

Turney School

Guidance on the use of Quiet Rooms

Rational

All students learn best when they are calm and relaxed. There will be times when a student may require access to a quiet and calm space so that they have an opportunity to regain control of their feelings and emotions. A Quiet Room is a sensory-controlled calming area. The purpose of a Quiet Room is **not** exclusion or punishment. Rather, it is a space to help the student to calm down and to begin to use self-regulation skills. A Quiet Room is designed for **single** student use.

A Quiet Room is a room that offers a student an opportunity to calm down during the school day. The rooms have been specifically designed by a specialist company to provide safe and secure settings for students who may need "calm areas" or a "place to be" that will not harm them. The rooms are not designed to provide an occasion for positive handling or a place for pupils to be left alone. They are not to be used as sanctions. It is anticipated that over time students will come to recognise the therapeutic and safe setting that the Quiet Room provides and will take themselves there to calm and self-regulate their emotions so that they can then return safely to their classroom activity.

Overview

In the majority of cases the use of a Quiet Room should form part of a student's individual positive support plan and should be agreed by the school leadership and parents/carers and their agreement recorded. Students should be consulted in accordance with their age and level of understanding.

In optimum circumstances the student will choose to access the Quiet Room, sometimes with a prompt from staff. In exceptional circumstances when the student is unable to make this informed choice, staff may be required to accompany the student to the Quiet Room using agreed positive handling strategies (see Positive Handling Policy).

The Quiet Room should only be used after in-class strategies have failed to calm the student. A decision to use physical intervention to support the student in accessing the Quiet Room should be based upon a dynamic risk assessment and should follow the Positive Handling Policy. The use of force is likely to be legally defensible when it is required to prevent:

- self-harming
- injury to another child or young person, service-users, staff or teachers
- damage to property
- an offence being committed and in school settings, any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school or among any of its students

In these instances the Quiet Room can be used as a means of:

- a) helping the student to manage their own emotional state;
- b) reducing the danger to staff/students and/or removing the disruptive behaviour from the body of the school;
- c) reducing the need for prolonged use of physical intervention.

Staff dealing with the student should be fully aware and competent in communicating effectively with the student. This could be through PECS, Makaton, use of visual cues or verbal communication; this will be included in a student's Positive Support Plan.

What should be in a Quiet Room?

The Quiet Rooms are not a teaching room. It is a place of safety and should create a calming environment for the student. The Quiet Rooms have soft padding on walls for protection for students who are very agitated. Lights should be low. Cushions, mattresses, bean bags can be used for students who need to lie down. Soft blankets and covers can be helpful to students who like to cover themselves up. Staff must be able to see the child or young person at all times.

Helping students to understand how to use the Quiet Room

1. Introduce the Quiet Room in a positive, proactive way that helps the student to understand the benefits that can come from its usage.
2. Explain or model to the student that the room can be used when she/he becomes aware that she/he is starting to get upset, get worried or get angry. Use language or other communication methods that are simple and positive.
3. Explain or model that the Quiet Room will be for them when they are in it.
4. Staff should avoid entering the Quiet Room unless absolutely necessary, i.e. to keep the student safe, or unless the student has asked or indicated the adult should join them in the room.
5. The Quiet Room should not be used on a 'scheduled' basis. It is meant to be used as and when a student is starting to show signs that they may become upset or demonstrating that they need a break to avoid a critical incident and to regain a sense of calm.
6. The best outcome of using a Quiet Room is when a student learns how to 'self-regulate' independently and is able to calm her/himself down.
7. The Quiet Room needs to be used with a calm and positive approach in order to help reduce anxiety. This means using a planned and sensitive manner to help the student move towards the room during and after they have spent time there.
8. When introducing the Quiet Room initially, the student should be asked to spend five to ten minutes in there. They can lie down on something comfortable if they want to (e.g. a bean bag, specially provided mattress, etc.) or they can stand and move around if they want to. This introduction session should be used in a proactive manner, when the student is calm and receptive, in order to help her/him feel good about being there.
9. Following several sessions when the student has been able to spend time in the room while in a pleasant and quiet frame of mind, the next step is to explain or model to the student that the Quiet Room will also be available when they need a place to calm down, help them stop worrying or help them to feel less angry.
10. It is important to explain that sometimes a member of staff will suggest that 'this is a good time to use the Quiet Room' or the student themselves may feel that 'this is a good time to use the Quiet Room'.
11. Staff should then be alert to warning signs that the student may need a break and remind the student that this may be a good time to use the Quiet Room.

Procedure for the use of the Quiet Room

1. When a member of staff notices that a student is becoming anxious or agitated, the student

should be given reasonable opportunity to calm using the strategies detailed in the school's behaviour policy or in the student's individual Positive Support Plan.

2. If the student's behavior continues to cause concern and is reaching a point where they are affecting other students and/or they become a danger to themselves, other students or staff, the student should be prompted to make 'the right choice' and comply with requests from staff.
3. Other staff should be alerted for support as appropriate.
4. If the student continues not to comply, staff should suggest 'this is a good time to use the Quiet Room'.
5. If the student continues not to comply and, subject to a dynamic risk assessment, one of the five legally defensible criteria (as in section 2 above) apply, staff may consider it necessary to escort the child or young person to the Quiet Room using an approved physical intervention in line with school policy, WCC's 'Guidance on the Use of Force and Physical Intervention' and the law.
6. Once in the Quiet Room, and away from the body of the school, staff involved should try to resolve the situation satisfactorily with the student spending the minimum time necessary in the Quiet Room.
7. When the Quiet Room has been used as described above, the incident must be recorded appropriately in line with the school's Positive Handling policy.
8. While a student is in the Quiet Room, senior staff should ensure that appropriate staffing is available to support the student.

The Executive Headteacher, SLT and governing body are aware of human rights legislation. They will not support the restriction of a pupil's right to freely leave a quiet room, unless there is an immediate danger of harm to the pupil or others. Such restriction will be treated as a physical restraint by the member(s) of staff involved.

At no time should students be unsupervised in a Quiet Room. It may be appropriate to allow the student to calm on their own but staff must be able to see the student via a window.

At no time should students be locked in a Quiet Room.

If a student tries to leave the Quiet Room before they are calm, staff should use low and slow responses to direct the student to stay. In extreme cases when the student is very distressed and unable to process requests, staff may need to implement a dynamic risk assessment (please also refer to the school's Positive Handling Policy).

This response must be recorded after the event in line with school policy. If this becomes a regular requirement it must be included in the student's individual positive support plan (PSP).


5/12/19