

# Portadown Integrated Nursery and Primary School Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy

(Reviewed October 2015)



## Portadown Integrated School

### Policy Checklist

Name of Policy	Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy
Purpose of Policy	The Governing Body and School Management considers the health, safety and welfare of pupils, staff and visitors to be of paramount importance, and that a safe and healthy learning and working environment is a prerequisite to achieving the School's goal to achieve excellent standards in teaching, learning and research.
Name/s of Author	Feargal Magee
Date Policy submitted to BOG Sub Committee	12 October 2015 Staffing Committee
Consultation	
Policy approved/rejected/amended	14 October 2015
Implementation Plan	Dissemination to staff 4 November 2015
Training Required?	
Date for review	October 2017

## **Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy**

### **Rationale**

#### **Context**

- Our dual responsibility
- providing a safe and secure environment for the whole school community (pupils and staff)
- promoting and sustaining appropriate behaviour
- taking account of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 – (Articles 12, 16 and 19); UK 1991
- taking account of the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Article 3) which requires Boards of Governors to ensure that policies are designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of the pupils
- taking account of the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Article 4) which clarifies the powers of members of a grant-aided school regarding the use of reasonable force
- taking account of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 (Articles 17, 18 and 19) which imposes a duty on Board of Governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- taking account of the Human Rights Act 1998 which provides for the right to education – Articles 3 and 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- Children (NI) Order 1995 – duty to protect and child protection responsibilities/ Fulfilling responsibility
- Health and Safety at Work Act (NI) Order 1978

This policy and our procedures have been developed in the spirit of:

- The Department of Education NI circular 1999/9, 1999/10, 2006/06, 2006/09 and 2008/03
- DE document “Towards a Model Policy in Schools on the Use of Reasonable Force” August 2002

- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001)
- Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection: Code of Conduct for Staff (1999/10) paragraphs 69 and 72
- DE Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils

## **Principles**

Portadown Integrated Primary and Nursery 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 atmosphere.
- All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment.

These principles underpin our school ethos and culture.

## **Purposes**

The following purposes underpin Portadown Integrated Primary and Nursery School policy and practices to:

- create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe
- 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
- 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 might be applied.

## Mission Statement

### Definition of Reasonable Force

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (part II 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 any offence
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself); 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 which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

Where necessary, Portadown Integrated Primary and Nursery School will consider:

- planned intervention in which staff employ pre-arranged strategies based upon a risk assessment and recorded within the pupil’s education plan; ref. risk assessment; and
- emergency or unplanned use of force/intervention, which occurs in response to unforeseen events, e.g. pupil fights

## Practices

### Preventative Strategies

The school actively promotes positive behaviour management thus reducing the need for any form of physical intervention, except in emergency situations.

### Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is one of our preventative strategies to minimise the risk of an incident escalating unnecessarily and will be a normal practice for our school where a pupil or a small number of pupils are known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour (EBD). **Risk assessment will be considered only for those pupils where there is a foreseeable risk and enables the school to plan and train accordingly.** Risk assessment will be considered from two perspectives (a) environmental risk or (b) individual risk assessment. This should form part of the pupil’s education plan.

## Procedures – Support Structures

The following procedures have been agreed by the staff and adopted by the Board of Governors. Parents and pupils will be informed of the school's procedures and support structures within the overall **Pastoral Care Policy**.

### 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 the pupils, e.g. teachers, classroom assistants, supervisory assistants. The principal will confirm with all staff those who are authorised to be in charge of pupils at any given time.

### Insurance

The school's insurance policy (School Protection Policy) adequately covers all staff and any other adult authorised by the principal to supervise pupils. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the school bursar.

### Procedures

There may be circumstances when a member of staff may have to decide between making an intervention, using reasonable force by placing him/herself in a dangerous situation or standing back and thereby allowing colleagues or pupils to face a potential danger. There will always be an element of personal judgement in these decisions and there is the possibility of someone being injured. However, 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 safeguard property.

