

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Policy on Care and Control of Pupils



Introduction

The Mission for St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is,

'...to ensure a loving and faithful learning community in which our children can become the person God created them to be. A community where we celebrate the dignity, worth and uniqueness of every individual. Where we grow and learn together with joy, in the love of Jesus. In this love, we strive to be courageous stewards of creation.'

Therefore, the implementation of our Policy on Care and Control plays an important part in enabling us to strive towards achieving this mission for all the children in our care.

This policy has been prepared for the support of teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils and volunteers working within the school to explain the arrangements for care and control. This statement includes information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

Purpose of the Policy.

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils is vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the wellbeing and safety of all pupils and staff in our school. However, it is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force is required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- a) clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary
- b) are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

However, individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical restraint.

The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable position. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff therefore have the responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Physical force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff and property are at risk.

Definitions

- a) Physical Contact
Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g. in the care of pupils with learning difficulties, to comfort pupils.
- b) Physical Intervention
This may be used to divert a pupil from a disruptive or destructive action, e.g. guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.
- c) Physical Control/Restraint
This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. All such incidents must be recorded.

Underpinning values

In keeping with the mission of our school, everyone in this school has the right to:

- Learn and work in a safe and secure environment
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Achieve their full potential
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- Individual consideration of their needs by staff who have responsibility for their care and protection
- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies

- Be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school
- Be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in our school.

Parents should have committed themselves through the Home-School Agreement to ensure the good behaviour of their child/children and that they understand and follow the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

Authorised Staff

In this school all teachers and teaching assistants are authorised to use reasonable force to manage or control pupils.

Authorisation is not given to parents and volunteers.

The headteacher is responsible for making clear to whom authorisation has been given. In what circumstances they may use this and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. Those to whom the headteacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control and restraint is needed, e.g. to contact an authorised member of staff.

Supply staff will not be authorised to use reasonable force.

Staff from the LEA working within the school

Support services will have their own policies of care and control of pupils but service staff will be expected to work within the schools policy and not be authorised to use reasonable force on pupils.

Training

Training for all staff will be made available and will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training.

Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order (see Behaviour Management Policy).

Every effort is made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils, staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain.
- Further verbal reprimand stating:
 - this is the second request for compliance
 - an explanation why such behaviour is unacceptable
 - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues
 - warning of the intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible, summon assistance.
 - Physical intervention – reasonable force uses the minimum degree of force to prevent the child harming him or herself, others or property.
 - **Always ensure another adult is present when such force is being used.**

Escalating Situations

Reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do the following (Education Act 1996 Section 550 A);

- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.
- Self-injuring or placing him or herself at risk
- Injuring others
- Causing damage to property, including that of the pupil himself or herself
- Committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility).

Types of Incidents

Incidents fall into three broad categories:

- a) where action is necessary in self defence or because there is imminent risk of injury
- b) where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property
- c) where a pupil is behaving in such a way that it is compromising the good order of the school.

Examples of this include;

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil.
- Pupils are fighting
- A pupil is engaged in or on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A pupil is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him/herself or others
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school.
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom.
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Acceptable measures of physical intervention

Physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent the pupil from harming him/herself, others or property.

The use of a degree of force can only be deemed reasonable if:

- It is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- It is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result
- The age, understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account
- It is likely to achieve the desired result.

Whenever physical intervention is being used another member of staff should be present.

The form of physical intervention may involve staff:

- Physically imposing themselves between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Escorting a pupil
- Shepherding a pupil away.

In extreme circumstances trained staff may need to use more restrictive holds.

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school. Whenever reasonable force is being used staff must keep talking to the pupil.

Recording

Where physical control and restraint has been used to manage a pupil, a record of the incident must be kept.

This record should be kept in the Serious Incident Book and a one line entry in the Serious Incident Book (situated in the lockable cupboard in the secretary's room). Details will include name of pupil, date, time and place of incident, brief description and action taken.

In addition to this specific details of reasonable force will be recorded on Form RF1 which will include how the incident happened, attempts to calm the situation, name of witnesses, the outcomes etc. Form RF1 can be found in the Child Protection folder available in the lockable cupboard in the secretary's room. A copy will be kept on the pupil's file and a copy will be given to the Headteacher.

Action after the incident

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is needed then this can be pursued through the appropriate procedures eg Behaviour Management Policy.

Complaints

Any complaints will be dealt with through the school's Formal Complaints Policy.

Monitoring

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use reasonable force this must always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and alert the Headteacher to pupils who may need additional support. This process will also address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

Signed: (Headteacher)

..... (Governing Body)

Date: