

ARUN COURT SCHOOL



'Building Resilience & Perseverance'

Arun Court School has a clear remit of taking students who have suffered a mental health breakdown, making them well through intensive therapy held within a school setting, then slowly re-introducing them to learning. The school has a clear aim to return students to non-independent settings once they are mentally well and when they have 'closed the gap' in their academic learning. We aim that students leaving us are re-entering the system at the point that they would have been at if a breakdown had not occurred.

Behaviour Policy review & BodyCam trial

Arun Court School wants to maintain its status as a non-restraint facility. Our current policy includes staff body blocking to prevent injury to others and in very extreme cases using a strong, loud command voice technique which in the history of the setting we have only had to use on 4 occasions; 3 x for children on trials who proved not to be suited to the setting and once for a student experiencing a psychotic episode. In all these cases the young person was sadly behaving with extreme aggression and the loud command to sit on the floor (like in an emergency) worked. Physical aggression thankfully remains low and has become even lower since gaining school status and re-thinking our admissions criteria further, however we want to investigate further ways of ensuring that behaviour is good and put in another step before this more extreme de-escalation is required.

The potential introduction of body cameras was not a decision to be taken lightly and we have been researching suitable organizations and reviewing research for some time now. Safety is at the heart of this entire project; both for students and staff.

The trial has now started, and we have a new temporary policy in place (below) regarding camera use. If the trial proves successful in improving behaviours for learning as well as showing potential for stopping rare incidences of aggressive behaviours it will become full policy in January.

When are Cameras used?

The cameras have both behavioural and educational uses and benefits:

- 1.The cameras will be used to record behaviour that falls significantly short of expectations. This includes physical aggression towards staff or students, verbal aggression and sexualized language or absconding. These extreme behaviours are usually an indicator of us not being the right setting, as they are not the 'norm' for students here. Usually they are the result of students on a taster or trial, sadly sometimes due to a change of presentation and need, existing students can alter and show these behaviours.
- 2.The cameras will be used for medical emergencies to record the actions taken by staff present
- 3.The cameras would also be used in evacuation and intruder situations (, not drills)
- 4.The cameras will also be used for student interviews with regards to accusations of assault against staff members, or in cases where a reveal is made that will require police investigation.

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5. The cameras will be used to record educational presentations and verbal contributions in class – This should be the main use of the cameras on a daily basis and will provide students with an excellent tool for discussion and review

Processes

- In case 1 students will receive a warning first "if the negative behaviour doesn't stop, I will need to put on the camera, which means I will have to share the footage with your parents". The student either then ceases the negative behaviour and the camera remains off or continues and a film is taken until the student is calm.
- In cases 2-5 students will not be given a choice, but will always be made aware that filming is taking place

Disclosure and footage sharing

- In case 1 and 4 parents will be shown the footage within 24 hours and will also need to come into the school to sign to say that they have seen the footage, and what actions they will be carrying out at home with the young person as a result
- In cases 2 and 3 footage would be made available in the case of an investigation or an inquiry, otherwise it would be stored for staff training and reflection purposes
- In case 5 footage is stored on the main hub under the student's usual work file

GDPR

Parents can request to see footage at any time, as well as their child's work and other documentation – we are an open access provider. Footage remains at the school and would not be passed on to the LEA or a receiving school placement. In the case of an investigation following a very serious event it may be shared, under legal restrictions, with the police, an external investigating team or the LADO.

Parental Views so far

Parental responses have largely been very supportive, and the school has already seen a reduction in inappropriate language. The parents who attended the launch event felt that the cameras were a useful tool, and a compromise instead of introducing full CCTV. Parents wanted reassurances around who could access the data, and these have been sought from the company who have confirmed only the school can access the cloud storage.

A final decision as to the continued use of bodycams will take place in early January.