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|  | **Ballynure Primary School****Policy Statement on the Use of** **Reasonable Force / Safe Handling** |

All schools have a pastoral responsibility towards their pupils in their charge and should therefore take all reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and that their safety is preserved. The Board of Governors and the Principal have a duty to promote and secure good behaviour and discipline on the part of pupils at the school.

**Principles which underpin our school ethos and culture:**

Ballynure Primary School believes that:

* Each child has the right to be educated in a safe and secure environment where each child’s moral, intellectual, personal, social and emotional development is promoted;
* Parents and carers are informed and reassured that their children are being educated in a safe, caring and respectful manner; and
* All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment.

**Purposes**

The following purposes underpin Ballynure Primary School policy and practices to:

* Create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe;
* Promote and sustain appropriate behaviour and discipline on the part of the pupils;
* Protect every person in the school community from harm;
* Protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful; and
* Develop and implement guidance for staff (teaching and non-teaching) so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force may be applied.

**Mission Statement**

The aim of Ballynure Primary School is to create a warm, welcoming school where each child feels happy, safe, self-confident and valued; and strives, with the help of caring teachers, to fulfil his or her potential.

**Legislative Framework**

This policy has been formulated with due consideration to the following legislation:

* Children (NI) order 1995 duty to protect and child protection responsibilities/fulfilling responsibility;
* UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child 1989 – (12, 16 and 19); UK 1991;
* Education (NI) Order 1998 (Part ll Article 4 (1);
* Human Rights Act 1998 – Articles 3 and 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights
* Health and safety at Work Act (NI) Order 1978; and
* Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 – Articles 17, 18, 19; and
* Child Protection A Guide for School 2019.

**Link With Other Policies**

* This policy is one of the suite of pastoral policies and should be read alongside the school’s existing Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, Special Needs Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Complaints Policy;
* It also takes account of the Staff Development and Health and Safety guidance; and
* Teaching and Learning and Assessment Policy and Curricular Policies.

**Definition of Reasonable Force**

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (part ll Article 4 (1)) states:

“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 circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

* Committing an 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.”

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.

*Reference: Circular 1999/09 USE of Reasonable Force, DE.*

**Practices**

**Preventative Strategies**

The school actively promotes positive behaviour management strategies through our Positive Behaviour Policy, thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention, except in emergency situations.

**Risk Assessment**

Where a pupil or number of pupils are known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour (EBD), a risk assessment will be considered and form part of the pupil’s education plan. (Appendix 2 Regional Policy Framework 05/2004)

**Procedures**

**Who may use reasonable force:**

1. teachers
2. Non-teaching staff (including classroom assistants, clerical staff, midday supervisors, caretaker, escorts, education and welfare officers, psychologists, speech therapists etc.
3. Volunteers, including parents, suitably vetted, should alert the member of staff in charge and defer to his/her judgement as to the appropriate means of handling the situation unless there is obvious and imminent danger

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. Staff should never put themselves in personal danger mainly to safeguard property. Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by a teacher or authorised person(s) on the school premises or when authorised elsewhere e.g. on school trip, sporting activity etc. Reasonable force should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when all 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; and
* A pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples that fall into the above categories are:

* A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
* Pupils are fighting;
* A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
* A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in which he/she might cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others;
* A pupil absconds from class or tries to leave the school. (Note: this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school); if a pupil absconds, every effort will be made to inform the parent/guardian, the PSNI will also be informed;
* A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom; and
* A pupil behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

**Forms of Reasonable Force**

**When other behaviour management strategies have failed –** it should be the minimum intervention or force that should reasonably be employed depending on the **age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical condition and any special needs of the pupil** and used in a way that **preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned.** The use of reasonable force/safe handling should involve a calm and measured approach at all times appropriate to the particular pupil and be in accordance with the schools agreed strategies and the following procedures:

* Tell the pupil to stop the inappropriate behaviour;
* Ask the pupil to behave appropriately, clearly stating the desired behaviour;
* Tell the pupil that physical intervention will take place if inappropriate behaviour continues;
* During the incident repeatedly reassure the pupil and tell him/her that physical contact will stop as soon as he/she is ready to behave appropriately; and
* If the teacher, classroom assistant or supervisory assistant feels at risk, e.g. from a large or older group of pupils, send for the nearest staff support (classroom assistant/reliable pupil/other available reliable party)

Forms of reasonable force the school will use will depend on the individual circumstances examples of which may be: physically interposing between pupils, blocking a pupils path, holding, breakaway techniques (e.g. when a member of staff or another pupil has been grabbed), pushing, pulling, leading a pupil by the arm, shepherding a pupil away and in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds.

Action taken in self-defence: everyone has the right to defend themselves against attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.

**Health and Safety**

When using reasonable force/physical intervention/restraint/safe handling, the pupils health and safety should be considered and monitored. Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the pupil.

**Record Keeping**

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded in the schools agreed pro-forma. Immediately following any incident the member of staff concerned must inform the Principal and provide the contemporaneous written record. (e.g. Appendix 3 Regional Policy Framework 05/2004). Parents will always be informed of an incident involving their child and given an opportunity to discuss the incident as soon as possible after the occurrence; the same day if possible.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will review annually the entries in the incident book. Records will be kept until the date of the child’s twenty-first birthday.

**Post-Incident Management**

The use of physical intervention can be upsetting to all concerned, therefore, we will endeavour to ensure that staff and pupils are given emotional support and where required basic first-aid treatment or medical attention. The school first-aider and the Principal will check for injuries or arrange for medical aid. The Principal will provide/make arrangements for the provision of support for staff and children after incidents as required according to particular circumstances.

**Complaints**

In the event of a subsequent complaint made against a member of staff either by or on behalf of the child, this will be dealt with in accordance the School’s Complaints Procedure.

Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence will be supported as appropriate, in taking any necessary action against an assailant.

**Designated Teacher**

The designated teacher for use of reasonable force is the Principal and the deputy designated teacher is Mrs Galashan.

**Training and Development**

All staff will participate in awareness raising training of issues relating to the use of reasonable force/safe handling as provided by the Education Authority.

This policy was formulated in consultation with pupils, parents/carers, all staff and the Board of Governors.

Date Policy agreed by Board of Governors \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Chair of Governors \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_