



**Policy on the Use
of Reasonable
Force/
Safe Handling**

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Rationale

Context

- our dual responsibility
 - providing safe and secure environment for the entire school community (pupils and staff)
 - promoting and sustaining appropriate behaviour;
- taking account of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12); International 1989 (UK 1991)
- taking account of the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Article 3) which requires Boards of Governors to ensure that policies are designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of the pupils;
- taking account of the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Article 4) which clarifies the powers of members of staff of a grant-aided school regarding the use of reasonable force;
- taking account of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 (Articles 17 + 19) which imposes a duty on Boards of Governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils; and
- taking account of the Human Rights Act 1998 which provides for the right to education.

This policy and our procedures have been developed in line with guidance from:

- The Department of Education NI circular 1999/9;
- DE document “Towards a Model Policy in Schools on the Use of Reasonable Force” August 2002;
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001);
- Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection: Code of Conduct for Staff (1999/10) paragraphs 69 to 72; and
- DE Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils.

Principles

Bangor Central Integrated Primary School believes that:

- Each child has the right to be educated in a safe and secure environment where each child's moral, intellectual, personal, social and emotional development is promoted.
- Parents and carers are informed and reassured that their children are being educated in a safe, caring and respectful atmosphere.
- All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment.

These principles underpin our school ethos and culture.

Purposes

The following purposes underpin Bangor Central Integrated Primary School's policy and practices to:

- create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe;
- protect every person in the school community from harm;
- protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful; and
- develop and implement guidance for staff (teaching and non-teaching) so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied.

Links With Other Policies

- This policy is one of the overall pastoral policies and dovetails into the school's existing behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, child protection policy, special needs policy, health and safety policy and complaints policy.
- It also takes account of the staff development and welfare policy.
- Teaching, learning and assessment policy and curricular policies.

Definition of Reasonable Force

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (part II Article 4 (1)) states:

“A member of the staff of a grant-aided school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

- committing any offence;**
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or**
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.”**

Based on this legal framework, the working definition of “reasonable force” is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

Practices

Preventative Strategies

The school actively promotes positive behaviour management strategies thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention, except in emergency situations.

Preventative strategies for inappropriate behaviour(s) are detailed in our schools behaviour management policy.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is one of our preventative strategies to minimise the risk of an incident escalating unnecessarily and will be a normal practice for our school where a pupil or a small number of pupils are known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour (EBD). Risk assessment will be considered only for those pupils where there is a foreseeable risk and

enables the school to plan and train accordingly. Risk assessment will be considered from two perspectives (a) environmental risk assessment or (b) individual risk assessment. This should form part of the pupil's education plan. (See Appendix)

Procedures - Support Structures

The following procedures have been agreed by the staff and adopted by the board of Governors. Parents and pupils will be informed of the school's procedures and support structures within the overall Pastoral Care Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by any member of staff who is authorised by the principal to have lawful control or charge of pupils, eg teachers, classroom assistants, supervisory assistants. The principal will confirm with all staff those who are authorised to be in charge of pupils at any given time.

Procedures

There may be circumstances when a member of staff may have to decide between making an intervention/using reasonable force by placing him/herself in a dangerous situation or standing back and thereby allowing colleagues or pupils to face a potential danger. There will always be an element of personal judgment in these decisions and there is the possibility of someone being injured. However, it is reasonable to expect a member of staff to engage in some risk where there is evidence of danger to others and intervention has a good chance of being effective.

Staff should not, however, put themselves in personal danger merely to safeguard property.

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by a teacher or other authorised person(s) on the school premises or when authorised elsewhere eg, supervision of pupils in bus queues, a field trip, on other authorised out of school activities such as a sporting event or educational trip. Reasonable force should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted and where:

- action is necessary in self defence or because there is imminent risk of injury to another pupil or person;

- there is a developing risk of injury to another pupil or person, or significant damage to property;
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples that fall into the above categories are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in which s/he might cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (Note: this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school);
- 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.

It may be necessary in the above situations to summon additional support. Procedures that will be used include: red card and a reliable pupil, etc.

