

Bowdon Church School

Positive Handling and safety policy



Policy information and Review

Names person with designated responsibility

Academic Year	Designated Lead Person(s)
2023-24	Dylan McCarthy/Sam Halliwell
24/25/26	Dylan McCarthy/Sam Halliwell

Policy review dates

Review date	Changes made	By whom
July 2023	Policy reviewed for BCS	Sam Halliwell
July 2025	as above in line with Team Teach training	Sam Halliwell/Dylan McCarthy/Zoe Power

OVERVIEW

Our Vision:

I have come that they might have life and have it in abundance. John 10:10

'Loving, learning and growing together'

Bowdon Church School aims to provide a nurturing community and rich curriculum to guide children on life's journey: fostering a love of learning, cultivating spiritual, social, moral and cultural wellbeing, and strengthening them with a growing trust and knowledge of God.

At Bowdon Church School Primary we truly help each other to learn and to love through our golden values of Ready, Respectful, Kind and Safe, which are central to all aspects of our school life. We are here to give our pupils an excellent education with a rich and inspiring curriculum, at the same time providing nurture and care for their spiritual/emotional, moral, social and cultural wellbeing. When children leave Bowdon Church School they will be prepared for life, with resilience, compassion and having developed courageous advocacy.

At Bowdon Church School our commitment to safeguarding the welfare of pupils is given the highest priority. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm. We believe that Bowdon Church School should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment, which promotes all pupils' social, physical, emotional, spiritual and moral development. We strive to ensure our pupils are safe within school and are treated respectfully.

Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils within Bowdon Church School, it outlines how staff create and maintain good order and relationships through positive approaches. Effective relationships are developed between staff and pupils and the school supports pupils in managing conflict and coping with feelings and emotions. This policy, on the use of restrictive physical intervention, supplements the main behaviour policy. Both should be read in conjunction with the schools SEN policy, the Health and Safety policy, Anti-bullying policy and the Safeguarding policy.

Purpose

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practiced by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It also acknowledges that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

This policy seeks to ensure that staff in Bowdon Church School clearly understand their responsibility in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is required. The policy includes clear guidance to ensure any physical intervention is done so in a way that supports our school values and principles and it is informed and supported by effective regulation and training.

These guidelines were produced using the Department of Education document 'Use of Reasonable force guidance (2013) and the TEAM TEACH workbook. This policy should be made available to parents on request.

Principles

All staff and pupils at Bowdon Church School have a right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity;
- Work in a safe and healthy environment and be protected from harm;
- Receive adequate information, support and training.

All staff and pupils at Bowdon Church School should:

- Follow the school's code of conduct, rules and policies.

Parents of pupils attending Bowdon Church School have a right to:

- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with school policies;
- Be informed about school rules, policies and expected conduct for all;
- Be informed of the school's complaints procedure.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Appropriate physical contact

Bowdon Church School staff have a responsibility to act at all times in a manner which reflects positively on their professional status.

Whilst it is recognised that there are situations in which appropriate physical contact occurs in the school setting between staff and pupils, it must be understood that to undertake any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to those circumstances described in this policy. Staff have a responsibility to seek alternative de-escalation strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

School staff have the legal power to use reasonable force, and lawful use of this power will be used in the appropriate situation, this is when staff will deploy positive handling techniques. Examples of incidents are outlined in **Appendix A**. Staff will endeavour to inform parents of any physical intervention as soon as practicable following the action. There will also be completion of a positive handling form which will be stored securely using the schools safeguarding reporting system.

Reasonable force

Reasonable force may only be permissible when it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence;
- Injuring themselves or others;
- Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property) which can endanger themselves or others;
- Engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in the classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere;
- Where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene. (Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Reasonable force may be used for a reasonable length of time as is necessary to safeguard all pupils and staff. Staff should not normally use force to maintain order or to avoid damage to property unless the action of the young person poses a threat to themselves or another.

