



# **St. Joseph's Special School**

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Registered Charity Number: 20140210 Roll Number: 19520H

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## **Positive Physical Interventions and Restrictive Practices Policy**

St Joseph's School

Balrothery

Tallaght

This policy reflects the school's ethos and is written in consultation with the following partners – staff, parents, pupils (where relevant) and the patron. Our school in the first instance applies the principles outlined in our Code of Behaviour, which provide guidelines to staff on the use of day to day positive behavioural management strategies. These are designed to help all pupils to modify/manage their own behaviour in the long-term. Where these strategies are not working and it is foreseeable that a pupil might engage in high risk behaviours requiring a physical intervention or restrictive practice, this policy applies. The Board of Management takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors noting that:

**The paramount concerns are for the safety and welfare of the pupils in the school as well as for the safety and welfare of the adults who look after them. Therefore, we will aim to implement our duty of care to all affected by our work at all times.**

The policy is based on guidance from the following:

- Education and Welfare Act 2000
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2007 Safety, Health and Welfare At Work Act, 2005 (as well as other statutes and standards)
- Children First Guidelines 2011
- Guidelines for Schools on Supporting Students with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - An information guide for Primary Schools: DES 2013.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and structures:

- Child Protection
- Anti Bullying
- Code of Behaviour
- Intimate Care Policy
- Health and Safety
- Enrolment Policy
- Grievance Procedures
- Data Protection policy

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

1. To provide clear guidelines to staff, pupils and parents regarding the use of restrictive practices/physical interventions in our school, including the use of time away and withdrawal from class.
2. To create a culture within the school of where as a last resort there is minimal use of physical interventions/restrictive practices.
3. To manage serious incidents when they occur.
4. To reduce the risks associated with serious incidents such as injuries to self or others or serious damage to property.

### **SECTION 1 - PHYSICAL CONTACT**

There are many times when physical contact is used in our school such as: physically assisting a pupil to complete a task; patting a pupil in affirmation; administering first aid and meeting intimate care needs. However, our duty of care to others means that it may on occasion also be necessary to use physical contact or restrictions to contain or restrain a pupil who is putting him/herself or another person at risk of injury. This policy governs the use of these practices. The following table, which is not exhaustive, outlines some circumstances where physical contact or restrictions may be used in the school.

Categories 1 and 2 and are necessary in order to take care of and teach our pupils and are not considered to be restrictive. Categories 3 and 4 however, are restrictive and require careful thought and consideration before being employed by staff. Any use of such restrictions must be discussed with the Principal and agreed with parents and in some instances with relevant multi-disciplinary staff.

<b>Category 1</b>	<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Category 3</b>	<b>Category 4</b>
<b>Reassurance/ Comfort</b>	<b>Intimate Care/ First Aid/Safety</b>	<b>Non-Contact Restrictions/ Containment</b>	<b>Use of Physical Intervention</b>
Pat on arm for praise/ reassurance	Cleaning cuts	High handles on doors  Coded exit at main door  Locked doors in agreed circumstances	Interventions to avoid personal injuries or infections resulting from kicking, punching, slapping, biting, spitting, grabbing, hair-pulling etc
Holding hand of upset child or to avoid (prevent) absconding	Toileting	Locks on cupboards	Escorting a resisting pupil to a safer location
High Fives	Lifting a child down from a height	Fences around playgrounds	Intervening in a physical altercation between pupils
Hugs	Dressing/ personal hygiene	Harnesses on transport  Clothing to restrict socially unacceptable behaviour and to preserve the dignity of the pupil	Controlling the movements of a pupil to prevent self- harm, harm to others, absconding, destruction of property, socially unacceptable behaviour.
Sensory programmes	Taking a dangerous object from a child	Restricted participation in activities that may pose unacceptable risks	Withdrawal/ seclusion

## SECTION 2 - PREVENTION

The school seeks in the first instance to be proactive at all times to prevent and minimise the need for physical interventions and restrictive practices by employing 'first resort' strategies i.e. de-escalation strategies and environmental alterations as follows:

### 1. De-escalation Strategies

Sensory breaks, visual schedules, use of rewards, verbal supports, praise, reassurance, positive reminders, offering choices, short tasks only, calm stance and facial expression of staff, careful use of tone of voice and choice of words by staff, change of staff, distraction/diversion, use of humour, negotiation, outlining limits/boundaries, selective attention, time given to process/cool down, close supervision.

