

Stanley School Policy

Calm Room Policy



General	
Date approved	September 2024
Date of Review	September 2026

All other Stanley School Policies should be taken into account when following the Stanley school room policy.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the managing behaviour and bullying policy.

The Stanley school calm room policy also works alongside, and may reference to the following policies;

- Communication Policy
- Moving and Handling Policy
- Sensory Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Health and Safety Policy
- Incidents and Accidents
- Managing behaviour

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos and enables consistency and quality across the school.

This policy relates to the following legislation

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Safeguarding vulnerable groups act 2006
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Equality Act 2007
- Education Act 2011
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2015

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This Policy was reviewed

September 2022	

Introduction

The following policy aims to outline the use of calm/quiet spaces and how they should be used. It will clearly identify and outline the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and those connected to using the calm/quiet room spaces.

Calm rooms and quiet spaces should be a place to enable students to gain control of their emotions in a safe and secure environment, in order to provide a safe place for themselves and those around them.

This policy will cover the use of calm rooms & quiet spaces.

A student may need the calm space for a variety of different reasons, primarily:

- To de-escalate an incident or pre-empt one by changing environments.
- To self-regulate after an incident or following the stages listed in the IBP.
- To use as a secure environment chosen by the student.
- To provide a safe, caring and nurturing learning environment
- To support any pupils whom are upset, distressed or acting in an unsafe manner.

The policy will outline the procedures to follow when calm room is being used;

- To ensure children are supervised at all times when using the calm room.
- To ensure the calm room is not used as a “punishment” or “reprimand” in any circumstance.
- To ensure children feel positive about their time in the calm room and see it as a happy place with a calming atmosphere.
- To share good practice within the school and with other schools
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.

Ethos

At Stanley School the term “Calm Room” provides a safe place for the pupil, staff and other pupils. The Calm Room can have many functions for our students. Some use it as a quiet place and will use it often to manage their own anxieties and behaviour, either with or independent of staff involvement.

The DCSF Building Bulletin 102 states that

‘These small rooms are used to help children calm down. Good sight lines, health, safety and welfare must be ensured. A pleasant calm space is needed. Materials, fittings and finishes should safeguard against self-harm’ (p 116)

Aim

At Stanley school we take the welfare of all children very seriously and we strive to provide a safe, caring and nurturing learning environment.

Stanley school provides calming spaces which are safe, quiet areas where pupils can relax and de-stress when needed, while engaging with minimal staff or being supervised from a safe distance by staff. These rooms all have windows on the doors and can be fully seen in to. It is the class teacher and team who decide how to use this small room that best suits the pupils' needs and should be included in the pupils individual behaviour plan (IBP) and agreed with parents if the pupil chooses to use the calm space.

We aim and want children to feel positive about their time in the calm room and to see it as a happy place with a calming atmosphere, a place where they can go when they are upset or just need some space and where they can emotionally regulate before integrating back into the classroom environment.

Overview

The underpinning principle of this policy is to outline and ensure the appropriate use of calm and quiet spaces. This policy will establish the use of how a calm room is used appropriately to allow a pupil to calm as safely and effectively as possible;

- Staff must be able to see the child at all times.
- At no time should pupils be locked in a Quiet Room
- Staff should monitor the pupil at all times, this may be with the member of staff inside the calm room or from outside if the child requests for staff to move away.
- Interior of calm rooms must be visible at all times from outside.
- Staff should monitor the time for the use of the calm room.
- If calm room doors are closed, they should not be locked or held.
- Under no circumstances should the liberty of the child be impinged in any way.
- The emotional and physical safety of the pupil should be the priority at all times.

In the majority of cases the use of a Quiet Room should form part of a pupil's individual behaviour plan (IBP) and should be agreed by the school leadership and parents/carers and their agreement recorded.

It is important here to understand the difference between the actions of seclusion, time-out and withdrawal; to see more information regarding this please refer to the 'Managing behaviour and bullying' policy, Page 12.

Background

Calming rooms and calming spaces at Stanley School

At Stanley school every classroom is designed appropriately to meet the individual needs of all pupils.

- Classes 1-4 all have 1 room which is built for the purpose of being a soft play/calm/quiet space. It is built to be flexible depending on the needs of the pupils within each class. They have soft padded walls and are decorated and furnished accordingly (notes to follow on how calm rooms should be designed).
- Class 5 have one side room and it is built to be flexible depending on the needs of the pupils within the class. It is, and will, be decorated and furnished accordingly. E.g. small work room, library, sensory room, physiotherapy room, calming room etc.
- Classes 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 have two additional side rooms one set up to be flexible depending on the needs of the pupils within the class.. It is and will be decorated and furnished accordingly. E.g. small work room, library, sensory room, physiotherapy room, calming room etc. The other room is fitted with soft padding and is built for the purpose of being a soft play/calm/quiet space. It is built to be flexible depending on the needs of the pupils within the class and is decorated and furnished accordingly (notes to follow on how calm rooms should be designed).
- Class 13 has one additional side room and these are spaces built for the class teams to adapt accordingly to meet the needs of the children in their class. E.g. small work room, library, sensory room, physiotherapy room, calming room etc.
- Class 15 and class 16 have one additional side room and this space is built for the class teams to adapt accordingly to meet the needs of the children in their class. E.g. small work room, library, sensory room, physiotherapy room, calming room etc.

