

Physical handling policy / Restraint

Whilst Big Bear Bespoke Education Ltd (Arun Court School, The Learning & Well-Being Centre and all other forms of the business model) fundamentally disagrees with the amount of physical restraint used in the UK school system, we understand that it is necessary in certain circumstances. We aim to create an environment where restraint is not needed and as such we DO NOT train our staff in MAPA or any other form of physical intervention. This affects our admissions policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy and our safeguarding policies.

As stated in our behaviour policy, we aim to reduce anxiety via the use of therapeutic approaches and through negotiation, and de-escalation, avoid anxiety reaching a level where physical aggression takes place.

We do our utmost to get to know the students well, and to learn the signs of rising anxiety and anger, so that we can put de-escalation techniques in place quickly. However, we recognise that sometimes these signs will not be obvious, and that sometimes for a variety of circumstances, a student can very suddenly display extreme aggressive behaviours.

In such circumstances we will use 'body blocking' (provided staff feel safe to do so) to enable an area to be evacuated and other students to be taken to safety.

We will not necessarily protect property and parents should be aware that they, not the funding LEA, are responsible for any damages caused by their child and will be billed accordingly.

Where we feel a child, or staff member, is in danger of physical assault we will use noise as a way of asserting ourselves and gaining compliance. We keep the centre very calm, and voices very low at all times, in order for this to have maximum effect. An adult will invade the child's space with a hand outstretched in a stop motion and will shout direct instruction using minimal language:

On the floor

Bottom on the floor

Down, down now, sit cross-legged

You will not assault a staff member

Down on the floor, now!

Once the child has complied with this emergency measure, de-escalation conversations and techniques will be used.

We will always later apologise to the child for shouting, and congratulate them for complying, however we make it very clear that assault is not acceptable and we reserve the right to prosecute. Students are expected to use the tools they have been given to reduce their anxiety and to control their anger – physical aggression is a red line and could lead to their placement ending.

We complete a risk assessment after such an incident, and the incident itself is recorded within our high level incident book.

If a child does not comply, and can't be contained, and starts to reach a level of aggressive behaviour which is extreme, we will have to work with the LEA to find an alternative as we cannot protect the integrity of the centres work, or the high psychological needs of other students, when pupils exhibit such behaviours. In such circumstances whilst staff are not restraint trained, they are legally entitled to protect themselves and others from injury, via use of reasonable force. We will ALWAYS notify the police in such extreme circumstances, and try to exit everyone from the premises until the police arrive.