

MY OASIS

Therapeutic Alternative Provision

Positive Handling Policy 2024/2025

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Introduction

My Oasis Therapeutic Alternative Provision (TAP) takes seriously its duty of care to students, employees and visitors to the provision.

Staff within My Oasis Therapeutic Alternative Provision (TAP) have a duty to look after students in their care, as well as to keep other staff members and visitors to the provision safe. Due to this, staff must intervene in order to prevent students from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, they will follow this Positive Handling Policy when doing so.

A clear and consistent Positive Handling Policy supports students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and follows our principles of mutual respect, care and safety.

At My Oasis:

The first and most important consideration is the welfare of the young people in our care.

The second is the welfare and protection of the adults at our provision.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force.

Before using physical controls, we take effective action to reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning techniques, as well as de-escalation strategies.
- Giving clear directions for students to stop the harmful behaviour they are presenting with.
- Reminding students about the My Oasis expectations, rules and the likely consequences following any deviation from these rules.
- Removing an audience or escorting vulnerable students to a safe place, using positive guidance, to allow them to calm down somewhere less pressured.

- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Ensuring that staff know what is happening and call for help where required.

Definitions

The term 'positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour.

The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance.

Physical Restraint

At My Oasis we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative.

As part of our student admission process, a thorough risk assessment is completed with a corresponding Positive Handling Plan (PHP) put into place if deemed necessary. This ensures a safe and supportive environment for all students on placement with us at My Oasis. These documents are regularly reviewed by staff throughout the student's placement, and we expect staff to use this document to support them in choosing the safest alternative for physical intervention should this ever be required. Despite this, staff are also encouraged to experiment and think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective with each individual student.

The most important consideration is that the action taken is in the best interest of the young person, minimising rather than increasing any associated risks. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate to the situation, avoiding using force wherever possible.

Physical restraint must only be used in accordance with the following guidelines:

- The young person is in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person, or they are at risk of seriously damaging property - the member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
 - Only the minimum force necessary should always be applied to prevent injury or damage.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can subsequently act as assistants or witnesses to the situation and support the staff member having to restrain the student.
 - Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the young person to regain self-control.
- Restraint should always be used as an act of care and control, never for punitive measures.
- Physical restraint should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to other people and/or property.
- Parents/Carers and a student's mainstream school should be informed immediately should physical restraint be used on a student. Where appropriate, this should also be discussed with the student following the incident.
- Prior to or during any physical restraint intervention being delivered, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance. For example, "I am doing this to keep you safe".

Responding to unexpected emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality which might occur. The provision therefore recognises that there are unexpected or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. An unexpected event may require an emergency response. However, following this event staff have a duty to reflect on the incident, update the student's risk assessment and prepare for any similar future incidents occurring.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are required for all students who are on placement at My Oasis and all staff should consider these to anticipate the possibility of negative events occurring in the future.

When considering a student's behaviour, staff will think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a health and safety risk related to this student's behaviour?
- Have we gathered sufficient information needed to conduct a risk assessment and develop a Positive Handling Plan?
- Has this risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan been provided to all staff working with the student?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?
- Perhaps consider the situation or environment we are taking a student to. Are there any known triggers for individual students that we can anticipate occurring?

Positive Handling Plans (PHPs)

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. Therefore, all students who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan.

This plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that young person, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Any specific physical techniques which have been found to be useful in the past should be named, along with any warnings about techniques which have been found to be ineffective which may have previously caused problems.

Information will be gathered by the student's mainstream school, where insufficient information has been provided by a student's mainstream school, a Positive Handling Plan will be completed with parents and carers instead.

Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with the student's EHCP, any SEND and other planning documents relevant to the student. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

Post Incident Debrief

Following a serious incident, it is the procedure of My Oasis to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up on incidents so that students have an opportunity to reflect on what happened, express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future as well as appreciate other peoples' perspectives regarding the incident.

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the needs of all staff. As individuals, we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is therefore expected to talk to the staff and young people involved (if appropriate) following any incidents involving violence.

If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Leadership team will make arrangements for the team to be supported.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

All incidents of unacceptable behaviour should be recorded.

All serious incidents or incidents involving restraint will be recorded on the appropriate form. Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty-four hours and signed by at least two members of staff.

The Senior Leadership Team must be informed of all incidents.

The SLT will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as and when required.

Parents and carers

All parents and carers will be invited to contribute to their child's risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan with a written parental agreement forming part of this.

During induction, parents and carers will be informed of the TAP's policies which are located on the My Oasis website, plus they will also always be informed following the occurrence of any serious incidents.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints will follow the TAP's Complaints Procedure.

Other physical contact with students (DfE Use of Reasonable Force 2013)

It is not illegal to touch a student. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper and necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when walking together.
- When comforting a distressed student.
- When a student is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.

- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

- To give first aid.

This list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where physical contact is proper and necessary.

All our other Policies will be incorporated into the support and care which is used to address each young person's needs, such as our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy and Health and Safety Policy.