These additional rooms provide facilities for pupils and staff to use when required that are in close proximity and aim to make incidents more manageable. All staff are aware of the responsibility to differentiate between the use of time out as part of a behaviour management strategy, and simply taking a pupil away from a distressing situation to emotionally regulate either alone or with staff support. This is often impossible in a busy classroom. Therefore going to a quiet soft play, calming room to do this is acceptable.

There are times when children need to have access to a calm and quiet place. The purpose of a calm room is never exclusion or punishment. Rather, it is a positive space to help children to calm down and to begin to use self-regulation skills. Calm rooms must be seen as a positive space providing support for all pupils to stay calm in school and without any stigma attached to its use. The school leadership team with cooperation from staff ensure that the calm room is used in a positive way and linked to our positive ethos and culture.

Objectives

Parents will always be kept informed on their child's behaviour and strategies used and IBPs are shared on a termly basis.

Ensure all staff are trained in calm room safeguarding protocols. These are to;

- Accompany the child to the calm room
- Monitor the child at all times
- Always use familiar language
- Ensure staff are trained and up to date in positive handling (team teach).

Ensure staff are trained in showing children ways to;

- Relax, such as through breathing or mindfulness
- Encourage self-regulation
- Develop appropriate communication techniques

What should be in a Calm/Quiet Room

The Quiet Room is not a teaching room. It is a place of safety and should create a calming atmosphere for the pupil. To ensure the calm room is a bright room, thoughtfully designed and offering a calm, safe and welcoming environment for children. Each calm room/quiet room in each classroom is set up accordingly and appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils in the class, this can be done in a variety of ways such as;

- Lights should be low.
- Cushions, mattresses etc could be used for pupils who need to lie down.
- Soft blankets and covers can be helpful to pupils who like to cover themselves up.
- A variety of multi-sensory aids
- Soothing music
- Sensory activities
- Bean bags
- A choice of making the room light or dark
- Calm strategy posters/reminders – (See appendix 1)

Our calming rooms are rooms that the students self-elect to remove themselves to although if staff can see that pupils would benefit from using the calming room they will be offered it as an option. The main purpose of the rooms is to teach de-escalation and self-regulation strategies, resulting in the reduction of challenging behaviours.

Students will not be restricted in their ability to leave calming rooms through the use of locks on the door or adults restricting the student's exit e.g. holding the door. The student's liberty will not be impinged in any way.

Helping pupils to understand how to use the Quiet Room

1. Introduce the Quiet Room in a positive, proactive way that helps the child to understand the benefits that can come from its usage.
2. Explain to the child using appropriate communication aids that the room can be used when she/he becomes aware that she/he is starting to get upset, get worried or get angry.
3. Use language that is simple and positively stated.
4. Explain that the Quiet Room will be for them when they are in it.
5. The Quiet Room should not be used on a 'scheduled' basis. It is meant to be used as and when a child 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. However it may need to be used in response to a specific transition such as arriving in school.
6. The best outcome of using a Quiet Room is when a child 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 child move towards the room and during and after they have spent time there.
8. When introducing the Quiet Room initially, the child 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 child is calm and receptive, in order to help her/him feel good about being there.
9. Following several sessions when the child has been able to spend time in the room while in a pleasant and quiet frame of mind, the next step (if appropriate) is to explain to the child that the quiet room will also be available when they need a place to self-regulate, help them reduce anxiety or help them to reduce frustration

and anger – these will be explained in an appropriate fashion making use of pecs symbols and take a break cards used as visual prompt for the pupils.

Best practice for the calm space

In optimum circumstances the pupil will choose to access the calm room, sometimes with a comforting reminder from staff. In exceptional circumstances, when the pupil is unable to make this informed choice, staff may be required to accompany the pupil to the calm room. Using agreed positive handling strategies and only to be used when totally necessary only by staff trained to do so. If team teach holds are used this must be on the pupils individual behaviour plan and signed by parent and head teacher.

The Calm Room can be used as a means of

- Helping the pupil to manage their own emotional state
- Reducing danger to themselves
- Reducing the danger to staff/pupils
- Reducing the need for prolonged use of physical intervention

Procedure for the use of the calm space;

When a member of staff notices that a pupil is becoming anxious or agitated, the pupil should be given the reasonable opportunity to calm using de-escalation strategies, where possible, linked to their behaviour plan (IBP).

