

Rosstulla School
‘Together Towards Tomorrow’
Reasonable Force and Safe Handling Policy
2016/17
Agreed by Governing Body, July 2017

Context of school

Rosstulla School caters for pupils with a moderate learning disability whose ages range from 4 years 6 months to 17 years.

The purpose of the Policy

To provide clear guidance re the use of reasonable force to constrain or control pupils as identified in **Department of Education Circular 1999/9**. Staff, parents and governors should understand the policy. The policy forms part of the school’s overall policy on discipline and pastoral care.

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 especially – defusing and de-escalating conflict/confrontation or aggression.

Reasonable Force

Definition of reasonable force

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

Reasonable force will only be used once all other de-escalation strategies have failed to resolve the situation.

We adhere to the **Education NI Order (1998)**. **Article 4** of the Order states that a teacher may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following:

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the person himself);
3. 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.

Staff should not place themselves at risk merely to protect property.

The use of reasonable force will depend on the circumstances and staff should take the following into consideration:

- Is it necessary (in the best interest of the pupil), reasonable and proportionate
- The age, sex, physical strength, understanding and special educational needs of the pupil
- Physical force or restraint is not to be used as routine part of behavioural management. It should be in proportion to the circumstances of the behaviour or the circumstances that it is intended to prevent

The following may be regarded as constituting reasonable force:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Guiding away from a situation using 'Caring Cs'
- Shepherding a pupil by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme circumstances using a safe handling hold (see below)

NB If a hold has to be used extreme care should be exercised. It should be held for the minimum time required and eased as the young person calms. Always advise the young person of the behaviours expected in order for the hold to be released.

Always be aware of how your actions may appear to others and for reasons of personal dignity that you are appropriately dressed (**App 2**)

Circumstances under which reasonable force may be deemed acceptable:

- Pupils fighting
- A pupil involved in rough play or misusing dangerous materials, substances or objects in a manner that may cause injury to him/herself or others
- A pupil refusing to cooperate with staff requests and verbally or physically abusing staff or other pupils or causing significant damage to property

Team Teach

The majority of permanent staff are Team Teach trained. Training was undertaken in November 2015 and will be renewed in November 2017.

Any injury which results from a physical intervention should not automatically be regarded as evidence of malpractice on the part of the staff member as long as the criteria for intervention was followed.

Unacceptable methods of force

Force should never be used as a punishment or intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation the examples below are **not** permitted under any circumstances:

Holding around the neck or restricting breathing in any way

Kicking, slapping, tripping, punching

Holding by the hair

Holding a pupil on the ground

Forcing limbs against joints

Absconding

It is reasonable to prevent a pupil from absconding on the basis that he/she may be injured, become involved in inappropriate behaviours or that the act is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline in the school.

Guidelines for dealing with a pupil who has absconded

1. Inform The Principal or his/her deputy immediately
2. The Principal or his/her deputy will inform:
The Police
The parent or carer of the pupil
3. Monitor the situation, in particular the whereabouts of the pupil.

Never confront a pupil in a heightened state of anxiety as you may cause them to run into the road or travel further than they would have done. Remain calm and reassuring.

A pupil is the school's responsibility even though they may have left the building or grounds.

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 when a pupil is known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour (SEBD). Risk assessment will be considered 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.

The risk assessment may indicate that a Risk Reduction Plan should be drawn up.

Risk Reduction Plan

This is a detailed risk management plan containing specific targets and outcomes.

Positive Handling Plan

Circular 1999/9 identifies that restraint (safe handling) should not be used as a form of discipline. If a pupil has had to be safe handled once a positive handling plan will be drawn up.

A positive handling plan informs all concerned how a pupil will be safely handled when in crisis. It will be drawn up, shared and agreed with the pupil, his/her parent/carers and relevant staff.

Whilst the agreement of the pupil or his/her parent/carer is preferable, failure to agree to the plan does not mean that positive handling will not be used when the pupil is in crisis. The best interests of the child are paramount.

