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## **Policy for Positive Handling Practices in Scoil Mhuire Senior School.**

**Ethos:** Scoil Mhuire Senior Primary School is a mainstream primary school catering for students from 3rd to 6th class. This policy reflects the school's ethos and is written in consultation with the following partners – staff, parents, students.

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.

The Board of Management takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors noting that:

In keeping with the ethos of Scoil Mhuire Senior National School, this policy reflects our commitment to providing a safe and secure and positive learning environment for all pupils. It applies to all staff and pupils in Scoil Mhuire Senior Primary School.

Scoil Mhuire Senior National School promotes the use of positive approaches with children.

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.

On occasion, the use of restrictive interventions may be required for the purpose of protecting pupils' wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, but this is always the least restrictive approach possible, for the shortest period of time possible and proportionate to the risks, in exceptional circumstances.

Scoil Mhuire Senior National School uses these restrictive practices, in exceptional circumstances, as outlined in this policy.

**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.**

- Education and Welfare Act 2000
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, (as well as other statutes and standards)
- Children First Guidance 2011
- Department of Education Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017
- Guidelines for Schools on Supporting Students with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties – An information guide for Primary Schools: DES 2013

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies

- Child Safeguarding
- Anti-Bullying
- Code of Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Admissions and Enrolment
- Intimate Care policy
- Data Protection Policy

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

1. To provide guidelines to staff, pupils and parents regarding the use of restrictive practices/physical interventions in schools, including the use of time out and withdrawal.
2. To emphasise a culture within the school where there is minimal use of restrictive practices and where any restricted practices used are, the least restrictive possible and used for the shortest duration possible proportionate to the presenting risks.
3. To adopt and maintain a low arousal approach throughout the school, keeping the environment as calm as possible.
4. To manage serious incidents when they occur.
5. To reduce the risks associated with serious incidents such as injuries to self or others.
6. To reduce the dangers associated with pupils who are a flight risk.
7. To minimise damage to property and the belongings of others.

## PHYSICAL CONTACT

There are many times when physical contact is used in our school, such as patting a child in affirmation, administering first aid and meeting intimate care needs. 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 examples of circumstances where physical contact may be used in the school:

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
<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 doors/ key fob system	Disengaging from a grab/ hair pull
Music	Holding hand of upset child or to prevent absconding	Toileting	Locks on cleaning cupboards or lunch cupboards.	Escorting a resisting pupil to a safer location.
Drama	High Fives	Lifting a child down from a height if they are	Fences around playgrounds- Electric Gates	Breaking up a fight/ blocking a pupil's path

		in danger.		
Sensory Programmes	Hugs	Dressing/ personal hygiene	Harness on transport.	Restraint if pupil is a flight risk or engaging in behaviour that could hurt them, a peer or staff.
Physical Prompting to support learning		Taking a dangerous object from a child	Prevention from participating in certain curricular activities that may pose unacceptable risks.	Withdrawal if a danger to themselves or others, or to preserve the pupil's dignity.

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.

## 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:

Examples of De- escalation strategies and Environmental Alterations is not exhaustive.

### 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

Access to SNA support when sanctioned. Access to 1:1 teaching if possible. Access to preferred activities where possible. Timetables organised to minimise risk.  
High handles on doors. Reduced access to learning material in some rooms.  
Coded access to the school and fenced in the playground.

3. Parents of pupils with behavioural needs have regular communication with staff to support the collaborative management of their son/daughter. Emotional behavioural needs will be supported in School Support File and a behavioural management plan/ communication journal may be put in place to aid communication and collaboration between school, pupil and parents.

## POSITIVE HANDLING PLANS

Positive handling plans will only be in place where pupils have ongoing emotional behavioural difficulties that put themselves and/or others in danger. These are devised for pupils assessed as being at greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions. Outside support services will be requested as necessary.

This plan will be included in the pupil's support file and outline briefly how this behaviour will be handled. The safety of the pupil, their peers and the personnel involved will be the primary focus. It should be signed by parents and Principal.

Staff will receive training from Dynamis Intervention Training and Studio 3.

Restraint/physical withdrawal will only be used where a pupil is a risk to themselves and or others. In situations where pupils are an ongoing risk to themselves or others or where pupils are an ongoing continuous disruption to teaching and learning, support will be sought from outside agencies regarding the pupil's ability to cope in this school setting.

If school personnel are unable to manage this behaviour, then parents may be called in to support in calming the child or take them home if necessary. If there is a risk to the health and safety of any pupil, staff must act in the best interests of the safety of all.

Where possible staff STOP AND THINK before employing a physical intervention as follows:

ACT	BALANCE	CHOOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture</li><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>

Some children may display 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. In the case that the school does not have the staff to support the pupil's current behaviour or the behaviour does not abate, parents may be called to support the school to manage the situation

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 two ways:



**1. Time Out** – This may be used informally for pupils who need time or space to calm/ cool down in accordance with our Code of Behaviour/ Behaviour for learning policy.

**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 or monitored by staff either inside or outside the area the child is in. This may involve physically intervening to prevent the child from leaving the area until staff consider that it is safe to do so. Staff will attempt to distract or divert the child and return the child to their 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 health and safety of all is the primary concern when a pupil engaged in this behaviour.

The class teacher, additional educational needs teacher and SNA will collaborate with parents regarding all aspects of their child's education, care and management. 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, communication journals or letters to texts. The school's Code of Conduct applies to all in the school community. Scoil Mhuire is a mainstream primary school and will endeavour to meet the needs of pupils in its care but where it does not have the facilities to manage a pupil's needs, advice from outside agencies will be sought to advise re appropriate placement.

## **SECTION 8: Post Incident Review Process**

Following an incident, the priority is to look after the pupils and staff involved before reports are filled out and reviews held.

### **Incident Report**

Incident reports should be filled out by the staff involved following the use of restraint. The best time to fill out an incident report is when the situation has settled.

The form is then checked by the Principal to decide if any follow up action is required to provide any further care or reassurance to pupils or staff, to review the interventions used by staff and to inform any future recommendations.

The incidents are recorded in the Pupil's Positive Behaviour Plan and will be discussed with parents.

**Ratified by the Board of Management on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

 Chairperson

## SECTION 9: Review Procedures

This policy will be subjected to periodic review, in the light of changing information and in consultation with the wider community.

\_\_\_\_\_ Intervention strategies will be deployed when.

- s/he is a danger to themselves
- s/he is a danger to others
- s/he is a constant disruption to teaching and learning
- s/he requires privacy to support their reputation/ dignity

\_\_\_\_\_ will be supervised by principal or SNA or support teacher depending on staff available at the time. All pupils with access to SNA have shared access only so supervision reflects this.

\_\_\_\_\_ will tidy up any damage done during their outburst before returning to classroom. \_\_\_\_\_ must be reasonably calm before they can be returned to classroom. \_\_\_\_\_ parents will be called if \_\_\_\_\_ presents an ongoing safety risk to themselves or others.

### Behaviour occurred when

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### Who removed pupil from classroom

\_\_\_\_\_ Length of time spent in  
time out \_\_\_\_\_

### Any damage done

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**Object pupil likes playing with**

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**Did object/ activity calm at start of behaviour?**

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**Other strategies/ choices offered to pupil?**

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**Outcome**

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