



Safe Space Policy



BACKGROUND

Safe Space

Description

Safe space is a low stimulation environment that can be used either as a space to calm in a crisis situation or as a sanctuary to use as a planned activity. These purposes can be worked out according to the child's individual needs.

A Safe space provides a low stimulation area for pupils to calm down, or have quiet time in- as opposed to a noisy/busy classroom. Pupils can use the Safe space as a means of managing their own behaviour, by requesting time in it when they recognise their stress levels are rising. This can dramatically reduce the incidence of crisis situations.

When a crisis situation occurs, the Safe space can reduce the extent and frequency of physical intervention and reduce the risk of injury to all. It can mean that relationships with staff members are less likely to be damaged by more restrictive practices.

In a classroom, a Safe space can facilitate a rapid response to incidents, and can remove the chaos and disruption involved in evacuating the classroom. Many schools are offering parents the option to include the use of a Safe space in their child's Individual Behaviour Support Plan.

For any staff member who uses the safe space as a de-escalation tool with a child, a 'Safe Space Recording Sheet' (*appendix 2*) should be filled in.

How

- The children are taught that the Safe Space is a safe place to calm.
- The aim is for the child to regulate their own behaviour and request to use the Safe Space themselves.

Safe Space Policy

Last Review: October 2024

Next Review: October 2026

- An individual behaviour plan for the child needing to use the Safe Space will be created by staff at school.
- Parental consent needs to be obtained where possible.
- Each time the Safe Space is used, a form is filled out (appendix 2) to detail why, when and how long the Safe Space was used for, along with notes of what the child said and did while in there. This can form an important part of safeguarding.
- Staff may go into the Safe Space with the child and appropriate resources as a planned intervention. If the child requests it then staff may either go in with the child, or sit outside with the door open.
- When it is being used as a crisis intervention, for example in times when a child is being physically aggressive the door will be zipped up and the child will be monitored through the viewing panel to ensure their safety. Staff will ensure that they monitor the child at all times via the window.
- Members of staff will not enter safe space whilst a child is in crisis without the permission of the SENCO, Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher. If this is to be planned a risk assessment will need to be carried out before agreement.
- In times of the Safe Space being used as a crisis intervention, the staff will aim to have the door shut for a maximum of 10 minutes. They will aim to have the door open and to be engaged with the child for them to calm further as soon as possible.
- The child can request water at any time while in the safe space and this will always be provided, staff will offer a child water as standard procedure.
- There is plenty of room for the child to sit, or lie down if they choose.

When

- When the child requests to use it.
- If there is a crisis situation, where it is considered the child, other children or staff are at risk.
- If the Safe Space is used in a crisis situation, for example when a child is being aggressive, it is considered to be a serious incident and as an act of seclusion, therefore a physical intervention.
- Ideally Safe Space needs to be used as a planned intervention and not as a reactive strategy, however, sometimes incidents occur and it is considered Safe Space is safer than staff having to physically hold a child. If a behaviour plan is not already in place for a child, after an incident where the Safe Space is used with that child, then a behaviour plan needs to be made and parental consent obtained.
- It can be used as a de-escalation strategy in that a child can be encouraged to move near to the Safe Space if they are becoming anxious or upset, this may then promote them making a positive choice to use it as a calming aid.

Page 12 of Behaviour and Discipline Guidance Advice for Head teachers, January 2016, Department for Education, via www.gov.uk states:

Safe Space Policy

Last Review: October 2024

Next Review: October 2026

Seclusion / isolation rooms

42. Schools can adopt a policy which allows disruptive pupils to be placed in an area away from other pupils for a limited period, in what are often referred to as seclusion or isolation rooms. If a school uses seclusion or isolation rooms as a disciplinary penalty this should be made clear in their behaviour policy. As with all other disciplinary penalties, schools must act reasonably in all the circumstances when using such rooms (see paragraphs 14 and 15). Any use of isolation that prevents a child from leaving a room of their own free will should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The school must also ensure the health and safety of pupils and any requirements in relation to safeguarding and pupil welfare.

43. It is for individual schools to decide how long a pupil should be kept in seclusion or isolation, and for the staff member in charge to determine what pupils may and may not do during the time they are there. Schools should ensure that pupils are kept in seclusion or isolation no longer than is necessary and that their time spent there is used as constructively as possible. Schools should also allow pupils time to eat or use the toilet.

