

Donard School Banbridge

Policy on Managing Challenging Behaviour and the Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling

Rationale:

This policy has been devised in order to create a learning environment in which all of our pupils and young people feel safe and to ensure the protection of everyone from harm. The policy aims to reflect the ethos and values of the school in promoting positive behavioural interventions as well as providing direction and guidance for all staff in managing and addressing challenging/aggressive behaviours in school. A Discipline Policy has been agreed and developed along with the implementation of positive behavioural approaches by each teacher. This policy aims to reflect school procedures in managing more significantly challenging behaviour which may require specific behaviour management plans on the completion of appropriate Behaviour Risk Assessments.

This policy and procedures for management of challenging behaviour has been developed in line with guidance from:

Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviours

Pastoral Care in School-Child Protection (DE99/10)

DE document-Towards a Model Policy in School on the Use of Reasonable Force

DE Circular 1999/9

DE Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils

This policy should be read in line with the following other school policies.

Child Protection Policy

Pastoral care policy

Discipline Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Aims of the Policy:

To create a happy, caring and supportive learning environment for pupils in which they can reach their potential and feel emotionally and physically safe.

To foster positive caring attitudes towards everyone where all achievements are recognised and celebrated.

To encourage independence and self discipline so that each pupil will learn to accept responsibility for their behaviour and understand the consequences of their behaviour.

To model attitudes of respect, tolerance, honesty and empathy.

To protect everyone in school from harm.

To ensure a consistent approach to behaviour throughout the school.

To put in place explicit guidance for staff so that they are clear about how the management of challenging/aggressive behaviour should be addressed.

Implementation/Practice

Preventative Strategies

Donard School actively promotes positive behaviour management (preventative) strategies thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention except in an emergency situation. Positive approaches are outlined in our Discipline Policy. All classes have their own classroom rules and token reward systems appropriate to the pupils, as well as incentive schemes such as pupil of the week etc. Within these approaches there is a recognition of structured approaches in managing routine and communicating with our pupil about expected behaviours and presented activities. This is particularly of relevance to those pupils with severe learning difficulties and especially those with a diagnosis of ASD.

Existing Supports to manage and promote positive behaviour include:

- Ethos of support and reconciliation
- Clear communication of rules and appropriate behaviours
- Effective routines and structured teaching approaches
- Reward Systems and effective recognition of achievement
- Consistency in dealing with behaviour/discipline difficulties
- Positive Teaching approaches including modelling good behaviour
- Close supervision at all times (ref:Supervision Policy)
- Targets established within IEPs to manage and review behaviour(PD)
- Effective monitoring and recording of pupil progress/observations
- Effective and meaningful links with parents/guardians
- Pupil of the Week-in all classes
- Visit to the Principal Office for achievement
- Donard 'Star' board

As a Special School we recognise that some behaviours are closely linked to a pupils condition. In managing challenging behaviour the ability, and understanding of the pupils, as well as the environmental factors which can impact on behaviour will be considered.

Behaviour Risk Assessment/Behaviour Support Plans

In Donard staff have been trained in Team Teach . This supports staff in the development of proactive strategies to support pupils individual needs. A clear behaviour cycle is in place to outline the processes and procedures required should a behaviour management issue arise.

Required Record Keeping

Staff are required to record incidents of challenging or concerning behaviour for Principal/Vice-Principal reference. Staff will work to develop a picture of the behaviour through observation records and effective links with parents. The following recording pro-forma should be used

ABCD should be used to record low level behaviours associated with the child or young person and the impacts of these behaviours.

CB1 should record new behaviours which is significant and creates risk to the child or young person self and others

CB2 should be completed following a crisis situation which requires reasonable force to be used to keep the child , others or property safe

CP3 should be completed following an incident where it was considered there was an injury or harm to someone. The CP3 should also record incidences where staff feel there is a risk of potential harm in the future.

(Injury is defined as any actual harm which requires any level of first aid or attention.)

All records of challenging behaviour should also be recorded on SIMS

The above records should be provided to School Principal or Vice Principal in her absence. Follow up to these will be considered in consultation with Mrs M Malcomson (Behaviour Support Coordinator)

In recording challenging behaviours and following observation and class monitoring teachers and CA staff should complete a risk assessment for ongoing, concerning behaviour or any behaviour which presents as a risk.

The risk assessment should aim to identify and highlight specific behaviours and those at risk from those behaviours. In order for staff to plan accordingly risk assessment will be considered only for those pupils who constitute a risk to themselves and others.

A team approach should be used to complete the risk assessment and in developing an appropriate Behaviour Support Plan for pupils. Parents will be fully consulted in the development of the plan and should provide written consent for its implementation. Staff will work with Mrs Malcomson to finalise the agreed plan and its implementation.

