



## **Health and Safety re: physical intervention**

### **Addendum to the Code of Behaviour Policy**

#### **Pastoral Care in St. Joseph's**

#### **Guidance on:**

#### **Appropriate physical contact interventions with pupils**

**Procedures in cases of violence, threatened violence and extreme verbal abuse.**

***This policy embraces the notion that a teacher stands in loco parentis at all times in St. Joseph's School.***

#### **AIMS FOR A POLICY**

- To create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe.
- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To put in place guidance for staff so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use physical contact to manage pupils and how such contact might be applied.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

- The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils in St. Joseph's School will never require any form of physical intervention. However, a small number of pupils may exhibit disturbed or distressing behaviour, which may require some form of physical intervention by staff.
- In order to minimise the risk of incidents escalating unnecessarily due to lack of foresight, planning and training, the school has carried out, and systematically reviews a risk assessment under two headings:

Environmental Risk Assessment;

Individual Risk Assessment.

#### **Environmental Risk Assessment**

- The school has carried out a risk analysis within the school and identified the yard as a location where there is increased risk of incidents happening.
- Appropriate type and level of supervision has been put in place.
- Staff and pupil opinion has been canvassed to augment this information.
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- On the basis of the analysis, the Principal and Senior Management Team have made recommendations to the Board of Management on the type and level of supervision which will be required to minimise risks.

### **Individual Risk Assessment**

- When the school becomes aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require physical contact, plans are in place on how to respond if the situation arises.
- Such planning includes :
- consulting the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be take
- managing the pupil, for example, reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict;
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned wherever possible. Assistant principal/ HSCL/SCP personnel)

### **Definition of Physical Contact Interventions**

‘A member of the staff of St. Joseph’s may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such contact as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil 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.’

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.

The use of reasonable force/physical contact will always depend on the circumstances of the case and staff should take the following into consideration:

- whether it is reasonable to use physical contact, and the degree of contact that could reasonably be employed, given the age, gender, physical strength, size, understanding, medical conditions and any special educational needs of the pupil;
- the use of physical contact can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it.



In St. Joseph's physical contact is never be used to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without physical contact;

- the degree of contact employed should be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent.

Any physical contact used is always kept to the minimum needed to defuse the situation.

### **Use and forms of physical contact/ interventions**

Physical contact interventions should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort in situations where:

- 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 him/her or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class to leave school (NB this will only applies if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Note: In circumstances where a pupil absconds, the school always make every reasonable effort to inform the parent/carer

Physical intervention in these circumstances may take several forms, egg: ■ physically interposing between pupils;

- blocking a pupil's path;
  - leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
  - shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
  - (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds eg underarm linking, with the support of designated staff wherever possible
- When used, physical intervention will avert danger by preventing or deflecting a pupil's action or perhaps by removing a physical object which could be used to harm him/herself or others.
  - It will , at all times, be carefully applied and may be eased by degrees as the pupil calms down in response to the physical contact.
  - The child will be advised throughout that physical intervention will cease when he/she calms down.



The use of physical intervention contact restraint is only likely to be needed in exceptional circumstances if a pupil appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour and is presenting a threat to him/her or others.

Drawing on Incredible Year Training, Restorative Justice practices the use of physical interventions will involve calm and measured approach at all times and is in accordance with agreed strategies and action steps:

- Speak quietly but assertively to the pupil involved.
- Ask them to go to time out zone or Assistant Principal's room
- If the incident occurs in class the other pupils may be asked to vacate the room
- Call on other member of staff and or / Assistant Principal to help deescalate the situation
- Where possible obtain the support of assistant principal to escort pupil to principal's office of senior management personnel's room.
- When pupil has been admitted to senior management room or office, staff involved will be given time without the student to debrief.
- Equally the student will be given time to calm down completely.
- Following this short calming session, staff and pupils will be brought together when to record the incident.

## **INTERVENTION GUIDELINES**

There are situations where staff should not intervene without help. Assistance should be sought when dealing, for example, with:

- A physically large pupil;
- More than one pupil;
- When the teacher believes that he/she may be at risk of injury.

In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to physically intervene with a pupil without help, he/she should:

- remove other pupils who might be at risk;
- summon assistance from colleagues; Walkie talkie;"

### **"SUPPORT NEEDED IMMEDIATELY"**

- inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving; and
- continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The school ensures that all staff knows and understands their roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of pupils.
- Members of staff who can use physical interventions include any teacher or SNA employed at the school and any person who, with the authority of the Principal, has lawful control or charge of pupils at the school
- The Principal will confirm with all members of staff whether or not they meet the terms of this definition.
- . However, in an emergency, if it is likely that a pupil will sustain an injury or injure another pupil or adult, any member of staff can intervene and use physical interventions to protect a pupil, other staff or defend themselves.
- Staff should be kept informed of planning in relation to individual pupils who are considered likely to pose serious behavioural problems.
- The school principal keeps staff informed about pupils with special educational needs who may require special attention with regard to their physical management.
- Staff consult senior management regarding any concerns which they have about the physical management of pupils with special educational needs.
- Line management and lines of reporting with regard to the use of physical interventions are the same as those for pastoral care/child protection. Yard diaries record incidents, but in the case of physical interventions, more detailed forms are completed
- Where necessary, parents are provided with a copy of the school's written policy on the use of physical interventions, which are an integral part of the school's policy for promoting positive behaviour.

## RECORD KEEPING

- All incidents involving the use of physical contact interventions are recorded in a detailed, contemporaneous written report in accordance with school procedures.
- The school keeps an up-to-date record of all such incidents
- Such records will be retained for future reference.
- Immediately following any such incident the member of staff concerned informs the Principal or a senior member of staff and provides a written report.
- Parents/carers are contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action will also be recorded as detailed in procedures
- Staff should keep their own copy of any written report.