Forms of Reasonable Force

When other behaviour management strategies have failed - it should be the minimum intervention or force that should reasonably be employed depending on the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical condition and any special needs of the pupil and used in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned. The use of reasonable force/ safe handling should involve a calm and measured approach at all times appropriate to the particular pupil and be in accordance with the following procedures:

- tell the pupil to stop the inappropriate behaviour;
- ask the pupil to behave appropriately, clearly stating the desired behaviour;
- tell the pupil that physical intervention will take place if inappropriate behaviour continues;
- during the incident repeatedly reassure the pupil and tell him/her that physical contact will stop as soon as he/she is ready to behave appropriately;
- if the teacher, classroom assistant or supervisory assistant feels at risk, eg from a large or older group of pupils, send for the nearest staff support.

The forms of reasonable force the school will use will depend on the individual circumstances and could include the following:

- separating pupils who are fighting, or who are about to fight;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding;
- breakaway techniques (eg when a member of staff is grabbed by a pupil);
- leading a pupil by the arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing hands on the backs of elbows; or
- using more restrictive holds (in extreme circumstances).

Health and Safety

When using reasonable force/physical intervention/restraint/safe handling, the pupil's health and safety must always be considered and monitored.

Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the pupil.

The use of reasonable force is only to be employed in exceptional circumstances or an emergency where a pupil appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and whose behaviour is presenting a threat to himself/herself or others. A member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help if there is a risk that he/she may be injured or may endanger his/her life.

Record Keeping

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded in the Incident Report Form (See Appendix). The school (Principal) will keep an accurate up-to-date record of all such incidents. Immediately following any incident the member of staff concerned must inform the Principal or a senior member of staff and provide the contemporaneous written record/report.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Principal will review annually the entries in the incident book. Records of incidents will be kept until the date of the child's twenty-first birthday.

The pupil's views should also be recorded as soon as possible, preferably on the same day.

The use of physical intervention can be upsetting to all concerned, therefore, it is important to ensure that staff and pupils are given emotional support and where required basic first-aid treatment (members of staff involved Mrs Heaney, First Aid co-ordinator, Mrs McMurtry, Pastoral Care).

Contacting Parents

Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them.

Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault should be supported, as appropriate, in taking any necessary action against an assailant.

Training and Development

All staff will have regular awareness raising of issues relating to the use of reasonable force/safe handling, procedures and practices relating to behaviour management and child protection policy and procedures. All staff will receive appropriate training and development, in line with the school's staff development policy, in the use of preventative strategies and approaches for managing difficult situations when they may arise.

Appendix 1

Risk Assessment

A small number of pupils may exhibit disturbed or distressing behaviour which may require some form of physical intervention by staff. To minimise the risk of incidents escalating unnecessarily due to lack of foresight, planning and training, schools should carry out a risk assessment from two perspectives:

- environmental risk assessment; and
- individual risk assessment.

Environmental Risk Assessment

- Identify situations or locations where there is increased risks of incidents happening.
- Analysis of past incidents to identify medium to high risk locations.
- Staff and pupils consulted.
- Individual pupil consulted.
- Decide the appropriate type and level of supervision.
- Principal and SMT to make recommendations to Board of Governors on type and level of supervision to minimise risk.
- Implement plan.
- Review plan.

Individual Risk Assessment

Where a school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force/safe handling, the school should plan its response by:

- consulting the pupil, as appropriate;
- consulting the parents – specific action the school may need to take;
- briefing staff – what action they should be taking (may require training or guidance);

- managing the pupil – eg reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict;
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned wherever possible;
- implementing plan and review;
- reviewing Plan.

Risk Reduction

Risk reduction should include:

- proactive measures to support the child effectively and prevent difficulties emerging;
- early interventions to help the child in difficult situations and avert problems; and
- planned measures to manage the child and others safely, when unavoidable difficulties arise.

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Appendix 2 Exemplar

Risk Assessment Proforma

NAME OF PUPIL: DOB. AGE:

SEN REGISTER CODE OF PRACTICE STAGE:

SUPPORT TO-DATE:

EDUCATION PLAN:

RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY

MEMBER OF STAFF:

DATE:

SIGNED:

(Principal) (Date)

Consultation has been carried out...

Please tick ✓

as appropriate.

with the pupil

with other pupils

with the parent/carer

with staff

15 16

Types of Behaviour Causing Concern: Level of Risk, Frequency, People to whom Behaviour Exhibited.

