RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Policy and Guidance for Schools

Guidelines for the Use of
Time Out/Withdrawal Rooms

RCT Behaviour Support Team

September 2019

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 These guidelines set out the requirements for the use of time out/withdrawal strategies, including dedicated time out/withdrawal rooms in RCT schools and other educational provision. The intention of this guidance is to ensure there is an overall framework to assist all mainstream schools, special schools and other educational provision formulate and develop their own particular policies and procedures in relation to using time out/withdrawal to control and manage the behaviour of pupils. All schools, including mainstream schools, should consider the whole document in order to contextualise the guidance to their own setting and provision.

1.2 This guidance is primarily about the use of time out or withdrawal strategies or rooms used to manage challenging behaviours. However, Section 7 covers the use of sensory rooms and other rooms that are used for individual or small group support as part of a pupil's individual education programme and Section 8 summarises the guidance on Detentions.

1.3 Ensuring the safety, wellbeing and dignity of children and young people in schools and other educational provision in the Rhondda Cynon Taf is of paramount importance (Children Act 1989). However, it is acknowledged that there are situations in which staff may have to intervene when a child is highly anxious or distressed and presenting with uncontrolled and challenging behaviours. Time out/withdrawal may be used as part of the range of strategies available to staff to help the pupil manage their behaviour and return to their usual educational activities.

1.4 It must be emphasised though that, as with any intervention that is restrictive, time out/withdrawal should only be used in exceptional circumstances after the full range of preventative and de-escalatory strategies have been employed.

1.5 Equality Act 2010 - Anticipatory Duty

All policies and practices need to show due regard for the Equality Act 2010, including the anticipatory duties. Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 highlights the need for the Council and schools to anticipate the needs of disabled service users and to take reasonable steps to remove barriers to accessing services. The duty is anticipatory in the sense that it requires consideration of, and action in relation to, barriers that impede people with disabilities seeking to use services and participation in experiences prior to them accessing it.

2 Definitions

2.1 As a term "time out" properly describes a behaviour intervention, the joint guidance published by the Department for Health and Department for Education and Skills (2002) describes time-out as:

> *"restricting the service user's access to all positive*
> *reinforcements as part of the behavioural programme"*

2.2 Time-out lies within the continuum of interventions used to assist pupils to regulate and/or control their behaviour. It is used as a proactive strategy to support self-calming and to provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their actions. Time out is usually implemented as part of a structured behaviour support plan.

2.3 The purpose of using "time out" is to achieve a change in the pupil's behaviour over a period of time when used alongside other behaviour interventions as part of a individual behaviour plan or pastoral support programme. In addition the pupil should be supported following an exposure to time out to help them select alternative behavioural possibilities.

2.4 Time out should be distinguished from "**seclusion**" which involves forcing a child or young person to spend time alone, without direct supervision or support, against their will. (Joint guidance from the Department of Health and DfES, July 2002). Seclusion is viewed as a behaviour management tool designed to provide short term management of a target behaviour that is presenting a high risk to the person and others. In itself it has no therapeutic value to the person exposed to it and it is possible that seclusion could have adverse effects. The British Institute of Learning Difficulties (BILD) view the use of seclusion as being contraindicated for many people that have an intellectual disability and/or autism as well as children and young people with severe social emotional difficulties (Factsheet: Time out and Seclusion, October 2009).

2.5 Rhondda Cynon Taf therefore expects schools and other educational provision **not** to use **seclusion** as a strategy to manage severely challenging behaviour.

2.6 On the other hand "**withdrawal**" involves removing the person, sometimes without their consent, from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities.

2.7 It should be noted that schools variously use the terms "time out", "withdrawal" and "seclusion" interchangeably to describe a range of strategies and consequences along a continuum of interventions designed to manage behaviour positively (See Sections 3 & 4). However, it is recommended that schools use the terms in accord with the definitions above.