### 2. Environmental Alterations

1:1 teaching areas, individual workstations, access to preferred activities where possible, access to preferred or skilled staff where possible, timetables organised to minimise risks, individual schedules, reduced pupil/staff ratios, increased access to specialist staff, comfort areas, sensory room, opportunities provided to 'burn off energy', High handles on some doors, locks on some doors, reduced access to equipment in some rooms, coded exit to front door, fenced in playgrounds, clothing such as dungarees, leotards, bodysuits used in the context of a wider behaviour support programme.

3. Pupils with Behaviour Plans are prioritised for meetings with staff and parents to discuss and review prevention strategies.

## **SECTION 3 - BEHAVIOUR PLANS**

These are devised for pupils deemed as being of greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions. In this instance teachers in consultation with relevant staff carry out a risk assessment. (see sample Appendix A) Pupils may be referred, with parent/guardian support, to a psychologist. Other multidisciplinary support services are requested as necessary.

This plan should ideally contain the following:

- a brief history of the pupil
- a brief outline of likes/dislikes and known triggers
- a functional assessment of the behaviour using information from several sources such as parents, staff, carers.
- a multi- element behaviour support plan outlining environmental alterations, direct interventions, skills teaching and reactive strategies
- de-escalation strategies to employ when behaviours start to occur
- recommended physical interventions which may be employed when de-escalation strategies are unsuccessful or not possible

- planned reviews of any recommended restrictive practices
- a list of persons to whom the plan needs to be communicated

The plan is signed by all involved in its implementation.

#### **4 SECTION 4 – STAFF TRAINING**

The Board of Management has over the years endeavoured to ensure that as many staff as possible have access to training. The absence of guidelines and funding from the DES has presented difficulties for the Board in providing whole school training in this area. The difficulties arise primarily from financial constraints and also from the absence of a structure whereby all staff can attend training during the school term. The necessity to regularly update training also poses problems for the same reasons outlined above. Some staff have availed of the following training:

- In-house training from experienced staff at staff meetings and CPD delivered out of school hours (Croke Park hours)
- Training delivered by the CALM
- Training for teachers provided by SESS – including CABA
- Training provided by the Middleton centre for Autism
- Teachers regularly participate in online and face to face courses during the summer
- Teachers attend seminars, conferences and workshops

#### **SECTION 5 – GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS IN CIRCUMSTANCES OUTLINED BELOW:**

A. Unforeseen or Emergency Situations: e.g. a pupil suddenly tries to climb over a fence or run out on a road, or attempts to hurt another unexpectedly – **all staff** must use their judgement and take appropriate action to safeguard pupils or staff whilst calling for assistance from other staff. Unplanned interventions must take the following principles into consideration:

- Necessity/Duress of circumstances – where action must be taken but staff members are required to choose a course of action that will result in least harm
- Reasonable Force - Determined by the severity of the behaviour and counterbalanced by gender, size, experience, etc
- Acting in Good Faith – encompasses a sincere belief or motive without any malice
- Duty of Care – Acting with watchfulness, attention, caution and prudence. Essentially keeping people safe.

B. Pupils with Behaviour Support Plans: The school will endeavour to ensure that staff with up to date training and knowledge of the pupil's plan are available to these pupils. In the event that this is not possible any staff member should take appropriate action to safeguard the situation whilst calling for assistance from staff familiar to the pupil.

**SECTION 6 - DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO USE RESTRAINT**

The school endeavours to encourage staff to STOP AND THINK before employing a physical intervention as follows:

ACTION	CONSIDER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selective attention</li> <li>• Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture</li> <li>• Use a slow controlled voice</li> <li>• Give clear visual or verbal directions</li> <li>• Pause and allow time for compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The likely outcomes if restraint is used against the likely outcomes if it is not</li> <li>• The short term risks versus long term risks □ Balancing the best interests, health and safety of the pupil with the best interests, health and safety of the other pupils, staff and general public</li> <li>• Alerting staff who are most likely to succeed in diffusing the situation</li> </ul>

Having followed all of the above, should restraint be necessary the minimum use of force necessary to achieve the desired result should be employed while at all times striving to respect the dignity of the pupil.

**SECTION 7 - USING A RESTRAINT**

If a restraint is used staff must ask themselves the following questions:

- Am I using the minimum force for the shortest time?
- Can I reduce the amount of pressure?
- How best can I communicate with the pupil and with other staff?
- Should I ask someone else to take over?

**SECTION 8 - LAST RESORT/EARLY INTERVENTION**

Restraint should be used as a last resort. This does not mean that all other possible strategies must be tried and tested beforehand; rather it means that staff must make a considered judgement balancing the risks involved, thus allowing informed decisions to be made. Occasionally using a physical intervention early on may prevent a risk of injury to other pupils and staff thus justifying the use of that intervention in that particular situation.

