



POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF TIME OUT/WITHDRAWAL ROOMS IN SCHOOLS/ EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS



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1. Introduction

This policy and guidance sets out the requirements for the use of time-out facilities and strategies, including dedicated time-out rooms in the Vale of Glamorgan schools and educational settings

Estyn (2012) states that there is no formal definition of 'time out'. However, it would normally include one or more of the following:

- allowing a child / young person time and space away from the class so they can re-gain composure and control over their emotions;
- preventing a child / young person being involved in activities until the unwanted behaviour stops and the child/ young person engages appropriately;
- asking or instructing the child / young person to leave the activity and return when they feel ready to be involved and stop the behaviour that is of concern; and
- using a teacher or support staff to accompany the child / young person to another location for a set period of time.

Time-out is usually implemented as part of a structured behaviour support plan. The purpose of using time-out is to achieve a change in the child/ young person's behaviour over a period of time. This should be used alongside other behaviour interventions as part of an individual behaviour plan or pastoral support programme. In addition the child/ young person should be supported following an exposure to time out; this will help them select alternative behavioural possibilities.

2. National Context

This policy is provided within the context of and is directly influenced by a range of guidance documentation from the Welsh Government including:

- *The All Wales Child Protection Procedures (AWCPP)*;
- Pupil Support and Social Inclusion;
- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- *Safeguarding Children; Working Together under the Children Act 2004*, and
- the Estyn report '*A survey of the arrangements for pupil's well-being and behaviour management in pupil referral units.*'

3. Local Context

The Vale of Glamorgan considers it vitally important that all schools and educational settings have a clearly articulated whole school behaviour policy from which procedures for the management of challenging behaviour are derived and which is shared with governors, parents and carers as well as the children and young people themselves.

The intention of this guidance is to ensure there is an overall framework to assist all schools and educational settings in formulating and developing its own particular policies and procedures in relation to using time out appropriately as part of its behaviour management programme.

4. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the policy are to:

- support schools and educational settings in developing appropriate use of time-out strategies as part of their behaviour management processes;
- provide schools and educational settings with the necessary guidance to implement a whole school / provision approach to the use of time out areas/ rooms;
- support schools and settings in using time out areas appropriately
- recognise the importance of supporting children and young people to manage their own behaviour
- encourage schools/ educational settings to work collaboratively with a range of partners to support and promote the welfare and well being of children and young people
- support the development of good practice

5. General Principles

Except for unanticipated situations that pose an immediate concern for the physical safety of a child / young person or others, the use of a time-out area should only be used in conjunction with the Council guidance, school/ educational setting's Behaviour Policy, Individual Behaviour Plans, Pastoral Support Plans and Positive Handling Plans. The following key factors should be considered:

- There is an agreed understanding that time-out lies within a continuum of behavioural interventions that assist the child/ young person to self-regulate and/or control their behaviour. Importantly, the implementation of time-out is not contingent on them being placed in a specific room. Time-out strategies could include location in the child/young person's classroom, another teacher's room or with a member of the senior management team or, at the most restrictive end of the continuum, the use of a dedicated time-out room.
- Time out should not be used as a punishment, to threaten pupils, to humiliate them or make them feel afraid.
- Staff must be assigned to continuously monitor the child/ young person in a time-out room. The staff must be able to see and hear them at all times.
- An understanding that time-out may not be effective for all children/ young people. Each child/young person is unique and may require alternative strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviours.
- A child/ young person, particularly those who are vulnerable, should not be placed away from direct adult supervision as part of any behaviour management strategy.

6. Process and Implementation

Each school/ educational setting must have a time-out policy or statement within their Behaviour policy that reflects their own context and takes account of this guidance. **Appendix 1** provides an example to support this process.

