

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit



Use of Reasonable Force-Safe Handling

Ratified by Board of Governors:
As per statement on Website

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 (Article 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 the Use of Reasonable Force" August 2002;
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001); and
- Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection: Code of Conduct for Staff (1999/10) paragraphs 69 to 72.
- DE Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils

Principles

Enniskillen 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 Enniskillen 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 positive behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, child protection 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.

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School will have:

- planned intervention, based in which staff employ, where necessary, pre-arranged strategies based upon a risk assessment and recorded within the pupil's education plan; ref risk assessment; and
- emergency or unplanned use of force/intervention, based , which occurs in response to unforeseen events, eg pupil fights.

PRACTICES

Preventative Strategies

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School actively promotes positive behaviour management strategies thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention, except in emergency situations.

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 which enables the school to plan and train accordingly.**

Risk assessment will be considered from two perspectives

- (a) environmental risk assessment
- (b) individual risk assessment.

This will form part of the pupil's education plan. (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2)

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School will seek staff-training, in relation to risk assessment, from CASS.

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 Policies**.

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.

Insurance

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School has clarified with their insurance company that **all staff and any other adult** authorised by the principal to supervise pupils and follow the schools policy and practice are adequately covered by insurance.

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.

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 schools agreed strategies and 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 Enniskillen Integrated Primary School will use, will depend on the individual circumstances and are the following Team-Teach techniques:

1. Arm-safe disengagement responses
 - Side-step in
 - Cross-step in
 - Drop elbow
 - Pump
 - Conductor

2. Neck-safe disengagement responses
 - Steering wheel
 - Fix and stabilise
 - Neck brace
 - Elbow guide
 - Elbow guide out of headlock

3. Body-hold safe disengagement responses
 - Fix and stabilize holds from behind
 - Prayer for entwined fingers
 - Bar and gate
 - Elbow guide
 - Explosion

4. Clothing, hair and bite responses
 - Fix and stabilize
 - Tube
 - Opening the oyster
 - Knuckle slide
 - Knuckle squeeze
 - Eye bulge
 - Manual manipulation of the jaw

5. Two person holds guides and escorts
 - Friendly guide
 - Friendly hold
 - Single elbow
 - Figure of four
 - Double elbow
 - Escort to chairs
 - Small child escort

6. Single person holds and escorts
 - T Wrap for a smaller child
 - T wrap to chairs with help
 - Help hug
 - Help with legs

Separating fights

- Steering away
- Punches and kicks

The forms of safe handling the school will use, will depend on the individual circumstances and are:

- teaching a child to hold an adults arm appropriately whilst walking down a corridor or a staircase; or on a visit outside school;
- reacting instinctively to a situation by holding or restraining a child who is running onto a busy road;
- physically prompting a young child as part of an educational or behaviour programme;
- assisting a child with toileting.

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.

There will be a post-incident support structure in place to facilitate the recover, rebuild and restore positive relationships process.

Record Keeping

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force will be recorded. The school (principal) will keep an accurate up-to-date record of all such incidents.

Post-Incident Management

Immediate action will be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require more than basic first aid.

There will be a post-incident support structure in place to facilitate the recover, rebuild and restore positive relationships process.

Contacting Parents

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. Any complaint from a parent will be dealt with within the school's complaints policy/procedures as detailed below.

Complaints

If an incident occurs in Enniskillen Integrated Primary School involving the use of reasonable force/restraint by a teacher, the procedures governing such incidents should be followed. This will include informing the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child as outlined above.

In the event of a subsequent complaint made against a member of staff either by or on behalf of the child, this will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy/Procedure and in accordance with the Circular 1999/10, Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection.

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

Designated Teacher

The Principal will have special responsibility for providing guidance to other staff on the use of reasonable force/ safe handling and for implementing and supporting the schools procedures.

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 be offered 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. (*The Board of Governors will source training from Team-Teach.*)

Policy Development and Guidance

Consultation

Key stakeholders will be consulted on the policy - (Education & Libraries Order (NI) 2003). These must include:

- children and young people;
- parents and carers;
- all staff; and
- Board of Governors.

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 Enniskillen Integrated Primary 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 will 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;
- Implement plan and review;

- Review 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.