Some pupils may have stereotypical patterns of behaviour which alert staff to a developing crisis. Such information is disseminated to all staff.

## **SECTION 9 - USING TIME-OUT/WITHDRAWAL/COMFORT/SECLUSION ROOMS**

Sometimes a pupil cannot manage in a classroom setting for a variety of reasons and needs to be withdrawn to allow teaching and learning to continue for the rest of the pupils. This can happen in 3 ways:

**1. Time Away** – This may be used informally for pupils who need time or space to calm/self-regulate i.e. pupil is encouraged or prompted to move to another table, chair or designated classroom area for a short period of time or may be sent 'on a message'. The purpose of this is to divert or distract the pupil. In a time-away procedure the pupil is given the option to decide to leave a certain area (i.e. they are asked if they would like to leave and are facilitated to do so). It is not presented as a directive. The goal of time-away is to support the pupil to learn self-management techniques when they are upset or experiencing difficulty. Time-away involves a choice on the part of the pupil. This can be distinguished from seclusion when the choice is taken away from the pupil. Time-away therefore gives freedom and choice where seclusion limits freedom

**2. Withdrawal/Comfort** – This may be used to move a pupil to another place outside of the classroom where he or she is continually supported or monitored by staff either inside or outside the area the pupil is in. This may involve physically intervening to move the pupil and/or preventing him/her from leaving the area until staff consider that it is safe to do so. Staff must continuously attempt to distract or divert the pupil and return him/her to the classroom as soon as it is safe to do so. This may take some time if the pupil demonstrates that he/she requires a break from activities or is still exhibiting behaviours that challenge. Doors are not secured in this instance.

**3. Seclusion** -This has been defined as 'the supervised confinement and isolation of a person, away from other users of services, in an area from which the person is prevented from leaving'

Removal to a seclusion or support area is a recognised restrictive physical intervention and is only considered in exceptional circumstances. The use of this intervention must be proportionate to the risk presented by the pupil. It may be used at times of emergency only where the risks of significant injury to pupils or staff are very high and it is not practicable to otherwise communicate with the pupil. If this is not an option the other pupils will go to other classrooms (as per class break-up list) and the pupil presenting the risk will be secluded in his/her own classroom. This action will be documented in a Serious Incident report which will be signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal. The pupil will only be secluded for the length of time necessary for him or her to self-regulate. In order to keep the seclusion period to a minimum staff will regularly engage with the pupil- offering choices, positive reinforcement and calming strategies. In either of the above locations the door is locked and the pupil is continuously monitored via glass panels to ensure his/her safety. At regular intervals staff open the door and check with the pupil if he or she is ready to re-engage. If the Principal or Deputy Principal is concerned for the welfare of any pupil in these circumstances, parents will be asked to bring the pupil home. Periods of seclusion are documented in the pupil's behaviour log. Parents are informed as agreed. Regular reviews take place with the whole team. The purpose of this is to safeguard pupils and or staff in situations of very high risk to themselves or others.

**Use of seclusion/withdrawal for reasons of sanction/punishment or staff convenience is NOT permitted. This is unlawful and will be dealt with appropriately by the B.O.M. Child Protection services and/or Gardai will be contacted.**

#### **SECTION 10 - POST INCIDENT SUPPORT** (see Incident Report template Appendix B)

Following an incident, the priority is to look after the pupils and staff involved before reports are filled out and reviews held. Incident reports should be filled out by the staff involved following the use of restraint as outlined in Section 1, Category 4, above. The best time to fill out an incident report is when the situation has settled and the pupil and staff have had time to recover. The report is signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal who will review the interventions used by staff. This will inform any future actions. In the event of any injury the Accident Incident form will also be submitted. This form is checked by the Principal or Deputy Principal to decide if any follow up action is required.

#### **7 SECTION 11 - COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS:**

The school seeks to engage positively with parents regarding all aspects of their child's education, care and management. Parents of pupils who engage in high

risk behaviours that challenge are prioritised for meetings/phone calls with the Principal or Deputy Principal. The school will endeavour to keep parents informed in a manner that is reasonable and in the best interests of their child. This will take the form of meetings, phone calls, communication books or letters. How to make a Complaint:

- Parents wishing to make complaint should in the first instance contact the Principal who will furnish the parent with a copy of the Complaints Procedure.
- Staff wishing to make a complaint should in the first instance contact the Principal who will furnish the staff member with a copy of the Complaints Procedure

### **Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

This policy is a collaborative document and is disseminated to the school community.

Storage Procedures: In St. Joseph's School.

Ratified by: Board of Management, St. Joseph's School 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2018
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