Reasonable force will be used as a last resort, either after all de-escalation approaches have been tried, or in situations of clear danger or extreme urgency. The majority of crisis situations can be dealt with through our supportive and restorative approach, however when required, reasonable force will be required to protect all staff and children.

Reasonable force definitions and information included in **Appendix B**.

Authorised staff

In line with Local Authority guidance on physical intervention, teaching staff at Bowdon Church School are authorised, within the content of this policy, to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils as suitably as practicable (**Appendix C**).

In addition, some members of the support staff who have lawful control or charge of pupils at Bowdon Church School are also authorised to use reasonable force. These are teaching assistants, lunchtime organisers and inclusion assistants.

The head teacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been made, in what circumstances and settings they may use force, and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The head teacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand properly, what the authorisation entails.

The head teacher will maintain a list of those who have been authorised and ensure that this list is available to all staff. This list will be reviewed as necessary at least annually by the head teacher.

All peripatetic teaching staff and visiting LA staff will work within the policy of their own service. Whilst on school premises they will be expected to follow procedures of the school and report any incidents in which they are involved, in accordance with their Service policy.

Training support

The school will need to undertake a risk assessment and use assessment to determine training needs. It is the duty of the head teacher to ensure adequate training is provided for all authorised staff. Responsibility for co-ordinating whole school training will be the responsibility of the SENDCo.

Members of staff will not be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without knowledge of the school's policy. New staff will be fully briefed prior to authorising their participation.

Staff involved in incidents of physical intervention will be offered the opportunity to access personal support, including counselling, at their request to the head teacher, deputy head and SENDCo.

Positive Handling Plan

In certain cases, a Safety & Positive Handling Plan will be created for a child. This would happen when there is a foreseeable risk that a pupil's behaviour could require physical intervention.

For example:

- A student who starts at the school and transfer documentation suggests reasonable force may be used
- A student who has had to be previously restrained
- A student who is displaying increasingly concerning behaviours that are not responding to de-escalation techniques

All children with a positive handling plan will also have a behaviour plan in place with identified de-escalation and support techniques (**Appendix F & G**).

Recording and Reporting

Following an incident in which physical force has been used, the member of staff involved will inform the deputy head teacher/ SENDCo, or other designated person and complete a written report using Bowdon Church School 'use of force incident report form' (**Appendix H**).

Staff involved will be 'de-briefed' as soon as is appropriate after the incident by the Deputy Head Teacher/ SENDCo and Pastoral Lead.

Bowdon Church School will keep an up to date record of all incidents in the school's confidential reporting system CPOMS.

All parents, carers and, where appropriate, social services will be informed as soon as possible.

Complaints procedure

At Bowdon Church School, we ensure that parents are aware of their right to raise their concerns in a reasonable manner.

Please see the Complaints Policy [here](#) , for further information.

APPENDIX A – TYPES OF INCIDENTS

Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil. They will fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples of situations that fall within one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of omitting, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (N.B. this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

APPENDIX B – REASONABLE FORCE

Reasonable Force

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'. So it is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case.

There are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.
- The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Whether it is reasonable to use force and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding, and sex of the pupil.

Practical considerations

Before intervening physically, a member of staff should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. The member of staff should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the pupil.

Sometimes a member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help (unless it is an emergency). For example, when dealing with an older pupil, or a physically large pupil, or more than one pupil or if the member of staff believes he or she may be at risk of injury. In those circumstances the member of staff should remove other pupils who might be at risk, and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary phone the Police. The member of staff should inform the pupil(s) that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Further information is outlined within **Appendix C**

APPENDIX C – PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Application of Force

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils;
- Blocking a pupil's path;
- Holding;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back, or,
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds which includes holding a pupil's arms by their sides.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force', for example to prevent a young pupil running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone or throwing something.

In other circumstances staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe;
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil;
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- tripping up a pupil;
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear;
- holding a pupil face down on the ground.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Where the risk is not so urgent the teacher should consider carefully whether, and if so when, physical intervention is right. Teachers should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using force. All teachers need developed strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations which they should use to defuse and calm a situation. In a non-urgent situation force should only be used when other methods have failed.