Reasons to why the calm area should be used

Some pupils at Stanley school have additional needs around processing, regulating and managing emotional needs and this is when it can lead to pupils expressing their feelings inappropriately. This may manifest through pupils becoming visibly angry or sad or a reduced ability to access mutual regulation.

Self-regulation is the ability to manage your own emotions and behaviour in accordance with the demands of the situation. It is a set of skills that enables children, as they mature, to direct their own behaviour towards a goal. This can include;

- To calm yourself down when you get upset.
- To adjust to a change in expectations
- To handle frustration without emotional outbursts.

Problems with self-regulation manifest in different ways depending on the child. Some pupils can move to high levels of anxiety/emotional outburst quickly. For other pupils, distress and anxiety can build slowly leading to behavioural outbursts.

At Stanley school the key is for pupils to learn to handle those strong reactions and for the staff to support the children to find ways to express their emotions that are in a more effective way reducing anxiety and longer term damage to mental health.

A key role is the environment. Using the calm room is a quiet and safe place for pupils to be guided to explore how they can manage their own self-regulation. Children with anxiety may find it particularly challenging to manage their emotions, and need more help to develop emotional regulation skills through adult guidance.

Research by Dr Rouse, Child Mind Institute shows that;

“The key to learning self-regulation skills is not to avoid situations that are difficult for pupils to handle, but to guide the children through them and provide a supportive framework.”

At Stanley our aim is to support pupils when they are experiencing issues with emotional regulation. If they feel frustrated they might;

- Give the pupil a drink.
- They might use a timer
- They want timeout in a calm room
- Use specific strategies linked to experience of individual pupils
- Use specific strategies as identified in the pupils IBP

If a pupil uses the calm room to help them self-regulate the staff should try to help the child to resolve the situation, with the child spending the only necessary time needed in the calm room.

When the calm room has been used the incident must be recorded on our behavioural incident system – sleuth. The amount of calm room use will be evaluated by behaviour lead and SLT to ensure it remains an appropriate strategy to support self-regulation.

Role and responsibilities

The leadership team will;

- Regularly monitor and review records of the use of the calm room and the outcomes of the use
- Ensure all staff, parents and pupils (if appropriate) are aware of the policy
- Ensure good practice is shared throughout the school.

The behaviour lead will;

- Make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy
- Provide guidance, support and training to all staff.
- Review the effectiveness of this policy by;
 - Monitoring learning planning and assessment
 - Speaking with pupils, school personnel, parents and governors.
 - Monitoring learning planning and assessment

Teachers will

- Support SLT in implementing this and relevant policies
- Report use of calm room strategies through sleuth
- Work alongside behaviour lead to improve self-regulation strategies for pupils.

Class staff will

- Follow this and relevant policies
- Support pupils through their use of calm rooms to improve self-regulation

Governors will

- Review the policy if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how this policy might be improved.
- Hold staff members to account regarding the implementation of this policy.

All staff will

- Follow this and relevant policies
- Report misuse of calming rooms to relevant parties

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how this policy might be improved.

The review process should include an examination of the use of the calm rooms, consulting with members of the leadership team and school staff.

Glossary of Terms

Calming Room

A separate space (maybe a smaller room) where the pupil can either choose to go or be taken to with the sole purpose to calm without the presence of other pupils. Pupils who are taken to a calm room must be observed and supported at all times until they are ready to resume. (See section 7)

Last Resort

When other less intrusive options have been considered and judged to be ineffective or inappropriate.

Positive Handling

The full range of Team Teach strategies used to de-escalate, defuse and divert in order to prevent violence and reduce the risk of injury to pupils and staff, reduce damage to property and maintain an appropriate learning situation.

Reasonable

Proportionate to the circumstances it was intended to prevent in relation to the context in which the action was applied.

Seclusion

Forced to spend time alone against own will. (This requires statutory powers other than in an emergency)

Significant

A measure of degree or extent used to designate a cut-off point in judging seriousness of harm, physical intervention or restriction of liberty.

Timeout

Restricting positive reinforcement as part of a planned behavioural programme (Requires written agreed plan)

Withdrawal

Removed from the situation but observed and supported until they are ready to resume

Violence

Any incident involving physical or verbal abuse of a threatening and/or racial nature, threat, fear or the application of force arising out of the course of their work.

Self-regulation

It involves controlling one's behaviour, emotions, and thoughts in the pursuit of long-term goals. More specifically, emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses.

Emotional-regulation

Is the ability to respond to the on-going demands of experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit spontaneous reactions as well as the ability to delay spontaneous reactions as needed.

References

<https://childmind.org/article/can-help-kids-self-regulation/>

A Practical Approach at Home for Parents and Carers: Making Sense of Sensory Behaviour

Calm Strategies

posters