- As a planned intervention, Safe Space can be used as a calming environment and staff may take in beanbags, cushions, blankets and sensory toys. These will be included in a child's individual behaviour plan, if appropriate and be easily accessible near to the Safe Space. At the end of that session, it is vital that those items are cleared away and Safe Space is left empty, this is to ensure that in the event of a crisis situation, there is nothing in the space that could cause injury to the child. In the event of a crisis situation staff will be required to vacate safe space immediately.
- It may be that the Safe Space is not an appropriate strategy for some children, particularly those who have attachment issues or fear seclusion. For those children, Safe Space will not be used.

Why

- Some of the children at Old Town have difficulty in managing their behaviour and emotions and they can engage in behaviour that challenges.
- We believe that children need the opportunity to develop and learn in a positive and supportive atmosphere, regardless of their needs. Safe Space is also a protection mechanism for the other children in the class who may be upset or disrupted by challenging behaviour.
- We form an approach to behaviour which tries to help us understand the purpose of the behaviour and to view it as a form of communication.
- Safe Space is a way of teaching children to access what they need in a more appropriate and safe way.
- We aim to equip our children with skills for life and regulating their own behaviour is a crucial skill.

Safe Space Policy

Last Review: October 2024

Next Review: October 2026

Record Keeping

The school has devised an incident form explicitly for use when a child has used the Safe Space in a crisis (*appendix 2*).

All incidents where physical intervention has been required, should be logged on the Track-it-Light system, under the appropriate red behaviour.

All staff are responsible for entering behavioural incidents on to the Track-it-light system the day that an incident/concern/matter occurred. Staff are also responsible for seeking advice from a senior member of staff or Pastoral Care Worker should it feel necessary.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately on to the My Concern system regardless of other work in which this post holder is involved in at the time. Once submitted all DSL's within the school will be immediately notified via email.

Well-being of Staff

Some of our children will have experienced trauma and therefore may display some very challenging behaviour. This can be very difficult to manage and can also invoke feelings of stress and anxiety in the key staff dealing with them. The school is committed to ensuring that staff well-being is supported at all times. Staff have access to counselling services for extreme situations and must be given the opportunity to debrief with the Pastoral Care Worker or with senior leaders when needed. Staff have a responsibility to raise any concerns over stress and anxiety through their line manager or with senior staff at any time. Line managers and leaders can refer staff to the wellbeing programme (through Education Mutual) or alternatively put in additional support e.g. offering external supervision or 1:1 session with our School based Educational Psychologist.

To support one another, all members of staff should be mindful to intervene when they are concerned over the anxiety/stress levels or well-being of those involved in crisis situations. This is not to undermine one another this is to ensure the well-being of all.

Safe Space Policy

Last Review: October 2024

Next Review: October 2026

Appendix 1

Using Reasonable Force

Coastal Learning Partnership's 'Partnership-wide Policy for Behaviour Principles, Reasonable Force and Exclusions' includes the power to use reasonable force and this is also reflected in each school's individual behaviour policy including the circumstances in which force might be used. Any such incidents involving the use of reasonable force are recorded by the school and are reported to parents. Given the additional vulnerability of the group, due regard will be paid to the use of reasonable force on pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

'Reasonable' means no more force than is warranted and only in situations where it is required. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom.

CLP recognises that all school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in relevant situations such as to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property, to conduct a search and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom. However, the primary aim in all schools is to consistently promote a positive culture and ethos. School staff will use de-escalation techniques and alternative strategies specific to the individual needs of children. Reasonable force would only ever be used in strict accordance with the legislative framework. Further details can be found in the government guidance 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention' (June 2019) and in DfE publication 'Use of reasonable force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies' (July 2013).

To safeguard a pupil and others, it may be necessary to use restraint and yet restraint is likely to impact on the well-being of the child and therefore CLP staff will consider the risks carefully. All records of restraint that are recorded on the Track it light system and should be shared with the safeguarding governor.

Safe Space Policy

Last Review: October 2024

Next Review: October 2026



Safe Space Recording Sheet (Please complete both sides of page)

Child's Name:					Class:				
Date	Timings	Location	Staff involved initials	Injury details: TICK BOXES /CIRCLE	Details of incident	Action:	Physical intervention: guides, safe space, door open/closed/ door held - circle	Without action what happened: TICK BOXES	Parents informed
	In:			Injury to self		Self directed	Guide.....	Increased behaviours	Behaviour Log
	Out:			Injury to others			To safe Space Y/N	Injury to self	
	Total:			Attempt		Staff directed: Safe Space Symbol VP GP PP	Door open / closed	Injury to others	Diary Verbal
				Other			Door held at	Other	

What worked?

What didn't work?

Observations while child was in Safe Space. What did they say? What did they do?

Senior Leadership Team Comment:

Signed/Checked (SLT):

Date:

Governors' Monitoring

Date

Safe Space Policy

Last Review: October 2024

Next Review: October 2026