachers and bring any problems or concerns to them.

Recording

25. Whenever physical intervention is used, the incident must be recorded using the approved forms. The forms must be uploaded weekly to the Office 365 section for each site. Once initialled by the head teacher/head of department, the report must then be printed off and placed in the incident report file and kept securely in the school office. **Each incident report must be numbered. The number should contain the student's initials, school site initial, date, and chronological number, starting from 1 in any given school academic year (e.g. for the first incident of the school year 2017/18 for Joe Bloggs at Moorings: JB 7/9/17-1 M).** Hard copies of Incident reports must be signed by the report writer, and signed off by the head teacher, deputy head or head of department.

26. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly, factually and without using emotive language. Names of staff and students involved should be completed in full at the top of the form and all forms should be signed by all staff participants and dated. Initials of staff and students involved will be used in the main

text of the incident form. All records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future. Serious incident reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident.

Monitoring and Evaluation

27. The Head Teacher/Deputy Head/Head of Department will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. Following an incident consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment².

² This policy was adapted from the National Association of EBD Schools 'Model Positive Handling Statement'.