That consideration is particularly appropriate in situations where the aim is to maintain good order and discipline, and there is no direct risk to people or property. As the key issue is establishing good order, any action which could exacerbate the situation needs to be avoided. The possible consequences of intervening physically, including the risk of increasing the disruption or actually provoking an attack, need to be carefully evaluated.

The age and level of understanding of the pupil is also very relevant in those circumstances. Physical intervention to enforce compliance with staff instructions is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils. It should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management.

APPENDIX D – SOME DOs AND DON'Ts

Avoiding Confrontation

It is often possible to decide not to 'make an issue', if a confrontation is predictable. This decision is inextricably linked with existing whole-school policies. A frequent point of initiation of confrontation is where conflicting or inconsistent expectations allow for discussion or argument. If it is desirable to 'make an issue', one may decide to defer the matter, with or without making an issue at the time. Avoiding having an audience is paramount.

It is useful to remember that adults have the skills/experience/self-confidence/power, in inter-personal transactions. Many young people have few, if any of the above – in particular those who are most likely to become involved in confrontation with staff. It should not be beyond a determined adult to avoid a confrontation developing except in the most extreme circumstances.

There are many alternative approaches, adults should try a range of responses and develop what seems comfortable to them. Some find that a little, light humour helps defuse potential friction.

As a general rule shouting, unless it is to draw attention (e.g. to stop a young person who is about to do something which is unintentionally dangerous) is likely to be ineffective in avoiding or de-escalating conflict.

Maintaining a calm manner whilst making clear that the pupil is behaving in an unacceptable manner is more likely to lead to a peaceful resolution than shouting and other signs of anger.

A simple restatement of expectations that does not invite comment or request any response 'closes down' some potential for confrontation. When linked with a simple choice, in the form of a statement, this also allows the young person to take some 'ownership' of the outcome by making a decision. An example of such a comment might be, "You know what you are expected to do, please complete the work. Either get on with it now or you'll have to see me at the end of lesson to arrange to do it during lunchtime." At this point the teacher might move away and interact with other pupils who are working, thus drawing attention away from the other pupil and allowing a breathing space for both parties.

Do	Don't
intervene early	shout
appear calm and confident	appear angry
get close and talk quietly	ask 'open' questions (e.g. why...? or are you....?)
avoid an audience	make promises you cannot fulfil
restate expectations	make personal comments
offer choices	back the pupil into a corner (literally or metaphorically)
allow time and space	
get someone else to take over if you think it's personal or more than you can manage	

De-escalation

It is advisable, wherever possible, to depersonalise interactions. Taking a step back from the immediate situation and being able to disassociate from personal comments, viewing them instead as general expressions of anger and frustration, can be a helpful approach to adopt.

It is important to be aware of the use of personal space and the effect different styles of interpersonal interactions have on defusing conflict. De-escalation strategies may include sitting down rather than standing over a pupil, inviting the pupil to sit down themselves, or walking away to the other side of the room. It may be safe to leave

the room completely, perhaps asking another teacher (not involving a more senior member of staff necessarily) to supervise, if the confrontation is thought to be personally inspired.

Schools may feel that it is worth designating a specific space for the de-escalation of conflicts; such spaces are often used as “time-out” rooms, allowing all parties a non-threatening opportunity to gain self-control before attempting a reconciliation. For some pupil’s access to such facilities can provide a vital “safety valve”; such a short or long term arrangement should be described within the pupil’s Individual Education Plan or Pastoral Support Programme, as indicated above.