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by a teacher or other authorised person(s) on the school premises or when authorised elsewhere e.g. supervision of pupils in bus or on authorised out of school activities such as a sporting event or educational trip. **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 self or 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 is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples that fall into the following 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 on the school premises where he/she might cause an accident likely to injure him/herself
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (Note: this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)

### **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 a 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 school's agreed strategies and the following procedures:

- tell a 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
- if a 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.

The forms of reasonable force the school will use will depend on the individual circumstances. Examples of these are:

- Physical imposing between pupils
- Blocking a child's path
- Holding
- Leading a child by the arm
- "shepherding" by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

### **Forms of Safe Handling**

**(Appropriate for Nursery, Early Years and identified pupils with a Statement of Educational Needs)**

Nursery, Early Years and staff working with identified pupils with a Statement of Educational Needs will be involved in activities that will require safe handling on a

regular basis for educational, therapeutic and health and safety purposes. The forms of safe handling the school will use will depend on the individual circumstances. Examples of these are:

- Teaching a child to hold an adult's hand appropriately whilst walking around the school grounds or on a school visit.
- Reacting instinctively to a situation by holding or restraining a child who is running onto a busy road
- Physically prompting a young child as part of an educational or behaviour programme
- Assisting a child with toileting (refer to the school's Intimate Care Policy)

### **Health and Safety**

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

### **Limits on the Use of Force**

The law strictly prohibits the use of force, which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment, the use of reasonable force as a 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 implement
- 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.**

The use of reasonable force is only to be employed in exceptional circumstances or in an emergency where a pupil appears to be unable to exercise self control of emotions and whose behaviour is presenting a threat to him/herself or others. A member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help if there is any risk that he/she may be injured or endanger his/her life.



## Post Incident Management

### Record Keeping

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded in the "Record/Report of the Use of Reasonable Force". The Principal will keep an accurate up-to-date record of all such incidents. Immediately following any incident the member of staff concerned must inform the Principal or a senior member of staff and provide the up-to-date written record/report.

The Safeguarding Team will review annually the entries in the incident book. Records of incidents will be kept until the date of the child's twenty-first birthday.

Confidentiality and the young person's right to privacy will need to be ensured.

The pupil's views should also be recorded as soon as possible, preferably on the same day, on an Incident Record Form.

If deemed necessary, the pupil may be placed on the school's Special Educational Needs register, in line with the SEN Code of Practice. Persistent incidents of disruptive behaviour may lead to a pupil being referred to relevant outside agencies for further support. (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Behaviour Support Team)

### Contacting Parents

Parents/Carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This must also be recorded in the "**Record/Report Of the Use of Reasonable Force**" as defined in the school policy. Any complaint from a parent will be dealt with within the school's Complaints Policy and Procedures as detailed below.

### Complaints

If an incident occurs in Portadown Integrated Primary and nursery School involving the use of reasonable force/restraint by a teacher, the procedures governing such incidents will be followed. This will include informing the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child as outlined above.

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 with the school's Complaints Policy/Procedures and in accordance with the circular 1999/10, Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection.

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

### Training and Development

All staff will have regular awareness raising of issues relating to the use of reasonable force/safe handling, procedures and practices relating to behaviour management and child protection policy and procedures. All staff will receive appropriate training and development, in line with the school's staff development policy, in the use of preventative strategies and approaches for managing difficult situations when they may arise. Training will be provided by accredited trainers.

**Reviewed and signed by Governors on \_\_\_\_\_(date) \_\_\_\_\_**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of the Board of Governors)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Risk Assessment**

A small number of pupils may exhibit disturbed or distressing behaviour which may require some form of physical intervention by staff. To minimise the risk of incidents escalating unnecessarily due to lack of foresight, planning and training, schools should carry out a risk assessment from two perspectives:

- Environmental risk assessment
- Individual risk assessment

### **Environmental Risk Assessment**

- 1) Identify situations or locations where there is increased risks of incidents happening
- 2) Analysis of past incidents to identify medium to high risk locations
- 3) Staff and pupils consulted
- 4) Individual pupil consulted
- 5) Decide the appropriate type and level of supervision
- 6) Principal and Core Leadership Team to make recommendations to Board of Governors on type and level of supervision to minimise risk
- 7) Implement plan
- 8) Review plan

