

Quiet Space Policy

Rationale

Quiet spaces sometimes referred to as break or calm areas etc., are based on the concept of reducing environmental and body triggers as a coping strategy for students in elevated and/or depressed emotional states of arousal. Quiet areas are widely used in a variety of settings, including schools, homes, therapeutic clinics and hospitals to support self-regulation. It is important that Quiet areas are not to be used as places of punishment, seclusion and/or containment.

There are times when students need access to a sensory controlled area that is quiet and calm where they can feel safe to self-regulate and calm their body and emotions. The purpose of these spaces is not exclusion or punishment. Rather, it is a space to help students to calm, soothe and to begin to use self-regulation strategies to maintain optimal levels of arousal. The student should always be supervised and allowed free movement in and out of any space they choose to be alone.

The student will choose to access these spaces, and should be taught about self-regulation strategies in accordance with their age and level of understanding.

Aims:

- In this policy, the term calming is used synonymously with the term self-regulation. Some students may experience high levels of frustration, anger and anxiety while at school. Teaching self-regulation strategies and giving students a place to go on their own is a proactive means of addressing safety issues and also providing the student with an increased opportunity for success.
- A Quiet Space is a space/room that the student self-elects to remove him or herself to and is one option as pre-determined and outlined in a student's individual profile and / or support plan. The main purpose of the space/room is to support the student in the implementation of self-regulation strategies, resulting in the reduction of behaviours of concern. The quiet space/room may contain materials to assist the student in calming methods (e.g. squishy balls, blankets, visuals of deep breathing, etc.). A student in a quiet space/room must be supervised by a staff member.
- In all situations, it is the intent of Jennings Street School to provide the best possible care and to ensure the welfare, safety, and security of all involved.
- The use of quiet spaces at Jennings Street School is a proactive self-regulation strategy and will be guided by the following implementation strategies:

Implementation strategies:

- Jennings Street Staff are provided with professional development related to self-regulation to provide opportunities to teach personal and social capabilities and to assist in the development of preventative strategies and de-escalation interventions for students. These professional development opportunities continue throughout the year and include teaching emotional regulation and social thinking (e.g., zones of regulation, the incredible flexible



you, think social, positive behaviour support, restorative practice, play therapy, etc.) to help staff teach students to recognize their emotional state and then employ strategies in response to different situations they may encounter throughout the day.

- Students are taught a variety of lessons about their self-regulation, including emotional regulation and social thinking and how to use appropriate strategies and respond in an appropriate way when they are anxious and or in an elevated emotional state.
- Specific teaching strategies may be combined with sensory strategies (as prescribed by an occupational therapist) or social narratives to support students in the process of self-regulation.
- Student Individual Profiles or support plans will document how a particular student uses a quiet space and the resources required to support them to regulate.
- Students accessing a quiet space/ room will do so of their own accord and volition and will not be physically moved into or out of the space/room by staff.
- Quiet spaces/rooms will not be used as a disciplinary measure or as punishment for inappropriate behaviour.
- Students will not be restricted in their ability to leave quiet spaces/rooms through the use of locks on the door or restricting the student's exit (e.g. holding the door, barring the door way, etc.)
- Staff must be able to visually see a student in a quiet space through a window or directly observing them. If the student chooses to close a door, a window must allow the student to look out and staff members to observe.
- Quiet spaces are not to be accessed during an emergency. If a student is in the quiet space and an emergency is implemented, the student should be directed to the nearest safe location, as determined in the school's Emergency Response (Lockdown) Plan.

Helping pupils to understand how to use the quiet space and self-regulate

1. Introduce the quiet space in a positive, proactive way that helps the student to understand the benefits that can come from its usage.
2. Explain to the child that the space/room can be used when she/he becomes aware that she/he is starting to get upset, get worried or get angry. Use language that is positively stated.
3. Explain that the space will be for them when they are in it.
4. Staff can help the student to self-regulate as appropriate or if the students asks for help
5. The quiet space 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 becoming dysregulated and to regain a sense of calm.
6. The student should have access to calming/self-regulating tools from their toolbox while in the quiet space.

The best outcome of using a quiet space is when a child learns how to self-regulate independently.



EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Date Implemented	October 2017
Author	Monique Cooley
Approved By	Jennings Street School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
Date Reviewed	18/10/2017
Responsible for Review	Policy subcommittee
Review Date	18/10/2019
References	

18.10.2017 – v0 – date of implementation