Do	Don't
sit down	Take angry comments personally
break eye contact	'invade' personal space
divert the focus (e.g. by humour – not sarcasm – by suggesting a different activity, even work!)	insist on 'getting your own way'
encourage, talk and be prepared to listen	
be prepared to lose face	

APPENDIX E – LANGUAGE PROTOCOL

Pupil Behaviour	Supportive Response
Part 1 – Increased levels of Anxiety Stage	
<p>Noticeable change in behaviour, increased agitation and fidgeting</p> <p>Change in voice pitch/ eye contact, speaking louder and faster</p> <p>Increased levels of anxiety</p> <p>The changes of behaviour gain the attention of the staff in the classroom</p> <p>Faster breathing</p>	<p>Find out what has happened?</p> <p>Speak calmly, supportively</p> <p>Ask if the child would like to leave the classroom for a break. Is there a job to do?</p> <p>Use distraction techniques – try to deflect their thinking (individual behaviour plan strategies)</p> <p>Be empathetic, non-judgemental</p> <p>Avoid using behaviour policy if this has a negative impact, focus on positive affirmation.</p>
Part 2 – Defensive Stage	
<p>Starts to lose rational control</p> <p>Becomes more verbal, louder, challenging in their comments.</p> <p>Refusal – verbal or non-verbal noncompliance e.g. shouting across the classroom, tapping on the table</p> <p>Release - Emotional outburst</p>	<p>Give a positive response</p> <p>Give opportunities to go out of the classrooms</p> <p>Guide with hands in a non-threatening way (take a side stance) Use positive body language validate feelings.</p> <p>Use simple clear, reasonable responses with opportunities to calm e.g 'I can see you are upset, how can we help? Come with me, make yourself available.</p> <p>Continue to keep using distraction techniques</p> <p>If there is no additional support, ask for additional support (peers support) or from the other year group classroom if this continues to persist and is appropriate</p> <p>Be empathetic and non-judgemental</p> <p>Understand when to walk and when to talk</p>
Part 3 – High levels of anxiety or aggression stage	
<p>Sensory overload</p> <p>Not hearing or seeing what is being communicated</p> <p>The child loses control of their emotions</p> <p>They begin to throw objects around the room, not at people</p> <p>They begin to throw chairs, move desks, push pencil pots around</p> <p>The child runs out of the classroom, hitting walls or touching displays.</p>	<p>Reduce language, use visuals</p> <p>Understand when to walk and when to talk</p> <p>If the child runs out of the classroom, let them, follow behind with distance. Encourage them to go outside onto the playground, run their anxiety levels off</p> <p>Positive handling will only be used if the child demonstrates unsafe behaviour towards themselves (self-harming) others (biting, hitting) or damage to property (throwing furniture, equipment) Staff will make a dynamic risk assessment call for assistant/ more help and follow the procedures in the Child's</p>

	positive handling plan. In this situation the member(s) of staff responding to the incident believe the force is reasonable proportionate and necessary. The child will be held for the shortest amount of time using the least amount of force.
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Part 4 – The option to use Team Teach techniques

<p>The child attacks a staff member, either with hands, feet or an object</p> <p>The child has threatened a pupil and staff make a judgment that the threat is high and the child will likely attack the other child.</p> <p>Objects that are being thrown are endangering the child, the pupils in the class or the staff members</p> <p>The child is making dangerous gestures e.g stabbing the plug with scissors, cutting through electrical wires etc.</p>	<p>The member of staff dealing with the situation at that time will make a dynamic risk assessment to intervene in the best interest and safety of the child.</p> <p>Where ever possible school will endeavour to have 2 staff members available to use the appropriate techniques in the child’s plan to support to a safe area using appropriate holds and one to open doors. Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff to ensure that any action taken is both safe and successful.</p> <p>The staff who are using positive handling to support the child will communicate at an appropriate level, manner maintaining professionalism, calm in control approach.</p> <p>The child will be taken to an appropriate safe space in school to support the de-escalate process</p>
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Part 5 – Repair and rebuild

