



JORDANSTOWN SCHOOL

*A specialist school for children who
are deaf or visually impaired*

Use of Reasonable Force / Safe Handling Policy

October 2018

Title	Use of Reasonable Force / Safe Handling Policy
Summary	<p>Guidance for all staff regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of reasonable force / safe handling of children and young people • Strategies for de-escalation for positive behavioural outcomes • Preventative strategies for inappropriate behaviours tailored to each individual pupil
Purpose	To provide guidance for all staff regarding the use of reasonable force / safe handling of children and young people, and to communicate school practice with all stakeholders
Current Operational Date	October 2018
Version Number	1
Supersedes previous	
Author	Miss R Sturgeon, acting Principal
Frequency of Review by Author	As necessary
Frequency of Review by Board of Governors	As necessary
Date last Reviewed and Approved by Board of Governors	October 2018
Method and date of dissemination	Placed on school website
Next Review Date	The school is awaiting the passing of new legislation regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion. This policy will be reviewed once the new legislation is passed.

Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy

Context of school

Jordanstown School caters for pupils with a visual impairment or auditory impairment, some of whom have additional needs.

The purpose of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance for staff in relation to the use of reasonable force as identified in Department of Education Circular 1999/9. Staff, parents and governors should understand the Policy. This 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. Preventative strategies for inappropriate behaviours are tailored to each individual pupil.

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force and safe handling should only be used if de-escalation techniques have failed to resolve the situation. Staff should employ the minimum physical intervention necessary and for the shortest time possible. This should be done in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned.

At Jordanstown School we provide a safe and secure learning environment for all pupils and staff. We recognise that at times it may be necessary for staff to, in the best interests of pupils, use reasonable force which may involve physical intervention. Prior to the use of a physical intervention staff will have tried a variety of strategies to de-escalate the situation.

A physical intervention will only be used if:

- it is in the best interests of the pupil involved
- it is necessary
- it is reasonable and proportionate

Definition of reasonable force

Towards a Model Policy in Schools on the Use of Reasonable Force (DENI) states that “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.” (page 3)

Pupils may display episodes of challenging behaviour. Challenging behaviour has been defined by Harris, Cook & Upton (1996) as;

- preventing participation in educational activities
- affecting the learning of other pupils
- reducing the pupil's opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities
- making excessive demands on staff and other resources

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (Part II Article 4(1)) states that “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 circumstance for the purpose of preventing the pupils from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following namely:

a) committing any offence

b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself) or

c) 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 at Jordanstown School have completed Team Teach training with an emphasis on de-escalation, risk and restraint reduction.

Assessing circumstances

Prior to undertaking any physical intervention staff must have exhausted other strategies. They need to determine that their actions are in the best interests of the pupil, necessary, reasonable and proportionate. It is also necessary that staff complete a dynamic risk assessment prior to starting the physical intervention.

Physical intervention must be justified. This will normally be when the actions of a pupil will

- put at risk their own health and safety
- put at risk the health and safety of other pupils and/or staff
- lead to significant damage to property.

Physical interventions can be used by a member of staff where:

- action is necessary in self defence
- there is imminent risk of injury to another pupil or person
- there is a developing risk of injury to another pupil or person
- there is a risk of significant damage to property
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good discipline and disrupting the education of others

The use of physical interventions should involve a calm and measured approach at all times, be appropriate to the particular pupil and be in accordance with the school policies.

Physical intervention can be on two levels: planned intervention (as stated on a positive handling plan) or intervention in the case of an emergency.

If necessary staff can request support from other staff or 'a change of face'. Physical intervention should only be used when the pupil concerned is on school premises or on a school trip.

Parents must always be contacted following an incident where physical intervention has been used.

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.

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.

If a positive handling plan is required, staff will work alongside the pupil's parents to draw up the plan which will then be followed by all staff members. This process will involve a discussion about potential triggers, terminology to be used, strategies to use and those strategies to avoid.

Staff should consult the Team Teach Tutors, the Senior Leadership Team and/or the Designated Pastoral Care Officer if a pupil requires a Risk Reduction and Positive Handling Plan.

Record keeping

If staff have used physical intervention they must ensure that it is recorded. This record keeping will enable the behaviour of the pupil to be monitored. The Principal and Vice Principal should be informed of the incident. The record will be shared with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

If a pupil or a member of staff have been injured, then the relevant accident forms and witness forms need to be completed.

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 and in line with our Complaints Policy.

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

Consultation

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

All Staff are required to sign the following form and return to the Principal

I have read and understood the Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling policy.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____