

**Rosstulla School**  
**'Together Towards Tomorrow'**



**Reasonable Force and Safe Handling  
Policy**

**Agreed by Governing Body, September 2018**

Chairperson's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Context of school**

Rosstulla School caters for pupils with a moderate learning difficulty and other complex needs whose ages range from 4 to 17 years.

### **The purpose of the Policy**

To provide clear guidance re the use of reasonable force to constrain or control pupils as identified in **Department of Education Circular 1999/9**. Staff, parents and governors should understand the policy. The 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, except in emergency situations. Preventative strategies for inappropriate behaviour(s) are detailed in our school's positive behaviour management policy especially – defusing and de-escalating conflict/confrontation or aggression.

### **Reasonable Force**

Reasonable force and safe handling should only be used if de-escalation techniques have failed to resolve the situation.

### **Definition of reasonable force**

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

We adhere to the **Education NI Order (1998). Article 4** of the Order states that a teacher may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following:

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the person himself);
3. 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 should not place themselves at risk merely to protect property.**

The use of reasonable force will depend on the circumstances and staff should take the following into consideration:

- Is it necessary (in the best interest of the pupil), reasonable and proportionate
- The age, sex, physical strength, understanding and special educational needs of the pupil
- Physical force or restraint is not to be used as routine part of behavioural management. It should be in proportion to the circumstances of the behaviour or the circumstances that it is intended to prevent

### **The following may be regarded as constituting reasonable force:**

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Guiding away from a situation using 'Caring Cs'
- Shepherding a pupil by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme circumstances using a safe handling/Team Teach hold (see below)

**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.

### **Circumstances under which reasonable force may be deemed acceptable:**

- Pupils fighting
- A pupil involved in rough play or misusing dangerous materials, substances or objects in a manner that may cause injury to him/herself or others
- A pupil refusing to cooperate with staff requests and verbally or physically abusing staff or other pupils or causing significant damage to property that made lead to the pupil injuring him/herself

### **Team Teach**

The majority of permanent staff are Team Teach trained. Training is updated annually. Any new permanent staff in the school will have the full training as soon as it becomes available after their start date.

Any injury which results from a physical intervention should not automatically be regarded as evidence of malpractice on the part of the staff member as long as the criteria for intervention was followed.

### **Unacceptable methods of force**

Force should never be used as a punishment or intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation the examples below are **not** permitted under any circumstances:

Holding around the neck or restricting breathing in any way

Kicking, slapping, tripping, punching

Holding by the hair

Holding a pupil on the ground

Forcing limbs against joints

### **Absconding**

It is reasonable to prevent a pupil from absconding on the basis that he/she may be injured, become involved in inappropriate behaviours or that the act is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline in the school.

### **Guidelines for dealing with a pupil who has absconded**

1. Inform the principal or his/her deputy immediately
2. Every effort will be made to persuade the individual to return to a place of safety.
3. If necessary, the principal or his/her deputy will inform:  
The Police  
The parent or carer of the pupil
4. Monitor the situation, in particular the whereabouts of the pupil.

**Never confront a pupil in a heightened state of anxiety as you may cause them to run into the road or travel further than they would have done. Remain calm and reassuring.**

**A pupil is the school's responsibility even though they may have left the building or grounds.**

### **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 when a pupil is known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour (SEBD). Risk assessment will be considered 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 assessment or (b) individual risk assessment.

The risk assessment may indicate that a Risk Reduction Plan should be drawn up.

### **Risk Reduction Plan**

This is a detailed risk management plan containing specific targets and outcomes.

### **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.

A positive handling plan informs all concerned how a pupil will be safely handled when in crisis. It will be drawn up, shared and agreed with the pupil, his/her parent/carers and relevant staff. (APPENDIX 1)

Whilst the agreement of the pupil or his/her parent/carer is preferable, failure to agree to the plan does not mean that positive handling will not be used when the pupil is in crisis. The best interests of the child are paramount.

### **Management responsibility**

Staff should consult the Senior Teacher for supporting Challenging Behaviours and/or Pastoral Leader for their department if a pupil requires a Risk Reduction and Positive Handling Plan

### **Record Keeping**

All incidents of positive handling should be fully documented and recorded in the bound and numbered book in the Principals office. The record will be shared with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

The Vice-Principal and the Principal should be informed of the incident.

The Principal or Vice-Principal must inform Parents/Carers if safe handling beyond that agreed in the student's positive handling plan has been used.

### **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 Raising a Concern and Complaints Policies.

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

### **Consultation**

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

L Matchett (Sept 2018)

**Positive Handling Plan**

**Name:**

**DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**

**SCHOOL:** Rosstulla School

**Likelihood of Physical Intervention Required:**

<b>High Risk</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Medium Risk</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Low Risk</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>None</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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**Triggers/Situations likely to result in Physical Intervention:**

**When does it occur?**

**Where does it occur?**

**What is the behaviour like/ what is most likely to happen?**

**Strategies to be used (where possible) before Physical Intervention:**

<b>Give Time</b> (when safe) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Distraction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> In some situations	<b>State Alternatives/</b> <b>Consequences</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Praise partial</b> <b>Compliance</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Give Space</b> (when safe) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Reassure/</b> <b>Remind</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other staff</b> <b>intervene</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Repeat</b> <b>request</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Talk calmly</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Give a</b> <b>count</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Instruct</b> <b>Other pupils</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Remove</b> <b>Stimulus</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Firm clear</b> <b>instructions</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Planned</b> <b>Ignoring</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Negotiation</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Humour</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Contingent</b> <b>touch</b> <input type="checkbox"/>			

**Other: (describe any interests, words etc, which may divert attention from an escalating crisis)**

**Prevention: (describe any strategies that should be avoided)**

**Preferred Handling Strategies to be used:**

Help Hug	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cradle Hug	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing Wrap	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sitting Wrap - be aware he may kick/spit/lash out.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing Double Elbow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half Shield	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sitting Double Elbow (Single person)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing Single Elbow (Two person)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sitting Single Elbow (Two person)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Figure of Four (Two person)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Front Ground Recovery (Three person)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elbow Guide	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing Response (detail: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biting Response (detail: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hair Response (detail: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Response to deliberate dead weight	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fight separation (detail: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: If in danger (ie climbing) hold legs and talk calmly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remove shoes.	

**Debrief process required after Physical Intervention e.g. Space, talk through etc:**

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**Recording and reporting if required:**

Accident Book	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serious Incident Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact parent/ guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact social worker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bound Book	<input type="checkbox"/>
PSNI	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Signatures:**

**Child** (where appropriate): \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School representative:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BSA:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