<p>Monitor child until levels of anxiety have returned to their baseline behaviour (may take up to 90 minutes, in some cases longer)</p>	<p>Speak calmly, be clear about what is going to happen next, they may need a drink, a place to lie down.</p> <p>A member of the senior leadership team will inform parents the incident,</p> <p>All incidents recorded on CPOMS with a body map if appropriate.</p> <p>The child is given an opportunity to talk when appropriate, after the incident to understand, repair and reflect.</p> <p>Important to focus on why it was felt the intervention was necessary</p> <p>Agree rules and responsibilities.</p>
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APPENDIX F – INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR PLAN

Name:	Date:	Date of Review:
Class:	Class Teacher:	Additional adults:

Descriptions of behaviours	Individualised behaviour responses		
	Proactive strategies / approaches	Active strategies / approaches	Reactive strategies / approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	<p>Praise points / diversion and distraction:</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

APPENDIX G – INDIVIDUAL SAFETY AND POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

*A child with a safety and positive handling plan MUST have an individual behaviour plan with identified behaviours and de-escalation strategies

Name:	Date completed:	Date of Review:
Class:	Class Teacher:	Additional adults:
Additional information (e.g. medical information or background information):		
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Indicator / triggers of behaviours:	Preferred handling strategies to be used	
	Caring Guide <input type="checkbox"/>	Single Elbow <input type="checkbox"/>
	Help Hug <input type="checkbox"/>	Double Elbow <input type="checkbox"/>
	Guiding Elbows <input type="checkbox"/>	Figure of Four <input type="checkbox"/>
•		

Successful approaches or methods:	Approaches, methods and techniques not to be used
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Repair and rebuild process following incidents:
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Signatures:			
SENDCo:		Class Teacher:	

Head Teacher:		Other signatory (please state):	
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APPENDIX H – USE OF FORCE INCIDENT REPORT FORM

POSITIVE HANDLING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

1. Name of Person Held:			
2. Staff Name completing the form:			
3. Date and Time of Incident			
Date (inc Day)		Time	
4. Location of Incident			
<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground (specify which)	<input type="checkbox"/> MUGA	<input type="checkbox"/> Corridor
<input type="checkbox"/> Hall	<input type="checkbox"/> Stairwell	<input type="checkbox"/> Infant field	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior field
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Location (Please specify):			
5. Why was it necessary to hold?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Harm to Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Harm to Others	<input type="checkbox"/> Damage to property	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify):			
6. Was any verbal reasoning / de-escalation used prior to the need to hold?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Please expand:			
7. Were any weapons involved?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If 'yes' please stipulate what type of weapon was involved:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Knife	<input type="checkbox"/> Glass/Cup	<input type="checkbox"/> Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottle
<input type="checkbox"/> Pen	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):		
8. Which technique/s position of hold did you use?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Caring guide	<input type="checkbox"/> Help hug	<input type="checkbox"/> Guiding elbows	<input type="checkbox"/> Single elbow
<input type="checkbox"/> Double elbow		<input type="checkbox"/> Figure of four	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):			
9. Who else was involved in the hold?			
Name(s):			
10. Please list any injuries to you			
11. Please list any injuries to the person held			

12. Adult statement – what occurred in your own words

Your statement must set out what happened; give details of your part in the use of force, any holds you applied and how the incident was finally resolved. It must give details of any attempts made to de-escalate throughout the incident. Your statement should be completed independently of other staff involved in the incident.

The use of force must only be used when it is:
Reasonable in the circumstance, meaning:
i. You believed that it was ***absolutely necessary*** &
ii. ***Proportionate*** to the seriousness of the situation

Where a hold was used, please tick your primary role:
 Right arm
 Left arm
 Supervising

Please provide as much detail as possible below, including:

Before the incident (i.e. what led to the incident, any de-escalation techniques used), during the incident (i.e. what types of force were employed, duration of the hold and why it was necessary), and after the incident (i.e. where pupil was relocated to and any injuries sustained)

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Pupil Statement (if necessary) :

Pupil Name:

Date:

Parent informed (Please date)

Face to face

Telephone

Letter/Email

Action Points for Risk Assessment

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