

**Title of Policy: Guidelines for Using Physical Interventions and Restrictive Practices in Scoil Ide, Including the Use of Time Out/Withdrawal.**

**Ethos:** This policy reflects the school's ethos and is written in consultation with the following partners – staff, parents, pupils (where relevant) and patron. A small percentage of our pupils have diagnoses such as ADHD, ASD, etc. 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. Where these strategies are not working and it is foreseeable that a pupil might engage in high risk behaviours requiring a physical intervention or restrictive practice, this policy applies.

For the purpose of this policy a child is defined as any child attending the school regardless of age.

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.**

The policy is based on guidance from the following:

- Education and Welfare Act 2000
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2007 Safety, Health and Welfare At Work Act, 2005 (as well as other statutes and standards)
- Children First Guidelines 2017.
- Guidelines for Schools on Supporting Students with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - An information guide for Primary Schools: DES 2013.

**Other Relevant Policies**

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

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

1. To provide clear guidelines to staff, pupils and parents regarding the use of restrictive practices/physical interventions in school, including the use of time out and withdrawal.
2. To emphasise a culture within the school of prevention and reduction of the use of physical interventions/restrictive practices.

3. To manage serious incidents when they occur.
4. To reduce the risks associated with serious incidents such as injuries to self or others or serious damage to property.

## **SECTION 1 - PHYSICAL CONTACT**

There are times when physical contact is used in our school, such as patting a child in affirmation, administering first aid and potential situations involving meeting intimate care needs as agreed with parents. 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	High handles or coded access on front door.	Disengaging from a grab/ hair pull
Music	Holding hand of upset child or to prevent absconding	Toileting		Escorting a resisting pupil to a safer location
Drama	High Fives	Lifting a child down from a height	Gates preventing Flight, Coded access to Front Door, External Doors locked during school day and where appropriate, Classroom door locked.	Breaking up a fight/ blocking a pupil's path
Sensory Programmes	Hugs	Dressing – eg. Assisting at swimming pool, concerts etc.		
Physical Prompting to support		Taking a dangerous object from a	Prevention from participating in	Withdrawal.

learning		child	certain curricular activities that may pose unacceptable risks	
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Categories 1 through 3 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. ***Any use of such restrictions must be discussed with the Principal and agreed with parents.***

## 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.

### 2. Environmental Alterations

Comfort areas, sensory break areas 1:1 teaching areas, access to preferred activities where possible, access to preferred or skilled staff where possible, timetables organised to minimise risks, increased access to specialist staff (Assigned SET teacher), opportunities provided to 'burn off energy', high handles on some doors, locks on some doors, reduced access to equipment in some rooms, coded access to front door, fenced in playgrounds

## SECTION 3 - THE FOLLOWING PERSONS ARE AUTHORISED TO USE RESTRAINT 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 and take appropriate action to safeguard pupils, including child at risk, or staff whilst calling for assistance .

## SECTION 4 - DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO USE FORCE

The school endeavours to encourage staff to STOP AND THINK before employing a physical intervention as follows:

ACT	BALANCE	CHOOSE
<p>Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 5 - USING A 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 6 - LAST RESORT/EARLY INTERVENTION

Force 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.

## SECTION 7 - USING TIME-OUT/WITHDRAWAL/COMFORT AREAS

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 3 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 by staff. 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 her 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. 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 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/Staff wishing to make complaint should in the first instance contact the Principal and procedure will be followed as stated in our Complaints Procedure – accessible on School Website.

## **SECTION 11- Current Position**

At present we do not have any serious restraint issues in Scoil Ide and any potential restraint required is agreed in writing by the parents of the child(ren) in question. Should this position change we will adapt our policy accordingly.

## **SECTION 12 - REVIEW PROCEDURES**

It is recommended that this policy is reviewed regularly in the light of changing information and in consultation with the wider community

**Ratified by the Board of Management on** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson of Board of Management.**

**Review Dates:**