### **Individual Risk Assessment**

Where a school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force/safe handling, the school should plan its response by:

- Consulting the pupil, as appropriate
- Consulting the parents/guardians – specific action the school may need to take
- Briefing staff – what action they should be taking (may require training or guidance)
- Managing the pupil – e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict
- Implementing plan and review
- Reviewing plan

### **Risk Reduction**

Risk reduction should include:

- Proactive measures to support the child effectively and prevent difficulties emerging
- Early interventions to help the child in difficult situations and avert problems
- Planned measures to manage the child and others safely, when unavoidable difficulties arise.

**Portadown Integrated Primary's Safeguarding Team:**

**PRINCIPAL:** Mr Feargal Magee

**DESIGNATED TEACHER:** Mrs Nicola Curran

**DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER:** Mrs Dionne Houston  
Mrs Noleen Loye

**CHAIR OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS:** Mr Michael Hogg

**MEMBER OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
WITH DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR CHILD PROTECTION :** Mr Pat Gallagher

# RISK ASSESSMENT

NAME OF PUPIL:

\_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

SEN REGISTER CODE OF PRACTICE STAGE (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPORT TO-DATE:

\_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION PLAN: \_\_\_\_\_

RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY MEMBER OF STAFF:

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

**Consultation has been carried out....**

Please ✓ as appropriate.

<b>with the pupil</b>	
<b>with other pupils</b>	
<b>with parent/carer</b>	
<b>with staff</b>	

# INCIDENT RECORD FORM

## BASIC DATA

DATE OF INCIDENT \_\_\_\_\_

PORTADOWN INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL      YEAR GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

Staff involved in restraint: \_\_\_\_\_

## Events Leading Up To The Incident

Where did the incident start?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was happening at the time?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Describe The Event That Occurred

When did the incident occur?

Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident occur?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What action did you take to try to de-escalate the situation before using restraint?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What behaviour/s was the child presenting that warranted restraint/physical intervention? (Please tick appropriate box)

At risk of injury to self or others  
property

At risk of significant damage to

Compromising good order and discipline  
offence

At risk of committing a criminal

What do you believe would have happened if there had been no physical intervention?

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How was the pupil held?

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How long did the pupil need to be held?

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Was anybody injured? **YES / NO** If yes, please give details

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Name of member of staff who verbally checked pupil for injury after the hold: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the pupil been physically restrained before? **YES / NO**

### **Implications For Future Planning**

Does this pupil have an individual behaviour programme/education plan? **YES / NO**

Do changes need to be made to any of the following?  
(Please tick appropriate box)

The environment e.g. organisation, curriculum

Targets for teaching new skills

Reinforcement strategies

Defusing and calming strategies

Other

Please specify:

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Do other agencies need to be involved in the future  
If yes, please specify who and with what aim

YES / NO

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**Follow Up Action**

Medical intervention was needed

YES / NO

Has school nurse/doctor been informed

YES / NO

Please specify other recording procedures

Accident Book Record

Accident Form

Child Protection

Parent/Carer informed by

Telephone

Letter

Direct Contact

Form completed by:

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Post Held:

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Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





## RISK EVALUATION

Level of Likelihood	x	Frequency	=	Risk
Very Likely 5	x	Hourly (5)	=	25 greatest
Likely 4	x	Daily (4)	=	16
Quite Possible 3	x	Weekly (3)	=	9
Possible 2	x	Monthly (2)	=	4
Unlikely 1	x	Termly (1)	=	1 lowest

### Likelihoods

### Frequency

Very Likely	5	Hourly	5
Likely	4	Daily	4
Quite Possible	3	Weekly	3
Possible	2	Monthly	2
Unlikely	1	Termly	1

This numerical evaluation of risk is not an absolute but simply affords a pupil's predisposition and risk frequency to be compared.

### RISK FACTORS

Score	Risk
25	Very High
15-20	High
8-12	Medium
6-10	Low
1-5	Very Low

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