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MAPA® at Watermill School,

A guide for parents and carers.

At Watermill School we welcome children with a wide range of special needs. The first right of every child and member of staff is to work in a safe and supportive environment. This guide is intended to help parents and carers better understand one of the tools we use to help us to ensure this, MAPA®.

What is MAPA®?

Wherever a child's behaviour becomes a risk to either themselves, somebody else or, sometimes, when damage to property is being caused, members of staff have a duty of care to act to reduce that risk. MAPA® is the training model we use to do this in the safest way possible.

MAPA® is a graded response model. This means that staff are trained to use the least restrictive hold, for the shortest amount of time needed to manage the risk being posed. We do this because it is the best way of keeping everyone safe, and because it is what the law expects us to do.

Why do we use MAPA®?

Very occasionally a pupil may be acting in such a risky way that staff have no option but to manage that behaviour. When staff are faced with this difficult decision they have to decide what might happen if they hold or escort a pupil, versus what might happen if they don't.

If staff feel that holding or escorting a pupil is the safest thing to do they will use the techniques described in our yearly MAPA® training. These techniques have been developed alongside the British Institute for Learning Disabilities (BILD)

MAPA® has been very carefully developed by experts who teach techniques which reduce the risk of injury to both staff and pupil. If staff hold a pupil they will adopt a comfortable position which avoids putting stresses and strains on joints. Great care is taken by staff to make sure that at all times the pupil is treated with dignity and respect and that under no circumstance is a hold used as punishment or to force a child to do something against their will.

One of the central values of the MAPA® model is the safety and care of our pupils. We work hard to build good relationships between adults and pupils in school and because of this we rarely need to hold or escort pupils. On the occasions where we do have to, however, staff will usually have tried every other strategy available to them before making that decision.

Where a pupil regularly presents behaviour where holding or escorting are likely to be needed more than very occasionally, this will become part of the pupils' CARE plan. We use the CARE plan in school to help meet a pupils needs most effectively. When a CARE plan is written it is shared by all staff to make sure we can all work with the pupil in the way that helps them best. If the school feels that planned holding is in the best interests of your child we would, of course, contact parents or carers to discuss the plan.

We understand that the thought of your child being held by staff at school can be worrying but parents and carers should be reassured that staff will always act in what they believe to be the best interests of the pupil.

Should you have any additional concerns or questions regarding MAPA® please do not hesitate to call me at school.

Yours Faithfully,



Matthew Coupe.

Deputy Headteacher.