

Our Lady of Fatima



School Policy on Physical Intervention

Introduction

This Policy was formulated by all staff in consultation with the Board of Management and parents.

Rationale

The policy was framed bearing in mind the practices laid down by Child Protection Procedures from Primary and Post Primary Schools(2023 Revised), Code of Discipline, Anti Bullying and Health and Safety School Policies.

We, as a staff, accept the duty of care which devolves to us. In our school we make every effort to ensure that the students given into our care are safe at all times.

The following principles will apply at all times:

1. Best interests of the student
2. Maximum safety, minimum harm
3. Reasonable, proportionate, necessary and least restrictive.
4. Only for reasons of safety (never for sanction, punishment or convenience)
5. Part of an agreed plan with parents and the pupil where appropriate
6. Reviewed regularly with a view to reducing the need for the intervention
7. Regular staff training - CPI
8. Use of COPING Model

COPING MODEL FOR STAFF		COPING MODEL FOR STUDENTS	
C	Control at all times	C	Allow calm/control
O	Orient: uncover facts/feedback	O	Orient - ask 5W Questions
P	Patterns: look for patterns in staff reactions to behaviours	P	Patterns/triggers (Use of ABC/Student Support File)
I	Investigate ways to strengthen staff responses	I	Investigate - alternatives can be used in future

N	Negotiate - agree to changes	N	Negotiate - what works if stressed/how can we help
G	Give support, encouragement & express trust	G	Give back responsibility to individual. Whilst still providing support & encouragement

Aims

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.

To provide clear guidelines to staff, pupils and parents regarding the use of restrictive practices/physical interventions in schools, including the use of time out, withdrawal and seclusion rooms.

To emphasise a culture within the school of prevention and reduction of the use of physical interventions/restrictive practices.

To manage serious incidents when they occur. To reduce the risks associated with serious incidents such as injuries to self or others or serious damage to property.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

There are many times when physical contact is used in our school, such as patting a child in affirmation, administering first aid and meeting intimate car needs. However, our duty of care to others means that it may on occasion also be necessary to use physical contact to restrain a child who is putting themselves or another person at risk of injury. This policy governs the use of these practices.

PREVENTION

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

1. De-escalation Strategies

Sensory breaks

Use of Sensory Pod for de-escalation

Calm stance & 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
Offering choices
Outlining limits/boundaries
Positive reminders
Planned ignoring
Reassurance
Short tasks only
Time given to process/cool down
Verbal supports
Visual schedules
Praise
Use of rewards
Close supervision

2. Environmental Alterations

Comfort areas
Sensory break rooms
1 to 1 teaching areas
Access to preferred activities where possible
Opportunities provided to 'burn off energy'
Reduced access to equipment in some rooms
Coded access to front door
Fenced in playgrounds

□ DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO USE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

In an unforeseen or emergency situation e.g. a child 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.

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

ACT	BALANCE	CHOOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture • Use a slow controlled voice • Give clear verbal directions • Pause and allow time for compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely outcomes if force is used against the likely outcomes if it is not • Short term risks versus long term risks • Best interests of the child against the best interests of other children and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons who are most likely to succeed • Best place available • Best time available • Minimum use of force necessary to achieve the desired result

□ USING TIME-OUT/WITHDRAWAL

Sometimes a student 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 2 ways:

- 1 **Time Out** - This may be used informally for pupils who need time or space to calm/cool down, i.e. student 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.
- 2 **Withdrawal/Comfort** - This may be used to move a student 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 student is in. This may involve physically intervening to move the student and/or preventing the student from leaving the area until staff consider that it is safe to do so. Staff must continuously attempt to distract or divert the student and return the student to his 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 that he/she finds over stimulating. *A positive handling Plan agreed with parents is needed for this intervention if physical interventions are required to move the pupil from the classroom.* The purpose of this is to safeguard pupils and staff in situations that have the potential to be high risk to themselves or others.

