



St Joseph's Special School

St. Joseph's Special School,

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Chairperson of the Board of Management: Tom Hogan

Principal: Sarah McGinley

Timetable for Review

As necessary

Restrictive Practices Policy

October 2018 /

September 2020/

September 2021

St Joseph's Special School Restrictive Practices Policy.

This policy reflects the school's ethos and was written in consultation with the following partners – staff, parents, and the patron Ability West Our school in the first instance applies the principles outlined in our Code of Behaviour and in the Policy on Behaviours that Challenge, which provide guidelines to staff on the use of day to day positive behavioural support 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 that physical, environmental or mechanical restrictions be put in place, this policy applies. 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and structures:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Behaviours that Challenge Policy
- Parent/staff communication policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Enrolment and Participation Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Protected Disclosure Policy
- Class break-up list
- Grievance Procedures

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide clear guidelines to staff, pupils and parents regarding the use of restrictive practices/physical interventions in our school
2. To create a culture within the school of where there is a last resort approach to the use of all restrictions
3. To safely and ethically 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.

5. To clarify our ability to facilitate pupils who need a 1:1 classroom and staff member on a medium to long-term basis (Specifically: Longer than 8weeks)

SECTION 1 - PHYSICAL CONTACT/ INTERVENTIONS

There are many times when physical contact is used in our school such as: physically assisting a pupil to complete a task; patting a pupil in affirmation; administering first aid and meeting intimate care needs. The table below outlines examples of circumstances where there is physical contact with a pupil for therapeutic safety or care needs. The list is not exhaustive. These interventions are not considered restrictive.

Reassurance/ Comfort	Intimate Care/ First Aid/Safety
Pat on arm for praise/ reassurance	Treating minor injuries
Holding hand of upset child	Assistance with toileting
High Fives	Assistance with dressing and personal care
Hugs	Lifting a pupil down from a height
Sensory programmes	Taking a dangerous object from a pupil.
Hand over hand assistance in completing tasks	Keeping a pupil with epilepsy safe
Assistance in walking, climbing stairs	

Our duty of care to others however, means that it may on occasion also be necessary to use physical contact to restrain a pupil who is putting him/herself or another person at risk of injury. This policy governs the use of the following practices:

Physical Prompting- giving enough physical or gestural cues to accomplish whatever response you are asking the person to make (e.g. when encouraging a pupil to leave an area you may have to gently prompt him towards the door/away from the area whilst also giving him verbal direction)

Physical Guidance - physically and gently supporting a pupil to leave an area that is unsafe, to not touch something that is risky, to go to a specific area for personal care, etc.

Physical Restraint is defined as *the use of any part of another person's body to restrict free movement of an individual for the primary purpose of controlling that individual's behaviour.*(Ability West)

The following table outlines some circumstances where physical contact as described above may have to be used as a last resort. The list is not exhaustive. These interventions are restrictive and require careful thought and consideration before being employed by staff.

Any use of such restrictions must be discussed with the Principal or deputy Principal and agreed with parents and if relevant, multi-disciplinary staff.

Escorting a resisting pupil to a safer location

Interventions to avoid personal injuries/infections resulting from kicking, punching, slapping, biting, spitting, grabbing, hair-pulling etc

Intervening in a physical altercation between pupils

Controlling the movements of a pupil to prevent self-harm, harm to others, absconding, destruction of property, socially un-acceptable behaviour.

SECTION 2- NON- CONTACT RESTRICTIONS/CONTAINMENT

To keep pupils safe mechanical restrictions may be employed. The following table outlines examples of mechanical restrictions present in the school and examples of mechanical restrictions that may be required for individual pupils.

Universal

High handles on doors
Locks on presses
Coded exits
Reduced access to equipment in some rooms
Fencing around playgrounds
Locked exit doors & Windows

Individual

Seat Belt Locks on transport
Harnesses on transport
Clothing to restrict socially unacceptable behaviour and to preserve the dignity of the pupil
Safety belts on wheelchairs and on bicycles.
Locked doors in agreed circumstances

SECTION 3 - PREVENTION

The school seeks in the first instance to be proactive at all times to prevent and minimise the need for physical interventions and restrictive practices by employing ‘first resort’ strategies i.e.de-escalation strategies and environmental alterations as follows:

1. De-escalation Strategies

Sensory breaks, visual schedules, use of rewards, verbal supports, praise, reassurance, positive reminders, offering choices, short tasks only, 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, outlining limits/boundaries, selective attention, time given to process/cool down.

2. Environmental Alterations

1:1 teaching areas, individual workstations, access to preferred activities where possible, access to preferred or skilled staff where possible, timetables organised to minimise risks, individual schedules, reduced pupil/staff ratios, comfort areas, sensory room, opportunities provided to ‘burn off energy’.

SECTION 4 – BEHAVIOUR Passports

These are devised by classroom staff,(and, if appropriate the Principal or Deputy Principal and pupils parents and any MDT available may contribute) for pupils presenting with behaviours that challenge and deemed as being of greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions.. In addition a referral may need to be made to HSE if there are mental health/other concerns.

The Behaviour Passport should ideally contain the following:

- a brief history of the pupil
- a brief outline of likes/dislikes and known triggers
- de-escalation strategies to employ when behaviours start to occur
- recommended interventions/ restrictive practices which may be employed when de-escalation strategies are unsuccessful or not possible
- The parents phone number to contact them in an emergency
- planned reviews of any recommended restrictive practices
- a list of persons to whom the plan needs to be communicated

The plan is signed by all involved in its implementation (Teacher, SNAs, Parents, Principal or Deputy Principal). The plan is typed and a copy sent to parents and their agreement to its implementation is obtained in writing this will be held in the pupils file. Parents and the principal or Deputy Principal are consulted if any major changes to the plan are needed in class following the initial introduction.

This should be made available to all staff involved in supervision of the pupil. It is the duty of all staff to be familiar with and implement the strategies outlined for individual pupils in behaviour plans and passports.

SECTION 5–STAFF TRAINING

The school uses the CPI (formerly MAPA) approach to support pupils having difficulties managing their behaviour. The aim of CPI is to promote de-escalation strategies; to reduce risk and use of restraint, and to support teaching, learning and caring, by increasing staff confidence and competence, in responding to behaviours that challenge.

In the absence of any guidelines or funding from the Department of Education and Skills the Board of Management has funded the training of one staff as a CPI Tutor to deliver training to staff in this approach to behaviour support which will be applied consistently throughout the school.

Other training availed of by some staff include the following

- Training for teachers provided by NCSE– such as CABA
- Training for SNAs by Ability West Behaviour Therapist
- Training provided by the Middletown Centre for Autism
- Participation by teachers in online and face to face courses during the summer
- Teachers attend seminars, conferences and workshops
- Training delivered by the Ability West MDT in the past which has included Studio III; Nonviolent Crisis Intervention; Positive Behaviour Support; Communication Strategies
- Training delivered by St. Joseph’s in the past on Team teach- training in positive behaviour management

SECTION 6–GUIDELINES ON THE USE RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES

A. Pupils with Behaviour Passports: Interventions used are as outlined in the plan. It is the duty of staff working in the class to be familiar with and implement strategies recommended. A positive behaviour passport containing relevant information is made available to all staff who are supervising pupils with behaviour plans. Should all planned interventions appear to be failing to manage a situation safely all staff must use their judgement and take appropriate action to safeguard pupils or staff whilst calling for assistance from other staff. The school will endeavour to ensure that, if possible, staff with knowledge of the pupil is available to these pupils.

B. Unforeseen or Emergency Situations: e.g. a pupil 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 or staff whilst calling for assistance from other staff. Unplanned interventions must take the following principles into consideration:

- Necessity/Duress of circumstances – where action must be taken but staff members are required to choose a course of action that will result in least harm
- Reasonable Force - Determined by the severity of the behaviour and counterbalanced by gender, size, experience, etc
- The best interests of the pupil
- The action is proportionate to the dangers involved
- Acting in Good Faith – encompasses a sincere belief or motive without any malice
- Duty of Care – Acting with watchfulness, attention, caution and prudence. Essentially keeping people safe.