3 General Guidance

3.1 RCT County Borough Council considers it vitally important that all schools have a clearly articulated whole school behaviour policy from which procedures for the management of challenging behaviour are devolved and which is shared with governors, parents and pupils. The intention of this guidance is to ensure there is an overall framework to assist all schools, special schools and PRUs formulate and develop its own particular policies and procedures in relation to using time out to control and manage the behaviour of pupils.

3.2 Time-out strategies are included by some schools in their school behaviour policies for use when a student is behaving inappropriately and a temporary

separation from that particular environment may assist in supporting the pupil to demonstrate appropriate behaviour.

3.3 Schools are advised to refer to their time out policy within the prospectus that they give to parents. A model paragraph might run:

We do all we can within our school to manage behaviour positively. However, there are times when we may need to use time out to keep a child or children safe, or to maintain good order within the school.

3.4 Any decision a school makes about the establishment of time-out/withdrawal strategies must only be taken after consultation with the school community in the context of the development or review of the school's behaviour policy.

3.5 Time out should not be used as a punishment, to threaten pupils, to humiliate them or make them feel afraid or as a means of removing pupils indefinitely from the classroom.

3.6 Staff must be assigned to continuously monitor the pupil in a time out room. Staff must be able to see and hear the pupil at all times.

3.7 Time out may not be effective for all children. Each child is unique and may require alternative strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviours.

4 Time-out/Withdrawal Strategies

4.1 Time-out may be teacher directed, or student selected, as a means of calming during a stressful situation within a safe and predictable environment.

4.2 A time-out strategy should be used only for the minimum period of time necessary for the student to regain enough composure to be able to return safely to class. However, it is recognised that some pupils may need longer periods of time to calm down.

4.3 Procedures for the use of time-out strategies should be communicated to all pupils, parents and carers and school staff and must include information for parents and carers about the process to be used when parents or carers may have concerns or complaints about the use of a time out-strategy.

4.4 Any use of a time-out/withdrawal strategy must take into account factors such as the age, cultural background, individual needs, any disability and the developmental level of the student. The choice of time-out strategy will depend upon:
- The seriousness or frequency of the behaviour
- level of disruption to learning
- risk of harm to the student or others
- risk of damage to property.

4.5 Procedures for the use of time-out/withdrawal strategies should include clearly articulated steps to be followed if a student does not comply with the time-out/withdrawal strategy, or if the use of the time-out/withdrawal strategy has not been successful in managing the behaviour of the student. This could include the involvement of other agencies and parent/carers.

4.6   **Team-Teach** training is offered by the Authority and this focuses on de-escalation strategies as well as physical intervention techniques.   It should be considered to equip staff with appropriate behaviour management skills to safely resolve situations where they may be confronted with anxious, hostile or violent behaviour.

5   Dedicated Time-out/Withdrawal Rooms

5.1   The use of a dedicated time out/withdrawal room should only be implemented within the context of the school's behaviour policy and following full consultation with the school community.

5.2   A dedicated time out/withdrawal room should only be used with a pupil after less intrusive interventions, which have been implemented and documented, have not been successful in managing the behaviour.

5.3   A time out/withdrawal room is an area for a pupil to safely de-escalate, regain control and prepare to meet expectations to return to his or her class. Time out/withdrawal rooms are to be used in conjunction with a behavioral intervention plan in which a student is removed to a supervised area in order to facilitate self-control or to remove a student from a potentially dangerous situation.

5.4   The head teacher should ensure that parents or carers are notified on each occasion the dedicated time out room is used with their child. This could be done by telephone, or by letter.
       Appendix 1 provides a model for this notification.

5.5   A referral or re-referral to the Behaviour Support Team for the development or refinement of a plan to support the student's behaviour should be considered following the frequent use of the dedicated time out/withdrawal room for a particular pupil. This plan should be developed or refined in consultation with the parents or carers and documented.