Management responsibility

Staff should consult the Pastoral Leader for their department if a pupil requires a Risk Reduction and Positive Handling Plan

Record Keeping

All incidents of positive handling should be fully documented and recorded on the Record of Positive Handling sheet (APP 1). The record will be shared with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

These sheets will be stored by the Principal in a filing cabinet in the locked archive room.

The person concerned in carrying safe handling should also retain a written copy of the record sheet.

The Vice-Principal and the Principal should be informed of the incident.

The Principal or Vice-Principal must inform Parents/Carers if safe handling beyond that agreed in the student's positive handling plan has been used.

Complaints

A subsequent complaint against a member of staff by or on behalf of a pupil will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school policy on child protection.

If a member of staff is subject to physical violence or assault and wishes to pursue a complaint against his/her assailant he/she will be fully supported in any action he/she may consider appropriate.

Staff Development

Staff will receive refresher training in 'Team Teach' in November 2017.

New staff to the school will be trained in Team Teach.

Consultation

The Governors and staff were consulted in the writing of this policy. The policy will be reviewed yearly and updated as required.

F. Burke (Principal)
2016/17

App 1

ROSSTULLA SCHOOL
Record of the use of Safe Handling

Pupil name:

Date of birth:

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Member(s) of staff involved:

Adult witness(es) to incident:

Pupil witness(es) to incident:

Has safe handling been required before for pupil? Yes / No

Outline of events leading up to incident (prior to positive handling)

Where did the incident occur?

Describe pupil's behaviour:

Steps taken to defuse the situation prior to safe handling: (Please tick as appropriate) ✓

Humour

Quiet voice

Distraction

Body Language

Reassurance

Withdrawal

Planned ignoring

Reminder of rules

Change of face

Other (give details)

Why was safe handling necessary? (Please tick as appropriate) ✓

- Self defence
- Imminent risk to pupil
- Imminent risk of injury to another pupil / person
- Developing risk of injury to another pupil/person
- Risk of significant damage to property
- Pupil is behaving in a way that compromises good order and discipline
- Pupil is at risk of committing a criminal offence

REMEMBER: Positive handling should be:

- In the best interest of the child (Children's Order)
- Absolutely necessary (Human Rights' Act)
- Reasonable and proportionate, and for shortest possible time (Circular 1999/9)

In your opinion, what may have happened if you had not used safe handling?

Safe handling hold used *(Please tick as appropriate)* ✓

Cradle hug

Wrap to chairs with feet

Single Elbow

Single elbow in chairs

Other actions taken by staff to reduce risk:

Wrap

Chair to wrap

Double elbow

Hair response

Wrap to chairs

Bite response

Figure of 4

How long was the hold applied for?

Injury reported at the time? Yes / No

If yes, how/to whom?:

Pupil verbally checked for injury by:

Staff verbally checked for injury by:

Please indicate other recording procedures used: *(Please tick as appropriate)* ✓

First Aid

Accident form

Other (please specify):

AR1 form

AR2 form

Child Protection

Parent/Carer informed by *(please tick ✓)*

Telephone

Letter

Face to face contact

Principal / Vice Principal informed at: *(time)*

Following the incident, what happened to the pupil?

Did staff member require support? Yes / No

Does the pupil have an IBP / Positive Handling Plan? Yes / No

If yes, do changes need to be made?

If no, please refer to Pastoral Leader to have plan drawn up

Do other agencies need to be involved? Yes / No

If yes, which one(s)?

Follow up action required (to include repair)? Yes / No *(if yes, please give details)*

Form completed by

Post held:

Signatures of all staff involved:

NAME (print)

NAME (signature)

POST HELD

Principal's signature: _____

Sent to Chairperson Board of Governors on
APP 2

In the case of having to safe handle a pupil it is advisable that for reasons of dignity, safety and child protection that the following guidelines are followed:

Remove watch or other items of jewellery that may cause an injury to you or the pupil

Avoid low necklines and short, tight skirts

Remove tie, scarf or lanyard

Wear flat shoes or remove shoes that have high heels

Hoodies should be avoided as the hood is easy to grab and pull on.

