

**Star of the Sea Primary School**  
**Passage West**

**Policy and Guidelines for using Physical Interventions and Restrictive Practices**

**Introduction**

This policy is as a result of the whole school consultation with the Board of Management and has been put in place for the protection and welfare of all pupils and staff, in response to recent challenges and changes within the school community and wider community.

**Rationale**

Star of the Sea Primary School is committed to providing a learning enriched environment for all our children. Every effort is made to ensure that our school is accessible in so far as possible to any child with special educational or physical needs. (*See Special Needs Education Policy and Admissions Policy*).

Occasionally children present with challenging behaviour(s), sometimes as part of these special educational needs (or due to other outlining reasons). 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.

In the rare occasion where these strategies are not working and it is foreseeable that a particular 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.**

Our aims and objectives in devising a policy on Physical Interventions and Restrictive Practices include:

1. 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 and withdrawal.
2. To emphasise a culture of positive re-enforcement of positive behaviour, and limited but appropriate use of physical interventions / restrictive practices.
3. To manage serious incidents when they occur.
4. In incidents where children engage in certain behaviours, to reduce the risks associated with serious incidents such as injuries to self or others or serious damage to property.

The policy is based on guidance from the following: Education and Welfare Act 2000

- Human Rights Working Group on Restraint and Seclusion 2005 (Northern Ireland)
- Best Practice Guidelines on the Use of Physical Restraints: Special Residential Board 2006
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2007 Safety, Health and Welfare At Work Act, 2005 etc.
- Physical Contact; Care, Comfort and Restraint, by Bernard Allen, 2011
- Children First Guidelines 2011
- Guidelines for Schools on Supporting Students with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - An information guide for Primary Schools: DES 2013.

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Other Relevant Policies

- Child Protection
- Anti Bullying
- Code of Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Admissions and Enrolment
- Complaints Procedures.
- Special Needs Education Policy

**Section 1: 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 care 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. The following table, which is not exhaustive, outlines the circumstances where physical contact may be used in the school:

<b>Category 1</b>	<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Category 3</b>	<b>Category 4</b>	<b>Category 5****</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Reassurance/ Comfort</b>	<b>Intimate Care/ First Aid/Safety</b>	<b>Non-Contact Restrictions/ Containment</b>	<b>Use of Physical Intervention/ Force</b>
PE / Games	Pat on arm for praise / reassurance	Cleaning cuts	Coded access on doors	Disengaging from a grab / hair pull
Music	Holding hand of upset child or to prevent absconding	Toileting (where needs deem it appropriate)	Locks on cleaning cupboards	Escorting a resisting pupil to a safer location
Drama	High Fives	Lifting a child down from a height	Fences around playgrounds	Breaking up a fight/ blocking a pupil's path
Sensory Programmes	Hugs	Dressing / personal hygiene	Prevention from participating in certain	Restraint
Physical Prompting to support learning	Sitting on laps (very young children)	Taking a dangerous object from a child	curricular activities that may pose unacceptable risks	Withdrawal

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Categories 1, 2 and 3 and are necessary in order to take care of and teach our pupils and are not considered to be restrictive. Categories 4 and 5, however, *are* restrictive and require careful thought and consideration before being employed by staff.

\*\*\*In our existing school community of Star of the Sea Primary School, Category 5 behaviour would not be expected often. Based on our past experiences, the occurrence of such incidents would be rare.

*Any use of such restrictions must be discussed with the Principal and agreed with parents and in some instances with relevant multi-disciplinary staff.*

### **Section 2 - 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, 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, 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. Use of programmes e.g. Zones of Regulation, Stop-Think-Do.

#### 2. Environmental Alterations

Comfort areas, 1:1 teaching areas, access to preferred activities where possible, access to preferred or skilled staff where possible, timetables organised to minimise risks, reduced pupil/staff ratios, opportunities provided to 'burn off energy', coded-locks on entrance doors, reduced access to equipment in some rooms.

3. Pupils with Positive Handling Plans (*see Section 3*) are prioritised for meetings with staff and parents to discuss, plan and review prevention strategies.

### **Section 3: Positive Handling Plans**

These are devised for pupils assessed as being of greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions.

It is not anticipated that a high number of pupils would be identified as needing such plans. It has been our experiences in Star of the Sea Primary School in the past that pupils, who have been at greatest risk, have usually (though not exclusively) been pupils who have already been assessed by an educational psychologist and/or have a Special Educational Needs diagnosis. Such pupils usually have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) drawn up in consultation with all partners in education.