5.6   A dedicated time out room must:
       - be risk assessed in relation to student and staff safety
       - allow for meaningful educational activity to be provided for students and have adequate ventilation, lighting and heat
       - have adequate space for students and staff
       - allow arrangements for the student to have lunch and toilet breaks when appropriate if time-out occurs across these periods
       - be conducive to de-escalating inappropriate behaviour
       - **not** be locked, latched or secured in any way that would, in case of an emergency, prevent staff or the student from exiting the room
       - be supervised at all times
       - display rules for behaviour within the room
       - display school rules and expectations
       - display visual supports for de-escalation strategies and for appropriate behaviour.
       Appendix 2 provides a suggested checklist for the organisation of a dedicated time out room.

5.7 The head teacher should ensure that a record of the use of the dedicated time out/withdrawal room with each individual student and for each occasion is maintained. This involves keeping accurate records of:
- frequency of use
- antecedent events leading up to the behaviour
- the behaviour itself that led to the use of the designated time out room
- behaviour observed in the time out room
- duration of time the pupil was placed in time out

Appendix 3 provides the model for this record

5.8 The head teacher must ensure that a register of the use of the dedicated time-out room is also maintained.
- This register should record information on the number of times the dedicated time-out room has been used and the number of students with whom the dedicated time out/withdrawal room has been used.
- The use of the room should be reported to the school's governing body or appropriate management committee and be made available to the Local Authority on request.
- Data on the use of the dedicated time-out room should be used by the school or educational provision to assess the effectiveness of the strategy within the context of the regular review of the school's or educational provider's behaviour policy.
- A copy of the record of use of the time out/withdrawal room should be sent to the local authority's Behaviour Support Service each term.

Appendix 4 and 5 provide a model for the record of use form.

5.9 The Local Authority has a role in monitoring the use of dedicated time out/withdrawal rooms RCT. This includes:
- Analysing the data provided by schools on the use of dedicated time out and withdrawal rooms.
- Raising any issues which arise from the analysis with individual head teachers when necessary.
- Ensuring that the guidelines on the use of dedicated time out/withdrawal rooms are reflected in schools positive behaviour policies.
- Reporting on an annual basis on the use of dedicated time out/withdrawal rooms to the Director of Education and schools.

6 Internal Exclusion Rooms/Pastoral Support Areas

6.1 Schools, particularly at key stages 3 and 4, can choose to internally exclude pupils during the school day to diffuse situations in school that may escalate, so as to avoid a fixed term or permanent exclusion (Welsh Government Circular No: 001/2004 - Revised September 2012 document no: 081/2012 - *Exclusions from Schools and Pupil Referral Units*).

6.2 Internal exclusions can be to a designated area or room within the school, with appropriate support, or another class on a temporary basis. Schools generally use internal exclusion in a planned way as a response to inappropriate and often disruptive behaviour. Internal exclusion marks the behaviour as inappropriate, allows the pupil time to reflect on their behaviour

and gives staff the time to work with the pupil and parents/carers to re-integrate them back into their normal classes.

6.3 In general, areas or rooms used for the purpose of internal exclusion are distinct from what the Authority considers as dedicated time out/withdrawal rooms. The use of these rooms is **not** time out/withdrawal as defined in this guidance. However the following guidelines should be noted:

- Rooms or areas used for internal exclusion should be supervised at all times.
- Internal exclusion should be used as part of a positive individual behaviour plan designed to avoid fixed or permanent exclusion.
- The use of internal exclusion should be detailed in the school or educational provision's whole school behaviour policy and procedures.
- The use of internal exclusion should be properly recorded for each individual pupil.
- Parents/carers should be notified of the use of internal exclusion as part of the plans to manage a pupil's behaviour.
- Data on the use of internal exclusion should be presented to the governing body as part of the regular review of positive behaviour policy and practice.

