

St Patrick's Primary School and Nursery Unit



Safe Handling and Reasonable Force

Reviewed 2018

Safe Handling Policy

St Patrick's Primary School Loughguile believes that: -

- Each child has the right to be educated in a safe and secure environment within which their moral, intellectual, personal, social and emotional development is promoted
- Each child should be educated in a safe, caring and respectful atmosphere
- All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment

The following purposes underpin St Patrick's Primary School's policy and practices in: -

- Creating a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe;
- Protecting every person in the school community from harm;
- Protecting all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful

Procedures

- There may be times when staff may have to decide between using reasonable force or standing back and allowing colleagues/pupils to face a potential danger
- There will always be an element of personal judgement in these decisions
- It is reasonable to expect a member of staff to engage in some risk where there is evidence of danger to others
- Staff should not put themselves in personal danger to protect property

- Reasonable force/ safe handling can be used by a teacher or other authorised person. It should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted and where: -
 1. Action is necessary in self -defence or because there is imminent risk of injury to another pupil or person
 2. There is a developing risk of injury to another pupil or person, or significant damage to property

Statutory Responsibilities

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998¹⁸, Article 4, outlines the powers a member of school staff can use in restraining pupils. Through this legislation, staff may use reasonable force for the purposes of preventing the pupil from: -

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil 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.

The legislation extends to the premises of the school and when a member of school staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned.

Definition of Reasonable Force

The minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming himself, herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

Forms of Reasonable Force

When other behaviour management strategies have failed, it should be the minimum intervention or force used as a last resort and in a reasonable and proportionate manner. It should be used only when absolutely necessary.

Limits on the use of force

Staff should not act in a way that might be expected to cause injury, for example by: -

- *holding around the neck*
- *any hold that might restrict breathing*
- *kicking, slapping or punching*
- *forcing limbs against joint*
- *holding or pulling by the hair*
- *holding the pupil face down on the ground*

Record Keeping

Any incident using reasonable force must be reported to, and recorded by the Principal.

The Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Principal will annually review all recorded entries.

(Reviewed June 2018 Ratified September 2018)