



# PICTOR ACADEMY

March 2025

## Protocol for Use of the Light Rooms as a Safe Haven

### Aim:

The Light Rooms support the de-escalation of a child by providing them with a safe place to calm and regulate.

### Use of the Light Rooms:

**The space needs to be seen by each pupil, as a positive, safe place so should never be used as a sanction, time out or as a threat.**

A pupil may need the space for different reasons:

- A quiet, distraction free environment to share quality time with an adult and / or another pupil.
- To create a space with tools for children to learn to self regulate.
- A safe place for a pupil during an incident.
- To de-escalate an incident or pre-empt one by changing environments.
- To calm down after an incident.
- To access an environment to suit the sensory needs of the child and reduce over-stimulation i.e. auditory, visual input.

**Physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property. It should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.**

### The Environment:

Soft materials such as beanbags, cushions and soft toys for the pupil to seek comfort or soothing if needed.

We will provide bean bags or cushions so that a pupil can express their frustration through them.

We will create appropriate lighting using coloured ceiling lights to create a personalised calm environment.

Audio input can be provided through an ipod linked to speakers to create a personalised calming environment.

Visually calming effects such as ceiling mobiles may be provided for some children.

Visually calming effects such as ceiling mobiles may be provided.

Soft padded surfaces create a safe environment.

### Good Practice:

A child should go willingly to the Light Room. Physical intervention should not be used to escort a child to the space. If this has been required once as a last resort, then a review should follow.

Direct teaching may be needed to help the pupil to learn how to access the space as a strategy when escalating so prior work with the may be needed through Zones of Regulation, 5 point scale e.t.c.

A pupil could be given opportunities to develop positive associations with the room to increase the likelihood that they will go there out of choice during times of escalating behaviours.

Whilst in the Light Room, the child must be supported by an adult at all times. If the adult is supervising from outside the room the door must remain open.

To avoid seclusion, the door should not be closed with the adult on the outside unless absolutely necessary. This would be breaching staff's duty of care (as noted in school's Positive Handling Policy).

If seclusion has been necessary as a last resort to keep a child or others safe from harm, a follow up meeting will take place to discuss alternative strategies. This form of intervention should be treated in the same way as a restrictive physical intervention (see below recording and monitoring). The presence of a member of the Leadership group is strongly advised. A pupil will be observed and monitored at all times and if a pupil attempts to self-harm then staff will immediately intervene to stop this behaviour. As soon as it is safe to do so then the member of staff should re-enter the room to offer support to the pupil. The door will never be locked on a pupil.

Use beanbags or cushions as a physical barrier against any targeted behaviours.

If it has been necessary for the adult to stay outside for any time, the adult should try to re-enter as soon as possible, slip into the room without fuss, use non-threatening body language e.g. sitting or kneeling down and wait for the pupil to seek attention.

Pupil's language levels will be reduced in a crisis so modify language accordingly. Use calm, comforting low level talk, repetition of the same phrases may help, 'It's ok, it's ok etc. Avoid use of directives or confrontational language.

Don't be afraid to avoid use of language or eye contact for some children it may be a trigger, threatening or over stimulating.

When engaging with the pupil think about your choice of words, subjects. Ask them how you can help before rushing in with your own suggestions and discussion about the preceding events.

If appropriate bring favourite toys or books with you to help the pupil calm, redirect their energy and engage in positive actions.

Give the pupil lots of time, they may need far more than you think. Don't rush them and allow them to decide when they feel ready to go back to the room.

Think about how the pupil will rejoin the class, natural transition times may be a good time to rejoin a group; lunch or play outside as sometimes it is difficult for a pupil to rejoin a group where everyone is focused and busy except them.

Give the pupil a focus when they go back to the main class, a low demand task or activity that they enjoy, helping them rejoin the class in a positive way.

If the pupil has had to use the safe space during a difficult incident then think about arranging to use the room during that week for a positive time, games, songs etc to enable the space to be seen as a positive and happy space too.

After an incident make time to share some positive interactions and fun time with the pupil so that you can re-engage with them in a positive manner and rebuild relationships.

## **Recording and monitoring:**

If the child does not transition to the safe space out of choice and physical support is necessary then **this must be recorded as per a physical intervention** and reported to the relevant personnel.

If the safe space has been used as a 'place of safety' and restricted the pupil's liberty as part of an unplanned incident then any further use of the safe space as a strategy must be part of the pupil's Individual Behaviour Support Plan and **agreed with parents/carers**. The effectiveness of this strategy will need to be reviewed when recording the incident and discussed as part of the regular review of the Individual behaviour Support plan.

If it has been necessary to close the door with an adult on the outside of the room as a last resort to keep a child or others safe from harm, a follow up meeting will take place to discuss alternative strategies. This form of intervention should be treated in the same way as a restrictive physical intervention and recording as such.

Restricted physical interventions are reported back to the Advisory Committee through termly reports.

The Behaviour Support Lead is always happy to offer advice and support following an incident or to suggest ways of de-escalating, calming a pupil.