SECTION 7 - DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO USE RESTRAINT

The school requests staff to make a dynamic risk assessment before employing a physical intervention using the following guidelines:

ACTION	CONSIDER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective attention • Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture • Use a slow controlled voice • Give clear visual or verbal directions • Pause and allow time for compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely outcomes if a restrictive practice is used against the likely outcomes if it is not • The short term risks versus long term risks • Balancing the best interests, health and safety of the pupil with the best interests, health and safety of the other pupils, staff and general public • Alerting staff who are most likely to succeed in diffusing the situation

Having followed all of the above, should a restrictive practice be necessary the guiding principle of “THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ALTERNATIVE IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT” should be applied whilst at all times striving to respect the dignity of the pupil.

SECTION 8 - USING A PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

If a restraint is used staff must ask themselves the following questions:

- Am I using the minimum force for the shortest time?
- Can I reduce the amount of pressure?
- How best can I communicate with the pupil and with other staff?
- Should I ask someone else to take over?

SECTION 9 - LAST RESORT/EARLY INTERVENTION

Restrictive practices should always be used as a last resort. This does not mean that all other possible strategies must be tried and tested beforehand; rather it means that staff must make a considered judgement balancing the risks involved, thus allowing informed decisions to be made. Occasionally

using a physical intervention early on may prevent a risk of injury to other pupils and staff thus justifying the use of that intervention in that particular situation.

Some pupils may have stereotypical patterns of behaviour which alert staff to a developing crisis. Such information is disseminated to all staff in the positive behaviour passport.

SECTION 10 - USING TIME-OUT/WITHDRAWAL/COMFORT/ENVIRONMENTAL RESTRAINT

Sometimes a pupil 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 Away– This may be used informally for pupils who need time or space to calm/self-regulate i.e. pupil 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.

In a time-away procedure the pupil is given the option to decide to leave a certain area (i.e. they are asked if they would like to leave and are facilitated to do so). It is not presented as a directive. The goal of time-away is to support the pupil to learn self-management techniques when they are upset or experiencing difficulty. Time-away involves a choice on the part of the pupil. This can be distinguished from environmental restraint when the choice is taken away from the pupil. Time-away therefore gives freedom and choice where environmental restraint limits freedom

2. Withdrawal/Comfort / Environmental Restraint (accompanied) – This may be used to move a pupil 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 pupil is in. This may involve physically intervening to move the pupil and/or preventing him/her from leaving the area until staff consider that it is safe to do so. Staff must continuously attempt to distract or divert the pupil and return him/her to the 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 or is still exhibiting behaviours that challenge. Doors are not secured in this instance.

3.Environmental Restraint (unaccompanied)– Confining a pupil to an area through use of locks on doors or windows is a major restrictive practice and is only considered in exceptional circumstances in which the pupil is presenting as a real and immediate risk to themselves or others. The use of this intervention must be proportionate to the risk presented by the pupil. It may be used at times of emergency or crisis only where the risks of significant injury to pupils or staff are very high. If the pupil cannot be removed to a support area other pupils will go to other classrooms (as per class break-up list) and the pupil presenting the risk will be environmentally restrained in his/her own classroom. In either of the above locations the door is locked and the pupil is continuously monitored via glass panels to ensure his/her safety. Environmental restraint is always be used in line with the strict criteria and rationale outlined in the Behaviour Passport. The action is documented in an incident report (see Appendix C) which will be signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal. If the Principal or Deputy Principal is concerned for the welfare of any pupil in these circumstances, parents will be asked to bring the pupil home Parents are informed as agreed. Regular reviews take place with the parents / guardians. The purpose of this is to safeguard pupils and or staff in situations of very high risk to themselves or others.

4. Environmental Restraint (unaccompanied at times) medium to long term: planned for –

Confining a pupil to an area through use of locks on doors or windows is a major restrictive practice and is only considered in exceptional circumstances in which the pupil is presenting as a real and immediate risk to themselves or others.

If a pupil is in a period of frequent crisis and unable to attend school in the usual way i.e., in a shared classroom with others, the school will endeavour to facilitate a private classroom for this pupil- given that the alternative is complete breakdown of school placement.

The school is not staffed or funded by the Department of Education to cater for pupils with these exceptional needs. An application will be made to the NCSE for a 1:1 teaching post to facilitate a private classroom. If this is not granted, the school will make every effort to reintroduce the pupil to the shared classroom. This will be an individualised process, undertaken in close consultation with parents, available MDT, and with the guidance of the NCSE. Each situation like this will be treated as a unique and emergency situation.

