



Caring Education

Maintaining a Safe Environment Policy

Background

This policy is intended to sit alongside the Relationships and Praise Policy.

The actions here are additional precautions that may be required to keep students safe whilst in our care.

If any of these precautions are taken, all parents and commissioners must be informed, an incident form and relevant safeguarding forms must be completed and a restorative meeting must take place with the student, parent, commissioner and any other professional to ensure the continued safety of the student and all those at VLC.

Please also refer to the:

Missing and Absconding students policy

E Safety Policy

Drugs Policy

Antibullying Policy

Aims

- VLC will always be an emotionally and physically safe place of learning for all.
- VLC will be an educational environment that is fair and based on mutual respect between staff and student.
- The atmosphere at VLC will be a calm, safe environment and conducive to excellent learning.
- VLC will encourage and promote self-reflection.
- VLC will help students with self-regulation.
- VLC will aid students to develop strategies to help during their time at VLC which will also help in their daily lives.
- VLC will enable students to reflect on the impact of unsafe behaviours on themselves and those around them.
- VLC will act to prevent bullying.
- VLC will be a place that students want to attend. Attendance for students will be excellent.
- VLC will help students find strategies to improve attendance where attendance is not excellent.

Physical Intervention

Staff have received Team Teach Training.

Our overriding aim is to deescalate at all times. Please see our relationships and praise policy for an understanding of our ethos.

Duty of Care: A professional duty to do the right thing

“As a professional, you are personally accountable for actions and omissions in your practice and must always be able to justify your decisions”; and, “You must always act lawfully, whether those laws relate to your professional practice or personal life.” Accountability is integral to professional practice.

Defining Restrictive Physical Intervention

There are several definitions of the term ‘restraint’ within or across different professions.

Physical restraint (or Physical Intervention) can also be defined as:

“the positive application of force for the purpose of overcoming a subject’s resistance with the aim of: - Preventing the actual or imminent physical assault of self or others; Effecting a lawful arrest; and / or preventing a person who is lawfully detained from escaping or absconding (if safe in the circumstances to do so). Stopping and / or preventing serious damage to property.”

- The force must be reasonable and proportionate to the threat being offered.
- The person must also have an honest held belief that they, or another, are in imminent danger
- The person’s use of force was reasonable in the circumstances
- The level of force was proportionate to the amount of harm likely to occur.

VLC will only use physical intervention techniques in a matter of last resort. Most times, we will call 999 or lock down as a preference to use of any physical intervention.

Incident Procedure

1. Incident Occurs
2. Staff ensure that they complete an incident form
3. Form to be shared with Centre Leader and/or member of the Senior Leadership Team – these will then be sent on to parents/schools/ABP’s/social services (where appropriate) and other agencies that might apply.

For major incidents;

4. Centre Leader or Principal to clarify statement with the young person and gather further reports from witnesses.
5. Statements to be passed to relevant member management – these will then be sent on to parents/schools/ABP’s/social services (where appropriate) and other agencies that might apply.
6. Should “Physical Force” be applied in any incident, staff should complete the “Use of Force Incident Form”. These are available in the SLT office. These will be sent to parents/schools/ABP’s/social services (where appropriate) and other agencies that might apply.

Lockdown Procedure

What does Lockdown mean?

This Lockdown Procedure provides the steps that can be taken to minimise threats and intruders from gaining access into VLC buildings and preventing them from moving through the building. This is achieved through actions and physical measures in response to warnings of threats that are about to happen.

Why do we have VLC Lockdown procedures?

There is an increasing importance of Lockdown Systems and procedures due to rising threat on all educational establishments of firearm, weapon and terrorist attacks. VLC is no exception.

Usually those who are thinking about carrying out an attack plan in advance, any opportunity to notice and prevent threats should be taken advantage of - for example day-to-day staff awareness, prevention communications and active observations from staff.

Complete prevention of attacks cannot be fully certain, therefore, being able to discourage and delay the attackers during a threat can be very useful. An effective Lockdown Procedure can enable students and staff to find a safe and secure place, therefore reducing potential casualties.

The main aims of this lockdown procedure include:

- To remove students and staff away from the threat.
- Keeping the threat isolated away from students if possible.
- Accurate recording of which students are present and any that are missing.
- Developing an efficient evacuation away from the threat.

Exact plans for lock down will be different depending on the individual centre. It is the responsibility of the centre leader to discuss the most appropriate room to move students to in lock down and to risk assess the individual centre.

There are two key types of lockdown situations:

1. School lockdown with warning: threat is outside VLC
2. School lockdown with intruder: threat or intruder has got inside VLC

VLC Lockdown with Warning

Carry out the following steps when the threat is outside of the school building:

- Once a member of staff has identified a threat, they should repeat the announcement "lockdown with warning".
- Students in Whitnash in the playground should re-enter the building.
- Exterior doors should be locked at all times. Double check all exterior doors are locked.
- Students or staff in rooms that are not able to be secured such as hallways and bathrooms should move to rooms that can be secured. In St Margartes Chapter House, this could be the upstairs room (checking that the doors to the downstairs rooms are locked. In St Margaret's centre, this could be the back room in the old school or the small room behind the office. In rugby this could be the vestry.
- Secure and cover windows if possible..
- Move everyone away from windows.
- Teachers should take a register of students in each classroom (take note of any missing or extra students in the room).
- The centre phone should be used to call 999
- When the threat has been removed, the member of staff can announce "all clear".

