

Guidance on the use of seclusion rooms including the SafeSpace, the White Room and Group Rooms

Introduction

The use of seclusion rooms is a complex and problematic area of our practice and merits continuous revision and re-appraisal as we develop our knowledge and understanding of pupils. Whilst guidance in this area can be complicated and at times confusing, one simple principle is abundantly clear, the use of seclusion rooms constitutes a **deprivation of liberty** and is therefore **illegal** other than for the most extreme of circumstances.

Therefore, we must be absolutely confident when using seclusion rooms that there is no alternative and that our actions would withstand the most intense scrutiny in law. The following guidance represents our school's policy in this area and must be adhered to at all times. This guidance must be read in conjunction with the school's *Behaviour Support Policy* and *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

Guidance

Recent Ofsted Training (April 2013) stated

It is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order except in an emergency, for example where the use of a locked room is a temporary measure while seeking assistance.

and this provides a clear starting point for the consideration of our actions under the law. Other Governmental guidance is available such as the 'Use of Reasonable Force' and the 'Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards' (DOLS) and it is around this framework of information that the protocol and procedures outlined below is based.

Protocol

The following protocol must be followed on all occasions in which a pupil is moved to, kept within or denied egress from any area against their will. Within school this will apply generally, but not only, to the SafeSpace, the White Room and Group Rooms. When pupils are working off-campus, this protocol applies to any area in which a pupil is being detained.

Failure to comply with this protocol in full will result in disciplinary action being taken and may constitute a criminal offence.

1. The use of any seclusion room or area can only occur in the most **extreme** of circumstances in which there is a clear and imminent threat of harm to people or of significant damage to property or possessions.
2. During any period of seclusion there must be a minimum of two members of staff present throughout the entire period of the seclusion.
3. Throughout the period of seclusion, there must be continuous monitoring and evaluation of the situation in order to secure a safe and positive resolution as quickly as possible. The *Restriction Reduction Table* must be completed every five minutes.
4. At the earliest possible opportunity a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be informed of the seclusion.
5. On receiving this information, the member of the Senior Leadership Team must attend the site of the seclusion if this is within school. If the seclusion is off-campus, the member of the Senior Leadership Team must monitor the situation via regular telephone calls.
6. The use of any seclusion room or area is only permissible if the pupil has a current **risk assessment** which clearly demonstrates that such action may be necessary. A current *Behaviour Support Plan* must be in place which stipulates that the use of a seclusion room or area may be necessary.
7. Parents or carers must be made aware of the pupil's risk assessment and the *Behaviour Support Plan*. The pupil's class teacher is responsible for ensuring this information is shared.

8. Parents or carers must be informed on each occasion in which a seclusion room or area has been used on the day in which it occurred. This information must be shared by either the home-school diary, text message, e-mail or telephone call. The Assistant Headteacher responsible for the Key Stage the pupil is in is responsible for ensuring this information is shared.
9. On very rare occasions, because of unforeseen circumstances, the use of a seclusion room or area may be necessary for a pupil who does not have a risk assessment which indicates this. On these occasions an immediate risk assessment must be completed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team in conjunction with the pupil's teacher. A full written report of the circumstances leading to the use of the seclusion room or area must be submitted to the Headteacher by the person making the decision to detain the pupil within one working day. If the Headteacher makes this decision, the report must be submitted to the Chair of Governors.
10. On those very rare occasions when a seclusion room or area has been used for a pupil without a clear and authorised plan in place, the Headteacher or Deputy headteacher must inform the parents or carers directly within one working day by either the home-school diary, text message, e-mail or telephone call.

Monitoring and Reporting

The use of seclusion rooms or areas will be monitored each day by the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher using the monitoring books supplied for this purpose cross-referenced with SIMS. A decision as to whether the use of the seclusion room or area should be referred to the LADO will be made by the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Behaviour Support, Matt Lawrenson, as part of his daily monitoring of the use of RPIs within the school.

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body the use of seclusion rooms and areas as part of the termly Headteacher's Report to Governors under the section detailing the use of RPIs.

Conclusion

This complex and problematic area continues to challenge practitioners in the field of SEND and it is critical that we continuously critique our practice in order to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for our pupils. Members of staff are actively encouraged to challenge and question the approach of the school in a professional discourse which serves the best interests of the school community. All members must acknowledge and accept the protocol outlined above and must have signed the appropriate register to record this.

Martin Hanbury – 31st October 2015