



## Garrick Garden Restraint and Restrictive Intervention Guidance for use of the 'Safe Space'

Updated June 2023

### **Introduction**

As a Specialist Resource Provision for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs, staff in Garrick Garden all understand the core principle that behaviour is a means of communication and has a cause and purpose. As outlined in the Governments report "Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention" – June 2019, we acknowledge that, "Behaviour that challenges may signal a need for support and it is essential to understand its underlying causes."

### **Our approach**

- We follow a careful transition plan that allows us to share information with previous settings, external agencies and parents/carers
- We have systems in place to continually assess the needs of pupils and identify the underlying causes of their behaviour
- We use this information to develop Positive Handling Plans, which enable all staff to work consistently with children to create a supportive environment and deploy techniques and strategies that will de-escalate or calm situations and reduce the need for physical restraint. For example introducing and encouraging the use of the Zones of Regulation intervention.
- We work with the children to support and encourage them to use alternative ways to express their frustration and teach strategies to help them to work towards independent self-regulation.

### **Positive Handling and Physical Restraint**

At times however, restraint may be necessary to safeguard the individual and/or others from serious injury or harm. A decision to use physical intervention should only be made after all alternative strategies have failed to calm the pupil and never used to punish or with the intention of inflicting pain, suffering or humiliation.

As outlined in DFE's guidance on the 'Use of Reasonable Force in Schools,' all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force when it is necessary. When evaluating a restraint or a restriction of liberty, the legislation requires us to consider:

- Was this action legal and necessary – for example, was this action taken to prevent a child injuring themselves or someone else or causing serious harm to property or to maintain good order and discipline?
- Could this action be considered as 'reasonable' in this particular circumstance? Was it the minimum force necessary? Was it proportionate?

Staff in Garrick Garden have been trained in Physical Intervention, provided by the Education Inclusion Service which prioritises de-escalation strategies and a graduated approach to ensure techniques used to restrain or restrict liberty of movement are reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances, risk and seriousness of harm; and are applied with the minimum force necessary, for no longer than necessary.

After any incident involving restraint, staff fill out a 'Significant Incident Book.'

The Senior Leadership team review these records regularly to ensure actions and consequences are appropriate. Any incident is always followed up by restorative work with the pupil to allow them to process what has happened and discuss alternative scenarios. Parents/carers are also informed and if necessary, Positive Handling Plans are updated.

### **Guidance for use of 'The safe Space'**

As part of our Provision, we have a specially designed 'Safe Space'. This is a place of safety with soft padding on walls to provide further protection for pupils who are very agitated. Whilst this is primarily a resource for pupils who are placed in the SRP, it is also available to children within Hampton Hill Junior school if needed. Below is guidance on how staff use this resource appropriately.

There are times when children need access to a quiet and calm space. The 'Safe Space' is a sensory-controlled calming area. The purpose of this space is not exclusion or punishment. Rather, it is a space to help children to calm down and to begin to use self-regulation skills.

In the majority of cases the use of the Safe Space should form part of a pupil's Positive Handling Plan. Children and young people should be consulted in accordance with their age and level of understanding.

In optimum circumstances the pupil will choose to access the Safe Space, sometimes with a prompt from staff. In exceptional circumstances when the pupil is unable to make this informed choice, staff may be required to accompany the pupil to the Safe Space using agreed positive handling strategies. In these instances, the Safe Space can be used as a means of

- (a) helping the pupil to manage their own emotional state;
- (b) reducing the danger to staff/pupils and or removing the disruptive behaviour from the body of the school;
- (c) reducing the need for prolonged use of physical intervention.

## **Helping pupils to understand how to use the Safe Space**

1. Introduce the Safe Space in a positive, proactive way that helps the child to understand the benefits that can come from its usage.
2. Explain to the child that the room can be used when she/he becomes aware that she/he is starting to get upset, get worried or get angry. Use language that is simple and positively stated.
3. The Safe Space should not be used on a 'scheduled' basis. It is meant to be used as and when a child is starting to show signs that they may become upset or demonstrating that they need a break to avoid a critical incident and to regain a sense of calm.
4. The best outcome of using a Safe Space is when a child learns how to 'self-regulate' independently and is able to calm her/himself down.
5. The Safe Space needs to be used with a calm and positive approach in order to help reduce anxiety. This means using a planned and sensitive manner to help the child move towards the room and during and after they have spent time there.
6. When introducing the Safe Space initially, the child should be asked to spend five to ten minutes in there. They can lie down on something comfortable if they want to (e.g. a bean bag, cushions, etc.) or they can stand and move around if they want to. This introduction session should be used in a proactive manner, when the child is calm and receptive, in order to help her/him feel good about being there.
7. Following several sessions when the child has been able to spend time in the room while in a pleasant and quiet frame of mind, the next step is to explain to the child that the Safe Space will also be available when they need a place to calm down, help them stop worrying or help them to feel less angry.
8. It is important to explain that sometimes a member of staff will suggest that 'this is a good time to use the Safe Space' or the child themselves may feel that 'this is a good time to use the Safe Space'.
9. Staff should then be alert to warning signs that the child may need a break and remind the child that this may be a good time to use the Safe Space.

## **Procedure for the use of the Safe Space**

1. When a member of staff notices that a pupil is becoming anxious or agitated, the pupil should be given reasonable opportunity to calm using the strategies outlined in the school's behaviour policy or in the pupil's Positive Handling Plan, this may include suggesting the Safe Space.
2. If the pupil's behaviour continues to cause concern and is reaching a point where they are affecting other pupils and/or they become a danger to themselves, other pupils or staff, the pupil should be prompted to make 'the right choice' and comply with requests from staff. Staff should suggest 'this is a good time to use the Safe Space'.
3. Other staff should be alerted for support as appropriate.

4. If the pupil continues not to comply and, subject to a dynamic risk assessment, one of the legally defensible criteria apply, staff may consider it necessary to escort the child to the Safe Space using an approved physical intervention in line with school policy and DFE guidelines.
5. Once in the Safe Space, staff involved should try to resolve the situation satisfactorily with the child spending the minimum time necessary in the Safe Space.
6. While a child is in the Safe Space, senior staff should ensure that appropriate staffing is available to support the child.

**At no time should pupils be unsupervised in a Safe Space or the door locked. It may be appropriate to allow the child to calm on their own but staff must be able to see the child via a window and mirror.**

**If a pupil tries to leave the Safe Space before they are calm, staff should use low and slow responses to direct the pupil to stay. In extreme cases when the pupil is very angry and unable to process requests, staff may need to implement a dynamic risk assessment (please also refer to DFE guidance on 'Use of reasonable force in schools' as above).**

**This response must be recorded after the event in line with school policy. If this becomes a regular requirement it must be included in the pupil's Positive Handling Plan.**

**The rights of the child should be respected at all times.**

I confirm that I have read and understood the guidance.

Signed by parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_