In the event of a **SERIOUS** incident the priority is to look after students and staff involved. Reports are then filled out and reviews held. (See Appendix 2)

□ **COMPLAINTS**

The school seeks to engage positively with parents regarding all aspects of their son's/daughter's education, care and management. The school will endeavour to keep parents informed in a manner that is reasonable and in the best interests of the student. This will take the form of meetings, phone calls, diaries or letters.

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.

Appendix 1 - POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

Students Name & D.O.B.	Names of staff & parents involved in devising this plan	Start Date	Date Plan Discontinued

1. **Background Information** (Diagnosis, medical, allergies, medication, sight, hearing etc.)

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2. **Profile of Student** (triggers, likes, dislikes, etc)

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3. **Functional Assessment of Behaviour**

Antecedent	Behaviour	Occurrence	Function (escape, attention, tangible, sensory)	Consequence (e.g. child avoided or gained something)

4. **Behaviour Support Plan**

Environmental Alteration	Direct Intervention (control of antecedents)	Skills Teaching (coping, tolerance, function, general)	Reactive Strategies (see 5)

5. Reactive Strategies

	What you see	What you do
Anxious Phase		
Escalation Phase		
Crisis Phase		
Recovery Phase		

6. Recommended Interventions for this student

Non-contact Restrictions/Containment	Disengagement Strategy	Physical Intervention	Use of room for withdrawal or seclusion

7. Review Dates & Comments

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8. Incident Diary

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9. Plan communicated to: (Signed and dated)

Parents:

Class Staff:

Principal:

Appendix 2 - Incident/Minor Accident Report and Risk Assessment

Student: _____

- What happened?
- What were the risks involved?
- What did you do?
- Why did you do what you did? Use Restorative Practice Questions.

Date:	Time:	Location:
What happened? (brief outline of the significant aspects of the incident)		
What were the risks involved? (to pupil, staff or other pupils)		
What did you do? (factual, brief account of the actions you took, including any 'on the spot/ actions you took to minimise risks to the student, other students or staff). See overleaf for assistance paragraph 1		
How was this in the best interest of the student? (see overleaf paragraph 2)		

Other staff present: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Principal

Incident Sheet (& Risk Assessment)

1. Helpful Phrases for 'What did you do?'

Ask for assistance - drew towards - eased away - encouraged - guided - used a help hug - led student to another room/yard/sensory room where s/he could be monitored/observed - monitored/observed (from outside the door) - moved student away from the area of the incident - (see paragraph 3 below) used physical prompt - used visual/schedules/timetables - reassured - supported - talked pupil down - withdrew other pupils - cleared the area of items that could be thrown - moved other pupils away from danger - asked other staff to withdraw from the area - withdrew myself to a safe distance - kept an eye out for members of the public who might be at risk - prevent emotional/psychological distress to other pupils.

2. Helpful Phrases for 'How was this in the best interest of the student?'

Maintain dignity of the student - prevent negative social outcome for student - prevent distress - prevent pain - reduce risk of injury - reduce possibility of ...- unsafe situation for pupil(s)/staff - welfare of pupil(s)/staff etc... prevent emotional/psychological distress.

3. Sample script to 'talk pupil down'


Use the following script to assist you to 'talk pupils down' during an incident where the pupil is demonstrating by his/her actions that s/he is feeling 'out of control'.

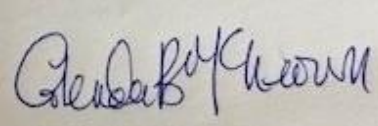
1. **Name** (pause to get attention). I can see something has happened.
2. I can see you are upset.
3. Tell me what happened (if pupil can verbalise) **or** I'll find out what happened from **name** (staff member, parent, other pupil).
4. I want to help you.
5. Let's - go outside/inside - go for a walk - to another room, etc. (try to get pupil to move away from the scene of the incident depending on the situation).

Offer water if appropriate.

Ratified by the Board of Management on: _____5th October, 2020_____

Reviewed by the Board of Management on: 27th September 2023

Signed: 
Chairperson of BoM

Signed: 
Principal

Date: 27/09/2023

Date: 27/09/2023