7 Sensory and Other Rooms Used for Individual Support

7.1 It is understood that pupils will often be withdrawn from classes as part of their individual education programme to be given support to meet specific learning targets. This can include the use of sensory rooms to improve a pupil's sensory integration by providing specific and targeted sound, smell, touch and light stimulation. Some schools may also set up rooms for relaxation and counselling and small rooms or spaces are often used to provide support to deliver specific educational programmes either individually or in small groups.

7.2 Schools and other educational provision should ensure the safety of these rooms or spaces by carrying out appropriate risk assessments for each activity that takes place in the room or space and making sure any equipment is safe to use. Staff working individually with pupils in such rooms should have training in the use of the room or space and any activity carried out in it.

7.3 Sensory and other rooms or spaces used for the purpose of delivering individual education programmes are not time out/withdrawal rooms and therefore their use does not need to be recorded or registered in the same way as dedicated time out or withdrawal rooms. The Local Authority **does not** recommend that such rooms are also used for time out or withdrawal.

8 Pupil Selected Release from Classroom Activities

8.1 It is not uncommon for schools to give permission for a pupil to leave a classroom and go to another designated, supervised room or space to calm down if the pupil is starting to feel anxious or agitated. This is often done as part of an individual behaviour plan and is a useful strategy to enable the pupil

to improve their emotional control and independence as well as start to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning.

8.2 Often pupils are issued with "time out" cards which they can show their teacher so they can be released from the class. However, these strategies are **not** time out/withdrawal strategies as defined in this guidance but fit within the broader range of behavioural strategies a school might use to help manage a pupil's behaviour and its impact on other members of the school community.

8.3 Schools may want to consider the following guidance when using such strategies with a pupil:
- Pupil selected release should be part of the pupil's individual behaviour plan and should have been discussed with the pupil and their parents/carers.
- The plan should be communicated to other members of staff to avoid misunderstandings.
- The plan should specify a designated room or space the pupil can select to go to which is supervised.
- Staff should record when a pupil is choosing to leave class activities and review the data to see if there are any patterns.
- The plan should be reviewed with the pupil, school staff and parents/carers regularly to monitor its effectiveness in improving a pupil's engagement and independence.

8.4 **Schools should be mindful that pupils must be supervised at all times and arrangements should be put in place to ensure pupils report to an appropriate member of staff whenever they are released from class so they do not have opportunity to leave the premises or move around a school site unsupervised.**

9 Detention

9.1 Schools sometimes use specified rooms to carry out detentions both at lunchtimes and after school. However, detention is **not** time out or withdrawal as defined in this guidance.

9.2 With regard to detentions the updated guidance in the Welsh Government Circular No 47/2006, Section 3, Annex 3ii, *Detention: The law and how to apply it* should be followed. This notes that Section 92 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 clarified that schools have the authority to detain pupils after the end of a school session on disciplinary grounds.

9.3 Detentions must be reasonable and proportionate to the offence and staff imposing detentions should take account of:
- The child's age
- Any special educational needs
- Any religious requirements
- Whether the parent/carer can reasonably arrange for the child to get home from school after the detention

9.4 The procedures for imposing detentions should be set out in the school's behaviour policy.

9.5   Staff supervising detentions do not necessarily have to be teachers but detentions should be carried out in a manner consistent with staff contracts and job descriptions and with the National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload.

9.6   Schools must give at least 24 hours notice of a detention to the parent or carer except for lunchtime detentions.

9.7   Generally a requirement to remain in the classroom or elsewhere in the school should not be enforced by the use of force. The only circumstances in which using force would be justifiable would be where the staff involved judged that allowing the pupil to leave would entail serious risks to the pupil's or others safety.

9.8   It is essential that staff and pupils get a reasonable break at lunchtime to eat, drink and use toilets. Lunchtime detentions should not be of a duration that deprives a staff member or pupil from their entitlement to these things.