## COMPLAINTS

- If an incident occurs in school involving the use of physical contact interventions, the procedures governing such incidents are followed. This includes informing the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child.
- In the event of a subsequent complaint made against a member of staff either by or on behalf of the child, this is dealt with in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.



- A dispute about the use of physical interventions by a member of staff might lead to an investigation either under disciplinary procedures, or by the police and Social Services Department under child protection procedures.

### **Staff threatened by violence/ physical and verbal**

School Procedures are in accordance with DES circular 40/97 and INTO recommended guidelines on teacher assault.

- Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault should be supported, as appropriate, in taking any necessary action against an assailant.
  - Staff given time-out to recover in the presence of a colleague and or/ member of senior management.
  - BOM informed immediately.
  - In consultation with the principal a visit to the doctor may be recommended
  - A consultation with the community guard may also be recommended.
  - In the case of a teacher, a copy of the incident form will be sent to the INTO should legal advice be required.
  - Insurance company will be contacted by BOM.
  - The pupil involved will be suspended for 5 days while a thorough investigation is completed and documented.
  - If the assault is on a class teacher, the class teacher will not be asked to teach or supervise that child during the investigation or if any written complaints are lodged.
  - The SNA will not be asked to supervise the pupil.
- (See below extract from DES circular on teacher health/safety included in school procedures.)

***It is accepted that judgement will have to be exercised in each case. However, the following elements should be included in each procedure***

*(i) The incident should be immediately reported to the principal teacher/other colleague. The details of the incident should be recorded in an Incident Book kept for this purpose in the workplace. Situations in which members have been intimidated or threatened with physical violence should also be recorded.(St. Joseph's has yard book records but individual forms retained in school file for serious physical interventions of any kind.)*

*(ii) Where necessary immediate medical assistance should be sought.*

*(iii) The matter should be reported to the Gardaí, where appropriate. This report would normally be made by the teacher who was assaulted.*



- (iv) *The Board of Management should be notified of the incident and where necessary an emergency meeting of the Board should take place. The Board should notify its legal advisors of the assault. The Board's insurance company should also be notified.*
- (v) *Where the assault is by a pupil the matter should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Discipline and as provided for in Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.*
- (vi) *Repeatedly aggressive pupils should be referred, with the consent of parents, for psychological assessment in order to assess the pupils' social and emotional needs and to determine how these can be best met.*
- (vii) *Where the assault is committed by a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian should be immediately instructed in writing not to make direct contact with the teacher/school pending full consideration of the matter by the Board. Subsequently the Board should correspond with the parent/ guardian stating:*
- *that the Board considers the assault unacceptable*
  - *what action the Board intends to take*
  - *outlining what pre-conditions should be met before access to the school is restored.*
- (viii) *Applications for leave of absence, in relation to a member who has been assaulted, should be forwarded to Primary Payments Section, Department of Education, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. Each application will be assessed on its merits.*
- (ix) *Where an employee's personal property is damaged in the course of an assault, compensation for its replacement value may be paid by the Board of Management under the extended school Protection Policy.*

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Training for teachers**

Although it is anticipated that incidences involving the use of physical intervention will be infrequent, all staff are made aware of the issues relating to the use of physical intervention,

Equally, staff are made aware of procedures and practices relating to school discipline and child protection procedures.

As part of the school's training and development policy, all staff receive appropriate training in the use of preventative strategies and approaches for managing difficult situations when they arise.

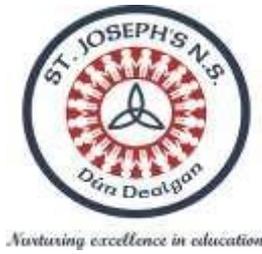


<b>St Joseph's School : Incident Report Form (Physical /Verbal Assault on Staff Member)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Details of teacher</b>	
<b>Details of pupil</b>	
<b>Date, time location of incident</b>	
<b>Names of staff involved</b> <i>Directly:</i> <i>Witnesses;</i>	
<b>Details of other pupils involved</b>	
<b>Description of incident</b>	
<b>Need for first aid/ nature of injury incurred</b>	
<b>Reasons for making a record of the incident</b>	
<b>Follow-up post-incident support with principal /deputy principal</b>	
<b>Follow-up post-incident visits to doctor and or Community Guard</b>	
<b>Details of any complaint lodged</b>	
<b>Report compiled by:</b> Name: Role Signature Date	<b>Report countersigned by:</b> Name Role Signature Date
<b>St Joseph's School : Incident Report Form (Cases of warranted pupil contact)</b>	
<b>Details of pupil</b>	
<b>Date, time location of incident</b>	
<b>Names of staff involved</b> <i>Directly:</i> <i>Witnesses;</i>	



<b>Details of other pupils involved</b>	
<b>Description of incident</b>	
<b>Need for first aid</b>	
<b>Reasons for making a record of the incident</b>	
<b>Follow-up post-incident support and any disciplinary action taken</b>	
<b>Parental views expressed about the incident</b>	
<b>Details of any complaint lodged</b>	
<b>Report compiled by:</b> Name: Role Signature Date	<b>Report countersigned by:</b> Name Role Signature Date
<b>Report countersigned by:</b> Name Role Signature Date	<b>Report countersigned by:</b> Name Role Signature Date
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**The Board of Management of St Joseph's N.S. reserves the right, in consultation with the education partners to review and modify the Health & Safety re: Physical Intervention Policy as necessary.**

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M in 2016.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2019.

This policy was reviewed by the BOM on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020

This policy was reviewed by the BOM on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

Sr. Joan Watters

Dr Rosalyn Morris

*Chairperson, B.O.M*

*Principal*