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EQUITY AND **EXCELLENCE** IN **EDUCATION** AND **ENHANCED**
WELLBEING FOR ALL

Guidance for Schools

Assessing and Managing Risks: Learners Who Present Challenging Behaviours

RCT Access and Inclusion Service

**This document is available in Welsh
Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg**

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Assessing and Managing Risks for Learners Who Present Challenging Behaviours

Introduction

The following guidance should be read in conjunction with *Restrictive Physical Intervention: the use of reasonable force to restrain and control children and young people*.

The risk assessment and management proforma included in this document have been designed to help teachers, learning support assistants and other adults working in schools and specialist provisions to improve practice in relation to the assessment and management of risk posed by pupils with severely challenging behaviour. The risk may be to the learners themselves, other learners, teachers, other adults or property.

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.

1 What is meant by "risk" and "risk assessment"?

"Risk" refers to any circumstances which could lead to adverse outcomes for the learner or others. Risks may arise in relation to a number of factors, such as

- the health, care and social support arrangements for the learner;
- interactions between the learner and his or her environment;
- violence and/or aggression shown towards the learner or others,
- the direct impact of behaviour(s) presented by the learner;

- measures and interventions employed to reduce, limit or manage the risks presented to the learner and others.

Risk assessment and management is a process that helps staff and others to consider risk issues, to act reasonably, and to learn from what happens in everyday practice. In the main, risk assessment and management involves:

- Using what is known, in the light of experience, skills and above all common sense to make rational judgements about risk issues.
- Following any competent instructions, information etc. given in the interest of Health and Safety
- Weighing up options and taking reasonable risks.
- Taking action to implement a range of approaches to support and safeguard the learner and others. By working in this way it is possible to make decisions and take actions to:
 - Limit the level of inherent risk to which the learner and others are exposed.
 - Take calculated risks to broaden the learner's experience and maximise his or her individual potential
 - Avoid unreasonable risks for this learner and others.
 - Ensure that strategies used to respond to challenging behaviour are reasonable and proportionate to the risks presented by the behaviour.

A clear risk assessment and management strategy will help staff to make decisions about what can reasonably be done to limit risks. At the same time it will help prepare them for times when things go wrong. Challenging behaviours are often foreseeable, even though it may be difficult to predict exactly when they will occur or the degree of challenge they will pose. ~~As a general rule,~~

In principle schools should:

- Explore why the learner behaves in ways that pose a risk.
- Try to understand the factors that influence the behaviour.
- Recognise the early warning signs that indicate that the learner's behaviour is beginning to emerge.

- Develop the skills to manage difficult situations competently and sensitively. The measures agreed for managing identified risks should be set out in an agreed behaviour management plan for the individual learner. Risk assessment and management can also be used in emergency situations when unforeseen risks occur.

Schools can request support from Access and Inclusion Services through the Service Delivery Model to help develop awareness and understanding of the points above.

2 Assessing Risk

Risk assessment involves a consideration of potential and actual risk. Key steps are:

- **Assessing the context for risk** - trying to predict the situations in which risks do/may occur. For example, situations where learners might feel frustrated, learners being near open roads, on transport or in crowded places.
- **Assessing probability** - trying to estimate how likely it is that the risk situation will occur and whether any injury or harm is *very likely* to occur, *likely* to occur, or *unlikely* to occur.
- **Assessing seriousness** - trying to gauge the kind of injury and harm that could result. For example: choking, bruises, bleeding, sprains, broken bones, stress, anxiety etc.

It is assumed here that the school will apply the risk assessment and management proforma (see appendix 1)

When assessed, all risks should be recorded in accordance with relevant requirements such as LA or school policies. In the event that risks are thought to be serious for the learner or others, the school may need to use formal risk assessment frameworks and tools, such as the Health and Safety Executive's "Five Steps to Risk Assessment" (www.hse.gov.uk/risk/5steps.htm).

3 Risk Reduction

Risk reduction involves an examination of risk management options and consideration of the benefits and drawbacks of each option for the learner, staff and others concerned. After weighing up the options available, some may be discounted as unsuitable. This will usually be because they have insufficient impact on the risk or have too many drawbacks. A record should be kept of risk reduction options examined and discounted as well as those adopted for each learner (see appendix 2). Risk reduction should include:

- Proactive measures to support the learner effectively and prevent difficulties emerging.
- Early interventions to help the learner in difficult situations and avert problems.
- Planned measures to manage the learner and others safely, when unavoidable difficulties arise.

In circumstances where there are concerns that the risk reduction options being considered may themselves give rise to risk to the pupil or others, it would be prudent for schools to seek advice from other bodies. These may include:

- Behaviour Support Service
- LA Health and Safety Unit
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for concerns in relation to learners

4 Risk Management Measures

The measures selected to prevent risks occurring, manage risks that arise and respond to injuries and harm that occur should be based upon a full appraisal of all the risk management options. In agreeing the risk management strategy, it is important to be explicit about inherent risks that

- continue to exist, even when the strategy is fully implemented
- can be reduced by implementing the strategy
- can be prevented by implementing the strategy
- are inherent in the strategy.