School Lockdown with Intruder

Carry out the following steps when the threat or intruder is already inside the school building:

- A designated member of staff should repeat the announcement "lockdown with intruder".
- All students, staff and any visitors must be directed to the nearest secure room without delay.
- Anyone outside must not go back inside the building. Instead, move them to their fire assembly point or other safe outdoor space.
- Lock all doors
- DO NOT lock exterior doors.

- Move everyone away from windows and doors. Make sure all students remain sitting on the floor.
- Turn off the lights.
- Teachers should take a register of students (take note of any missing or extra students in the room). Keep the list of names when allowed to leave the room.
- DO NOT respond to anybody at the door until it has been announced that it is safe.
- Keep out of sight.
- The centre phone should be used to call 999
- Ensure students move quickly and quietly when or if they are moved out of the room.
- When there is no longer a threat or the intruder has left the building, the designated member of staff should announce “all clear”.

Calling 999

If a situation occurs and it is not possible to deescalate and use our multitude of strategies for maintaining a safe environment – VLC may call 999 and ask for police assistance.

If this happens, parents, commissioners and other relevant professionals will be informed immediately. A incident report will be completed and also any relevant safeguarding documentation.

The student will always need a restorative meeting and effective reintegration program prior to their safe return.

Knives and Offensive Weapons

It is illegal to carry knives or other offensive weapons on and around School premises.

The Trustees at VLC recognises that the presence of weapons, or items which could potentially be offensive weapons, on the premises would not only create unacceptable risks of bullying, injury or death, but also create a climate that undermines the educational purposes and core values at VLC.

It is therefore the VLCs policy to forbid the possession, custody and use of weapons by unauthorised persons in, on, or around VLC premises and during VLC activities.

These rules apply at all times except where an item, which could potentially be an offensive weapon, is issued to a student by a member of staff at VLC or is required by VLC for the purposes of teaching and learning, as necessary, for the delivery of the curriculum. Misuse of such items will be dealt with as though possession is not authorised.

For the purpose of this Policy a “weapon” is:

- a firearm of any description, including starting pistols, air guns and any type of replica or toy gun;
- knives, including all variations of bladed objects ie: pocketknives, craft knives, scissors etc;
- explosives, including fireworks, aerosol sprays, lighters, matches;
- laser pens or other objects, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose but has a potentially violent use ie: the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use, as a weapon.

Any breach of this will be actioned immediately. This could mean fixed or permanent exclusion from the school. The police might also be contacted.

Procedure for Dealing with Knives and Offensive Weapons

Under most circumstances, the Police should be informed of any incident believed to involve a weapon. However, where, in the judgement of the staff, the circumstances are wholly innocent and there is no suggestion of the use of the article as a weapon, the matter may be dealt with internally on a disciplinary basis.

When contacting the Police the VLCs senior member of staff dealing with the matter should give his/her evaluation of the seriousness of the incident, (i.e. in progress, threat to life, or weapon secure, for collection only) to help the Police to make their own judgement on the nature and immediacy of the response required.

Police Community Support Officers have no powers to act under this legal framework, it is only Police officers or School staff.

There may also be some exceptional circumstances where members of staff, who have been made aware that a weapon may be on school premises, decide that they need to act before the Police arrive. If this is the case:

Designated staff should always be called to assess and manage any situation where an offensive weapon is suspected:

- where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student might have in their possession an offensive weapon, knife or blade, it might be appropriate for the Principal, or an authorised member of staff, to conduct a search of that student or his/her possessions, with or without the student's consent;
- in making that decision, a risk assessment approach should be adopted and it should be noted that such immediate preventive action could either prevent a potentially dangerous situation escalating or could, conversely, inflame the situation; such a search may only be carried out where the member of staff and student are on VLC premises or are elsewhere and the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the student.

A member of staff carrying out a search:

- may not require a student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing, i.e. any item of clothing not being worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment being worn as underwear;
- must be of the same sex as the student;
- may carry out the search only in the presence of another member of staff who is also of the same sex as the student;
- a student's possessions (including any goods over which he/she appears to have control) may not be searched except in his/her presence and another member of staff;
- if in the course of a search the member of staff finds anything he/she suspects of falling within the knives and offensive weapon category, or any other thing he/she suspects is evidence in relation to an offence, he/she may seize and retain it ;
- members of staff may, on occasion, take possession of a knife or other weapon brought to School by a person in circumstances which contravene the Offensive Weapons Act 1996;
- possession of the weapon in such circumstances by a member of staff is likely to be with good reason or lawful authority, and thus not an offence under the Act, but a member of staff in possession of a weapon in such circumstances should secure it, and pass it immediately to the Principal or, in the Principals absence, the Deputy Principal, and arrange without delay to surrender it to the Police, or where satisfied that it is reasonable to do so, arrange for it to be taken away by the parent/carer of the person from whom it was taken