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If a pupil is identified as being of great risk of needing restrictive physical interventions, **does not** have the above supports already, they should be referred (as soon as possible) to an educational psychologist or to any other supports or agencies which could assist.

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, previous staff, carers, appropriate behavioural assessment charts / graphs
- 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

It should be signed by parents and Principal. *See Appendix A: Positive Handling Plan Template.* This template is a guide and should be adapted according to the needs of each particular child.

#### **Section 4: Certified Training System**

At present (November 2014) no member of staff has certified training in this area.

It is hoped that a number of members of staff will engage in certified training provided by Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) in Management of Actual or Potential Aggression where it is considered prudent and necessary. Provision of an accessible course in the Cork / Munster area, will determine the dates of certification. Staff members who are working with children deemed at most risk of needing physical intervention or restraint will be prioritised for certification, with this need being reviewed on an annual basis, with extra staff being certified as needed. It is also hoped that certified staff members will engage with the whole school staff to provide CPD in this area. Once certification has been completed, a list of trained staff and tutors will be available from the Principal.

#### **Section 5: Persons are authorised to use restraint/ force in the school in the circumstances outlined below:**

- A. Unforeseen or Emergency Situations: 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

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and take appropriate action to safeguard pupils or staff *whilst seeking assistance from other staff*.

**B. Pupils with Positive Handling 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 trained staff*.

**Section 6 - Deciding whether or not to use physical interventions**

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

**Section 7 - Using Restraint**

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

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

**Section 8 - Last Resort/Early Intervention**

Physical Intervention or restraint should be used as a last resort. This does not mean that all other possible strategies must be tried and tested beforehand, it means that staff must make a considered judgement balancing the risks involved, thus allowing informed decisions be made. Some children may have stereotypical patterns of behaviour which alert staff to a developing crisis. Early action may prevent a risk of injury, thus justifying the use of the physical intervention. The child's Positive Handling Plan should reflect this.

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**Section 9: Using Time-out/Withdrawal**

Sometimes a child 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. child 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 child 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 child is in. This may involve physically intervening to move the child and/or preventing the child from leaving the area until staff consider that it is safe to do so. Staff must continuously attempt to distract or divert the child and return the child to his or 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. Doors are not secured in this instance. *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.

**Section 10 – Post-incident Support**

Following an incident the priority is to look after the pupils and staff involved before reports are filled out and reviews held.

**Incident Report / Debriefing See Appendix B**

Incident reports should be filled out by the staff involved following the use of physical intervention or restraint as outlined in Section 1: Category 5, 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 form is then checked by the Principal and Deputy to decide if any follow up action is required to provide any further care or reassurance to pupils or staff, to review the interventions used by staff and to inform any future recommendations.

It is practice to provide parents with copies of incidents reports on request, as long as there is no further risk to children or breach of data protection re other pupils or staff. Both the Principal and Deputy check and discuss each incident report involving physical interventions/restraint. The incidents are recorded in the Pupil’s Positive Handling Plan for discussion with parents as agreed. Some parents wish to be informed of every incident after they occur; others prefer to be informed at review meetings. The Principal is the only person authorised by the Board to release an incident report to a parent. The Principal may defer to the Chairperson of the Board if necessary.

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Checklist for Principal / Deputy Principal

CHECK	RECORD	REPORT TO	REVIEW ( if necessary)
Has anyone been hurt? (pupils or staff) Is medical attention required? Does anyone need a drink of water/rest?	Check Incident Report and decide if any follow up is required. If injuries were sustained, fill out accident report for insurance purposes.	Parents (as agreed) BOM if necessary Insurers if medical attention was necessary	Positive Handling Plan Policy Guidance Risk Assessment Staff Training

### **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 challenging behaviours are prioritised for meetings/phone calls etc. with the Principal or Deputy. The school will endeavour to keep parents informed in a manner that is reasonable and in the best interests of the child. This will take the form of meetings, phone calls, diaries or letters.

#### **How to make a Complaint:**

- Parents wishing to make complaint in relation to restrictive practice 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.

### **Section 12: Review Procedures**

This policy will be reviewed every five years or earlier, in the light of changing information, changing needs of pupils, and training of staff, and in consultation with the wider community.

### **Section 13 - Timeframe**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Star of the Sea Primary School on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and signed by the Chairperson, Denis O' Byrne.