9.9   The time a pupil spends in detention should be used constructively and to best effect.

9.10   Schools should keep a written record of any detentions and the reasons for imposing them.

APPENDIX 1

Sample letter

_____ School

_____ Date

This letter is to inform you about the use of the Time Out Room today with your son/daughter _____ of Year _____consistent with the School Behaviour Policy.

The Time-out Room was used with your son/daughter between _____ (time) and_____(time) because

Please feel free to contact the school to discuss the behaviour that led to your child being placed in the Time Out Room

Yours sincerely,

APPENDIX 2 - Sample Checklist

The Use of a Dedicated Time-Out Room

- Has been endorsed by the school community and incorporated as part of a continuum of behavioural interventions in the school behaviour policy.

- Has been risk assessed in relation to student and staff safety.

- Allows for meaningful educational activity to be provided for students.

- Has adequate ventilation, lighting and heat.

- Has adequate space for students and staff.

- Allows arrangements for the student to have lunch and toilet breaks when time out occurs across those periods.

- Is conducive to de-escalating inappropriate behaviours.

- Is not to be locked, latched or secured in any way that would, in case of an emergency, prevent staff or the student from exiting the room.

- Is supervised at all times.

- Displays rules for behaviour within the room.

- Displays school rules and expectations.

- Displays visual supports for de-escalation strategies and for appropriate behaviour.

Communication and Evaluation

- Procedures for the use of time out/withdrawal have been communicated to all students, parents and carers and school staff.

- Training has been conducted for school staff in procedures for the use of the dedicated time out/withdrawal room.

- A record of the use of the dedicated time out/withdrawal room with each individual student and for each occasion is maintained.

- Procedures for notifying parents or carers of the use of the time out/withdrawal room with their child have been developed.

- Procedures for referral or re-referral to the Behaviour Support Team have been developed.

- A register of the use of the dedicated time out/withdrawal room is maintained and forwarded to the Education Authority each term.

- Procedures to be followed if a student does not comply with the use of the time out/withdrawal t room or if the use of the use of the time out/withdrawal room is not successful in managing the behaviour of the student have been developed.

- Data on the use of the time-out room is used to assess its effectiveness in supporting an individual student.

- Data on the use of the time out room is used to assess the effectiveness of the strategy within the context of the regular review of the school's behaviour policy.

APPENDIX 3: Suggested Use of Time Out/Withdrawal Room - Recording Pro-forma

Date	Pupil Name	Year Group	Time In	Time Out	Staff Member supervising	Antecedent event & behaviour leading up to the use of the room	Staff and Pupil debrief carried out (yes/no)	Parent/ Carers notified (phone/ letter and date)	Follow – up support (yes/no)

APPENDIX 4

Time Out Room Secondary School Return

Section 1: School Information

School Name:	
Term:	

Section 2: Data

Please identify the number of pupils who have accessed the time out/withdrawal room:

Year Group	Number of Pupils	Gender		Code of Practice Stage (SA, SA+, Statemented or not applicable)
		Female	Male	
Year 7				
Year 8				
Year 9				
Year 10				
Year 11				
Year 12/13				
Total				

Total number of individual uses of the Time Out/ Withdrawal Room (eg some pupils may have accessed the room on more than one occasion):	

Section 3: Signature

Forwarded to Behaviour Support Service on:	
Head Teacher's Signature:	
Date:	

Time Out Room Primary School Return

Section 1: School Information

School Name:	
Term:	

Section 2: Data

Please identify the number of pupils who have accessed the time out/withdrawal room:

Year Group	Number of Pupils	Gender		Code of Practice Stage (SA, SA+, Statemented or not applicable)
		Female	Male	
Nursery				
Reception				
Year 1				
Year 2				
Year 3				
Year 4				
Year 5				
Year 6				
Total				

Total number of individual uses of the Time Out/Withdrawal Room (eg some pupils may have accessed the room on more than one occasion):	

Section 3: Signature

Forwarded to Behaviour Support Service on:	
Head Teacher's Signature:	
Date:	