Due to the impact his has on the safe running of the school it may be necessary for the pupil to attend part time or move to a shortened day. This will only be done under exceptional circumstances. Staffing levels and the health and safety of all pupils and staff will have to be taken into consideration when determining a pupil's attendance. The school will do it's best to work with families of our pupils in crisis situations like these to facilitate a fulltime placement.

However, if progress is not made within 8 weeks of needing a private room and 1:1 staffing, be it for reasons such as

- Self-injurious behaviours
- Inappropriate behaviours in front of peers
- Behaviours that challenge directed at pupils or staff
- The pupils own difficulties in anxiety being at a debilitating level
- Any other behaviours that compromise the safety of this pupil or the adults working with them

the school will be forced, as per code of behaviour, to follow the route of suspending the pupil. If serious/gross incidences of behaviour persist the pupil will face possible expulsion.

This would be a regrettable outcome for the pupil, their family and the school, but if the NCSE and Department of education fail to equip St. Joseph's with the staff, resources and facilities to accommodate our most complex pupils needs then there will be no other option available to the school.

This would be seen as a failure to be able to continue to support a pupil and would be a last resort.

Use of time out or environmental restraint for reasons of sanction/punishment, staff convenience or absence of appropriate resources is NOT permitted. This is unlawful and will be dealt with appropriately by the B.O.M. Child Protection services and/or Gardai will be contacted

SECTION 11 - POST INCIDENT SUPPORT (see Incident Report template Appendix C)

Following an incident the priority is to look after the pupils and staff involved before reports are filled out and reviews held. Debriefing of staff and pupils is important and is facilitated by allowing for class break up following a serious incident. Classes may call on support from an adjacent class to allow for individual staff members to step out for a short period. Ideally a formal debriefing meeting should be held in the days following a major incident. This meeting will be held by class groups following the CPI COPING model for post incident support.

Incident reports should be filled out by staff involved when:

- A physical or environmental restraint has been used.
- Other pupils or staff have experienced physical assault
- There is significant damage to property

The best time to fill out an incident report is when the situation has settled and the pupil and staff have had time to recover. Group completion of an incident report enables staff to reflect together on possible triggers, appropriateness of interventions and future actions. The report is signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal who will review the interventions used by staff. This will inform any future actions. **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 behaviours that challenge are prioritised for meetings/phone calls with the class teacher, the Principal or Deputy Principal. The school will endeavour to keep parents informed in a manner that is reasonable and in the best interests of their child. This will take the form of meetings, phone calls, communication books emails or letters. All parents are issued with a copy of the policies of the school and requested to indicate that they have read and agree with the contents.

How to make a Complaint

- Parents wishing to make complaint should in the first instance contact the Principal who will furnish the parent with a copy of the Complaints Procedure.
- Staff wishing to make a complaint should in the first instance contact the Principal who will furnish the staff member with a copy of the Complaints Procedure

SECTION 12 –OVERSEEING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

The Class teacher must furnish the principal with a report of any restrictions being used in their class, and the Principal presents this to the Board. The report outlines the following:

- Instances of mechanical restraints being used with individual pupils to ensure their safety
- Instances of planned physical restraints and/or environmental restraint used with individual pupils
- Instances of un-planned physical and/or environmental restraint used with individual pupils.
- Any other relevant information

SECTION 13 – TIMEFRAME FOR REVIEW

The draft policy was circulated to Staff, the Patron and the Board of Management 2018.

A full review was carried out in September 2021 by Sarah McGinley and presented to the Staff, Parents and school BOM for immediate review for the following reasons:

- 1) In preparation for the changeover of ability west MDT involvement to HSE.
- 2) To reflect recent staff training in CPI crises management.
- 3) To more accurately reflect the current need for individual rooms for some of our pupils and to have a clear guideline in place for these exceptional cases on how to proceed if the exceptional circumstances are not changing and the school is struggling to safely manage the situation.

Timetable for Review

As necessary

Review and Ratification

The Board of Management is aware that this plan was ratified 2018, and reviewed in September 2020. The amended document was presented for ratification. And again updated in September 2021 to be presented to the staff, parents and school BOM.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____