The agreed risk management measures should form the basis of the learner's behaviour management plan and the school's risk management strategy. All decisions made about risk management options should be recorded in accordance with school procedures. When selecting risk management procedures for the learner's behaviour management plan and the school risk management strategy, schools should adopt person centred planning practices and involve parents, or those with parental responsibility.

Professionals from other agencies should also be consulted in the process of deciding the best options to eliminate, reduce or limit the risk, without placing unreasonable restrictions on the learner, other learners, school staff or others, or putting others at unreasonable risk. Accommodation and resources will influence the strategy employed, however, learners, particularly those who are vulnerable, should not be placed away from direct adult supervision as part of any behaviour management strategy.

In the event that there are disputes or concerns about the measures employed, it would be prudent for schools to seek advice from the people or bodies listed in the preceding section. (Refer to appendix 3)

5 An Agreed Approach

Once agreed, the behaviour management plan and risk management strategy should be shared with all those responsible for implementing or monitoring the impact of the plan. This will help to ensure that those concerned know how the learner is to be supported and why, which behaviours are to be managed and how they are to be managed; and which risk reduction measures are to be employed and when (refer to appendix 4). The risk management strategy can be shared through discussion groups, meetings and circulating information. Those who should be informed include:

- the learner.
- his/her parents or those with parental responsibility.
- members of the teaching team and other school staff.
- other professionals involved with the learner, learner protection teams and
- other agencies.

Schools should keep a record of those informed about the strategy.

6 Staff training

Once the plan and risk management strategy have been shared with those who work with and support the learner, consideration should be given to the ability of staff to implement the strategy. It should be determined what training may be required prior to implementation. Successful implementation will be dependent on staff competence and expertise. The Behaviour Support Service can support schools in this regard. School records should show training needs identified as a result of the strategy and when and how training was provided to enable staff to implement it. Where it is apparent that there are staff with significant training needs, implementation of the risk management strategy should be modified until relevant staff training has been provided. In some instances, staff training will be required as a matter of urgency so that implementation can take place without delay (refer to appendix 5)

7 Evaluation

Schools should regularly review risk assessment and management measures. All evaluations of plans and strategies should be reported using school procedures and recorded in school records. These will make an important contribution to informing future planning and improving day-to-day practice. Should the level of risk be such that the use of reasonable force is needed to restrain the pupil then careful consideration will need to be given to RCT policy on **Restrictive Physical Intervention: the use of reasonable force to restrain and control children and young people**. All incidents of physical intervention will require a detailed incident log to be submitted to the Local Authority through the agreed reporting procedure.

8 Managing the impact on staff working with learners who may exhibit challenging behaviour.

It is recognised, with concern, the vulnerability of school staff to harm as a result of the challenging behaviour of learners in the course of their work. These concerns are treated seriously, every effort will be made to prevent, wherever possible, such situations occurring and minimise the consequences of challenging behaviour should it occur.

It is important that school staff who are at risk of harm, or experience it, feel valued and supported. The environment and working practices of school staff, particularly those who are vulnerable should be monitored. Where necessary, suitable control measures and training needs will be identified and implemented within resource allocation, to ensure that the risk of harm is reduced and its effect mitigated.

All incidents of harm as a result of the challenging behaviour of learners must be reported to the designated Senior Leader, who has responsibility for the overall monitoring and review of staff welfare.

Further advice and guidance can be found in the council's Violence at Work Policy.

Appendix 1

Risk Assessment: Learners with Challenging Behaviours



School name:		Name of pupil:		Date of birth:	
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Identification of Risk

Is the risk potential or actual? (Has there already been an incident?)	
List who is affected by the risk	

Assessment of Risk

In which situations does the risk usually occur?	
How likely it is that the risk will arise?	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?	
What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?	
How serious are the adverse outcomes?	

Assessment completed by:

Name:		Designation:		Signature:		Date:	
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Appendix 2

Risk Reduction



School name:		Name of pupil:		Date of birth:	
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Risk Reduction Options			
Measures	Possible options	Benefits	Drawbacks
Proactive interventions to prevent risk			
Early interventions to manage risk			
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes			

Completed by:

Name:		Designation:		Signature:		Date:	
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School name:		Name of pupil:		Date of birth:	
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Focus of measures	Measures to be employed	Level of risk Drawbacks
Proactive interventions to prevent risk inc environmental aspects (noise, people, changes, activity, communication)		
Early interventions to manage risk		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes (eg calming, verbal/non-verbal interaction, redirection, relocation)		

Agreed by:

Parent/Carer:		Relationship to learner:		Signature:		Date:	
Staff member:		Role:		Signature:		Date:	



School name:		Name of pupil:		Date of birth:	
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Plans and strategies shared with	Communication Method	Date Actioned

Completed by:

Name:		Designation:		Signature:		Date:	
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Appendix 5

Staff Training



School name:		Name of pupil:		Date of birth:	
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Identified training needs	Training provided to meet needs	Date training completed

Completed by:

Name:		Designation:		Signature:		Date:	
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School name:		Name of pupil:		Date of birth:	
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Measures set out	Effectiveness in supporting the learner	Impact on risk
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early interventions to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Evaluated by:

Name:		Designation:		Signature:		Date:	
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