Within the Behaviour Support Plan any requirement for the Use of Reasonable Force or Safe Handling will be cited. School staff will record and review plans on a termly basis or as required and complete records of incidents or concerns in the development and implementation of the plan.

Use of Reasonable Force

Definition of Reasonable Force

The Education(NI) Order states:

A member 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 to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

As a school Donard School recognises that the use of Reasonable Force/Safe handling needs to be considered in

- Planned intervention where staff employ where necessary pre-arranged strategies based upon a risk assessment and considered Behaviour Support Plan
- Emergency or unplanned use of force/intervention which occurs in response to unforeseen circumstances or events.

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.

There will always be an element of personal judgement in decisions to use reasonable force. It should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when 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 compromises order and effective safe management of the environment.

In some circumstances a member of staff may have to decide between making an intervention/using reasonable force by putting themselves in a dangerous situation or standing back and thereby allowing colleagues or pupils to face a potential danger. 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 safe guard property.

Forms of Reasonable Force

When other behavioural management strategies have failed it should be the minimum intervention or force that should be reasonably employed depending on **the age ,sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical condition and any special need of the pupil and used in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned.**

A calm and measured approach should be taken at all times, and it should be appropriate to the particular pupil and in accordance with the schools agreed strategies. The following procedures should be adhered to at all times.

- Tell the pupil to stop the appropriate behaviour in line with their communication/ receptive language abilities
- Advise on appropriate or alternative behaviour
- Refer to and bring child to agreed structures and interventions (if agreed)
- Tell the pupil of the intervention/consequences of behaviour
- Intervene in a measured way

Examples of appropriate use of reasonable force may include

- Separating pupils who are fighting
- Stopping or intercepting a pupil who is absconding or running away
- Breakaway/Separating activities if a staff member or other pupil is grabbed
- Protection of pupils from a child who is attacking another pupil
- Shepherding a pupil away from activities such as throwing equipment/ climbing/ being aggressive toward other pupils or staff
- Protecting a pupil who is making efforts to self harm eg biting themselves, hitting or head banging.

The forms of safe handling the school will use will depend on the individual needs of the child and the circumstances. It is recognised within this policy that within a Special School, staff will be involved in activities that require safe handling on a regular basis for educational, therapeutic, health and safety purposes. The school has agreed the following range of examples

- Teaching a child to hold hands/ hold on to an arm appropriately while walking in school and on an educational visit.
- Physically prompting a child/ young person as part of an educational or behavioural programme
- Assisting a child with toileting/ intimate care procedures including those pupils who may actively resist personal care routines (PMLD) REF Intimate care Policy
- Physical hand over hand prompting to develop/teach new skills

Every effort should be made by school staff to ensure that any use of reasonable force/ physical prompting as an agreed teaching/ support measure should be communicated with parents.

Health and Safety

When using reasonable force/physical intervention/restraint/safe handling the pupil's health and safety must always be considered. Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the problem and calm the pupil and situation.

Limits on the Use of Force

The law strictly prohibits the use of force which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment. The use of force as punishment or to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation would contravene our Child Protection Policy. Staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding around the neck
- Any hold that might restrict breathing
- Kicking, slapping or punching or using any implements
- Forcing limbs against joints
- Tripping
- Holding or pulling by the hair
- Holding the pupil face down on the ground
- Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in any way that might be considered indecent.

At all times staff should comply fully with the Code of Conduct for Staff.

Record Keeping

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force **must be recorded and provided to the school Principal/Vice Principal who will maintain records.**

Form CB2 (Record of the Use of Reasonable Force) should be completed to record an incident which was unprecedented. Where agreed procedures and management plans have been established records should be contained within the management plan review or observation sheets.

Parents should always be advised on incidents of significant challenging behaviour which required the use of Reasonable Force.

The chairperson of the Board of governors and the Principal will review annually all incident records.

Staff Training and Development

All staff will have regular awareness training on issues related to the use of reasonable force. The policy will be regularly reviewed with staff and key points visited annually within the annual staff handbook. Staff will access training on 'Moving and Handling Pupils with SEN' as well as 'Team Teach' training which will support the determination of appropriate reasonable force

Complaints

Any complaint from a parent or other will be dealt with according to the school's Handling Complaints Policy and in accordance with the Circular 99/10 Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection.

Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault will be supported as appropriate. It is important to note that 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Mrs E Lavery (Principal) will co-ordinate and oversee the policy and its implementation. The policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through consultation with pupils, staff and parents and in line with statutory requirements or advice.