ST VINCENT'S SCHOOL
A Specialist School for Sensory Impairment and Other Needs

Reviewed: 10/26

To be reviewed: 10/28

Physical Intervention Policy

Staff receive up-to-date training.

We believe that physical intervention should be the last resort. In the majority of cases de-escalation and diffusion are the appropriate methods of dealing with situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals.
On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between learners.

These include:
Injury, or risk of injury, to another learner.
Injury, or risk of injury, to a member of staff.
Serious damage to property.

Any intervention should be a last resort and be proportionate, reasonable and necessary.

All staff have a duty of care to learners. If staff take no action, and the outcome is that a learner injures him/herself, or another, including staff, this could be seen as negligence.

Advice for Staff

Members of staff facing confrontational situations with learners are reminded that the following behaviour can either reduce or inflame incidents, and that a brief moment of risk assessment may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary.

Staff should give a clear choice and spell out consequences.

Remaining calm – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke. A relaxed posture and a non-threatening (CALM) stance, i.e. respecting personal space.

Awareness of Space – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into the learner's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back to avoid confrontational body language.

Pacing and Chasing – when angry some learners often pace around in tense situations and staff should give them time to calm down.
Where possible, it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down.

Intonation and use of voice - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to speak more slowly, in a lower tone and more quietly and where appropriate using visuals and/or gestural prompts.

Help Script

– Connect by using the learner's name.
– Recognise and acknowledge the learner's feelings.
– Tell the learner you are there to help: "You talk and I will listen."
– Give direction.

Diffusing body language responses

– Social distance.
– Sideways stance, step back.
– Intermittent eye contact.
– Relaxed body posture.
– Palms open.

Calm Stance

Think of the values of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally:

– Allows a more considered response.
– Time to make a 'dynamic' risk assessment and seek assistance.
– Allows the learner to 'take up' time to make their own choices.
– Build confidence in learners that you are in control – children need to feel that adults are in control to feel safe.

In the event of a serious incident e.g. a fight, staff should:

- Give clear and immediate instructions – "stop fighting."
- Send for assistance
- Spell out sanctions
- Instruct and/or remove any onlookers from the environment where possible
- Intervene physically if confident and having assessed the degree of risk- if not, call for assistance.

Designated Safeguarding Lead to be informed immediately

Home to be called to inform the family.