Schools and educational settings are advised to refer to their time-out practice within the prospectus that they give to parents/carers. A model paragraph might run:

'We do all we can within our school to manage behaviour positively. However, there are times when we may need to use time-out to keep a child or young person safe, which may be themselves or others, or to maintain good order within the school'

Time-out strategies

1. Time-out strategies are included by some schools in their school behaviour policies for use when a student is behaving inappropriately and a temporary separation from that particular environment may assist in supporting the child/young person to demonstrate appropriate behaviour.
2. Time-out strategies should not to be used as punishment or as a means of removing students indefinitely from the classroom. Time-out may be teacher directed, or student selected, as a means of calming during a stressful situation within a safe and predictable environment
3. A time-out strategy should be used only for the minimum period of time necessary for the student to regain enough composure to be able to return safely to class.
4. Procedures for the use of time-out strategies should be communicated to all pupils, parents and carers and school staff. It must also include information for parents and carers about the process to be used when parents or carers may have concerns or complaints about the use of a time out-strategy.
5. Any use of a time-out strategy must take into account factors such as the age, cultural background, individual needs, any disability and the developmental level of the student. The choice of time-out strategy will depend upon:
 - risk of harm to the themselves or others
 - the seriousness or frequency of the behaviour
 - level of disruption to learning
 - risk of damage to property.
6. Procedures for the use of time-out strategies should include clearly articulated steps to be followed if a student does not comply with the time-out strategy, or if the use of the time-out strategy has not been successful in managing the behaviour of the student.
7. **Team-Teach training** should be used to equip staff with appropriate behaviour management skills to safely resolve situations where they may be confronted with anxious, hostile or violent behaviour.

Dedicated Time-out Room

- 1 The use of a dedicated time out room should only be implemented within the context of the school's behaviour policy and following full consultation with the school community.
- 2 A dedicated time out room should only be used with a child/young person after less intrusive interventions, which have been implemented and documented, have not been successful in managing the behaviour and the child/young person is at risk of significant harm to themselves or others.

3 A time out room is an area for a child/young person to safely de-escalate, regain control and prepare to meet expectations to return to his or her class. . Time out rooms are to be used in conjunction with a behavioral intervention plan in which a student is removed to a supervised area in order to facilitate self-control or to remove a student from a potentially dangerous situation.

4 In some secondary schools time-out may take the form of a withdrawal room that is utilised as a sanction for a number of reasons such as avoidance of fixed term exclusion; to reduce the risk of escalation of incidents or as a response to unacceptable behaviour

5 The head teacher should ensure that parents or carers are notified on each occasion the dedicated time out room is used with their child. This could be done by telephone, or by letter. **Appendix 2** provides a model for this notification.

6 A referral or re-referral to the Behaviour Support Team for the development or refinement of a plan to support the student's behaviour should be considered following the frequent use of the dedicated time out room for a particular pupil. This plan should be developed or refined in consultation with the parents or carers and documented.

7 A dedicated time out room must:

- be risk assessed in relation to student and staff safety
- be conducive to de-escalating inappropriate behaviour
- not be locked, latched or secured in any way that would, in case of an emergency, prevent staff or the student from exiting the room
- be supervised at all times
- allow for meaningful educational activity to be provided for students and have adequate ventilation, lighting and heat
- have adequate space for students and staff
- allow arrangements for the student to have lunch and toilet breaks when appropriate if time-out occurs across these periods
- display rules for behaviour within the room
- display school rules and expectations

Appendix 3 provides a suggested checklist for the organisation of a dedicated time out room.

8 The head teacher should ensure that a record of the use of the dedicated time out room with each individual student and for each occasion is maintained. This involves keeping accurate records of:

- frequency of use
- antecedent events leading up to the behaviour
- the behaviour itself that led to the use of the designated time out room
- behaviour observed in the time out room
- duration of time the pupil was placed in time out

Appendix 4 provides an exemplar recording proforma.

9 The head teacher must ensure that a register of the use of the dedicated time-out room is maintained. This register should record information on the number of times the dedicated time-out room has been used and the number of students with whom the dedicated time out room has been used. **A copy of this register should be available for scrutiny, as part of the Learning and Skills Directorate monitoring programme.** Data on the use of the dedicated time-out room should be used by the school community to assess the effectiveness of the strategy within the context of the regular review of the school's behaviour policy.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Learning and Skills Directorate will monitor the implementation of this policy and guidance document through the following:

- Monitoring visits to schools / educational settings to ensure an appropriate policy and processes are in place;
- Providing updated information to schools/educational settings regarding the use of time out areas
- Working proactively with schools/ educational settings to develop appropriate recording and reporting mechanisms;
- Collating and using information regarding the use of physical intervention and use of time-out areas effectively to share good practice and target support;
- Scrutiny of recording information provided by schools
- Using the Learning and Skills Directorate Time-out survey as a baseline to map provision and progress.