BEHAVIOUR	VERY LIKELY	LIKELY	QUITE POSSIBLE	POSSIBLE	UNLIKELY	FREQUENCY
	Y	Y	E	E	Y	H – Hourly D – Daily W – Weekly M – Monthly IT - Termly

DISRUPTION:

Vandalism

Bullying

Fighting

Violent and Aggressive

Angry Outbursts

Impulsive Dangerous Behaviour

Self Harms

Medically Related Behaviour

PEOPLE TO WHOM BEHAVIOUR IS MOST LIKELY EXHIBITED

LOC ATI ON AN D TIM E OF BEH AVI OU RS	DI SR U PT IO N	V A N D A L I S M	B U L L Y I N G	FI G H T I N G	VI OL EN T AN D AG GR ES SI VE	A N G RY O UT B U RS TS	IM PU LS IV E DAN GER O US BE HA VI O UR	S E L F H A R M S	M E DI C A L LY R EL AT E D B E H A VI O U	TH RE AT EN I NG AN D AB USI VE	OT HER R (p l e a s e s p e c i f
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Behaviour During Lessons
Behaviour in Practical Lessons
(please specify)

Behaviour Going Between Lessons

Behaviour in Library
Behaviour in Canteen/ Lunch

Behaviour at Break Times
Behaviour in Playground/ Lunchtime

Behaviour on Educational Trips

Behaviour Off-Site Disapplied Programmes

Behaviour in PE/Games Hall

Behaviour on School/
Public Transport Bus
Behaviour in Taxi
Behaviour if Medication Not Taken

Other Behaviours –
(please specify)

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Risk Evaluation

Level of Likelihood x Frequency = Risk

Very Likely 5 x Hourly (5) = 25 greatest

Likely 4 x Daily (4) = 16

Quite Possible 3 x Weekly (3) = 9

Possible 2 x Monthly (2) = 4

Unlikely 1 x Termly (1) = 1 lowest

Likelihoods Frequency

Very likely 5 Hourly 5

Likely 4 Daily 4

Quite Possible 3 Weekly 3

Possible 2 Monthly 2

Unlikely 1 Termly 1

This numerical evaluation of risk is not an absolute but simply affords a pupil's predisposition and risk frequency to be compared.

RISK FACTORS

Score Risk

25 Very High

15-20 High

8-12 Medium

6-10 Low

1-5 V Low

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ACTION PLAN

Drawn up by Date

Name of Pupil

Agreed by (Principal) Date

Presented to BOG (Date)

To be reviewed (Date)

Signed (Parent) Date

Beh avio ur	Ri sk Fa ct or	Existing Precauti ons/ Support/ Supervisi on Linked to Educatio n Plan	Addit ional Prec autio ns/ Supp ort/ Supe rvisio n/ Strat egies	Ac tio n By W ho m	Ac tio n By W he n

Appendix 3

Incident Record Form

Date of Incident

Name of Pupil:

Year Group:

Staff Involved in restraint:

Designation:

Events Leading up to the Incident

Where did the incident start?

What was happening at the time?

Describe the Event that Occurred

When did the incident occur?

Day:

Time:

Where did the incident occur?

What action did you take to try to de-escalate the situation before using restraint?

What behaviour was the child presenting that warranted restraint/physical intervention (Please tick appropriate box)

At risk of injury to self or others

At risk of significant damage to property

Compromising good order and discipline

At risk of committing a criminal offence

What do you believe would have happened if there had been no physical intervention?

How was the pupil held?

How long did the pupil need to be held?

Was anybody injured? YES/NO If yes, please give details

Name of member of staff who verbally checked pupil for injury after the hold

Has the pupil been physically restrained before? YES/NO

Implications for Future Planning

Does this pupil have an individual behaviour programme/education plan?
YES/NO

Do changes need to be made to any of the following? (Please tick appropriate box)

The environment eg organisation, curriculum ☐

Targets for teaching new skills ☐

Reinforcement strategies ☐

Defusing and calming strategies ☐

Other Please specify

Do other agencies need to be involved in the future YES/NO

If yes, please specify who and with what aim

Follow Up Action

Parent/carers informed by Telephone / Letter / Direct Contact

Form completed by:

Post held:

Principal's signature

Date

A copy should be sent to the chairperson of the Board of Governors