8. Appendices

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Appendix 1:

Example Policy / Statement - Use of time-out areas

Name of School:

This should be viewed in the context of the School Behaviour Policy and Physical Intervention Policy.

Time out should only be used as part of an agreed behaviour management plan, IBP and individual positive handling plan. This involves removing the child/young person from a situation, which causes anxiety or distress, to a location where they can be continually observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the best interest of the child/young person and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk to themselves or others.

The use of the time out area must ensure that safeguarding and welfare of the child/young person is of paramount importance.

Regular risk assessments will be undertaken with colleagues from appropriate agencies to ensure a shared understanding of the use of the time out area and restraint procedures to prevent inappropriate incidences arising.

Consideration will be given to the following:

1. Time-out should only be used as part of an agreed behaviour management plan.
2. Time-out is used for children and young people to prepare themselves for the classroom.
3. Use of time out area must be for relatively short, time limited periods relevant to age and risk.
4. A child or young person must **not** be locked in an area.
5. A child or young person must **not** be in an area where they cannot be continuously observed and supervised.
6. Staff must be trained on / clear about the use of the time out.
7. Discussion regarding how the time out area is used must be shared with parents and a signed written agreement produced.
8. Use of the time out area is recorded in writing and parents notified.
9. Clear monitoring arrangements must be in place.

10. Opportunities are created to give the child/young person the choice to rejoin the class, group, activity.
11. The time out area should be seen as an extension of the classroom.
12. Good practice will always be concerned with assessing and minimising risk to children/young people, staff and others and ensure intervention is in the best interests of the child/young person.
13. Good practice will always be concerned with pre-planning responses, where possible.
14. Use of the time out area will always be followed by a dialogue between child/young person and staff to discuss the incident and protect good relationships.
15. The use of the time out will be explained to the child / young person and should be clearly understood.
16. The time out area can be used as a managed space when there is a situation that a child / young person feels he/she cannot engage in.
17. Governors and Council officers will be kept updated regarding the use of the time out area in line with Council Policy.

Signed:

Head Teacher

Chair of Governors

Date:

Appendix 2:

Sample letter

_____ School

Date

This letter is to inform you about the use of the Time-out Room today with your son/daughter _____ of Year _____ consistent with the School Behaviour Policy.

The Time-out Room was used with your son/daughter between _____ (time) and _____ (time) because

Please feel free to contact the school to discuss the behaviour that led to your child being placed in the Time-out Room

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 3:

Sample Checklist

The Use of a Dedicated Time-Out Room

- has been endorsed by the school community and incorporated as part of a continuum of behavioural interventions in the school behaviour policy
- has been risk assessed in relation to student and staff safety
- allows for meaningful educational activity to be provided for students
- has adequate ventilation, lighting and heat
- has adequate space for students and staff
- allows arrangements for the student to have lunch and toilet breaks when time out occurs across those periods
- is conducive to de-escalating inappropriate behaviours
- is not to be locked, latched or secured in any way that would, in case of an emergency, prevent staff or the student from exiting the room
- is supervised at all times
- displays rules for behaviour within the room
- displays school rules and expectations

Communication and Evaluation

- Procedures for the use of time out have been communicated to all students, parents and carers and school and educational setting staff
- Training has been conducted for all staff in procedures for the use of the dedicated time out room
- A record of the use of the dedicated time out room with each individual student and for each occasion is maintained
- Procedures for notifying parents or carers of the use of the time out room with their child have been developed
- Procedures for referral or re-referral to the Behaviour Support Team have been developed
- Procedures to be followed if a student does not comply with the use of the time out room or if the use of the use of the time out room is not successful in managing the behaviour of the student have been developed
- Data on the use of the time-out room is used to assess its effectiveness in supporting an individual student
- Data on the use of the time out room is used to assess the effectiveness of the strategy within the context of the regular review of the school's behaviour policy
- A register of the use of the dedicated time out room is maintained and forwarded to the Education Authority each term
- A register of the use of the dedicated time out room is maintained and monitored by the Learning and Skills Directorate on an annual basis.
- Any use of time-out that necessitates the use of physical intervention must be recorded and reported in accordance with Council policy on Physical Intervention.

