



Bray School Project N.S.

**Policy
on
Flight Risk
and
Restrictive Practice**

Introduction:

This policy was drafted by the staff and Board of Management of Bray School Project National School to provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the school when a child absconds or attempts to abscond from a class or from the school premises or while on a school trip, or when a serious incident of physically/verbally aggressive behaviour occurs in school or on a school trip.

Rationale and Relationship to school ethos

Bray School Project N.S. is a multi-denominational Educate Together primary school whose ethos is based on the four core principles of Equality, Co-educational, Child-centred and democratically run. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our pupils and staff are of paramount importance. Different pupils can present with various needs which can, on rare occasions, cause them to behave in a way that is a threat to their own or others safety. While every measure will be taken to prevent incidents, safety of pupils and staff will be prioritized if and when incidents occur. This policy was formulated by consultation with staff and the Board of Management of our school and reflects the need for clarity around the procedures relating to serious incidents of physically/verbally aggressive behaviour and absconding.

Guidelines and General procedures:

- Staff will use the 'Continuum of Support' to put in place behaviour plans for all children who may pose a risk of absconding or physical/verbal aggression, in consultation with parents/guardians.
- Prevention, in terms of sensory breaks, calm stance and facial expression, calm tone of voice, awareness of triggers, distraction/diversion, verbal support, low arousal approach, minimal communication, rewards, praise and close supervision will be prioritized.
- Environmental alterations are in place – School grounds are secure and gates locked, sensory resources in classrooms, sensory/quiet room separate to class room, 1:1 teaching, being mindful of the dignity of the child, mindfulness teaching, movement breaks.
- Specialist training and/or advice may be sought around how to deal with students presenting with a medium to high risk of physical violence or absconding.
- Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff at as early a stage as possible since single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.
- All staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil will have a responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required.

- Before intervening in a non-emergency, consideration will be given to whether or not other staffs are available to assist. Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident, may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the pupil if this proves necessary.
- A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. If this is the case, the audience will be redirected to another area, or if this is not possible, the pupil themselves will be redirected to another area. The pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place (e.g. two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation).
- Staff will be aware of the need to communicate in a calm, gentle manner, that the reason for an intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil is calm, the intervention will no longer be needed.

Our approach to best practice

The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined should be considered from the following sources:

- Government of Ireland (2022) Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools Supporting Children and Young People
 - School's own policies: Code of Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and the Health & Safety Statement
 - Guidance received from experts or during staff training in the area of physical intervention e.g. Behaviour Therapist, NEPS Psychologist
 - Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) "[Guidance on promoting a care environment that is free from restrictive practice](#)", in particular the general principles and guidance for consideration (P.7 of aforementioned document).
- In the following situations staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate:
 - Student putting themselves in danger e.g. throwing furniture, climbing to a dangerous height, breaking glass, attempting to abscond or trying to self-harm.
 - Student with a weapon and perceived intent to use it.
 - Physically attacking another student(s), staff and/or visitor(s) to the school or attempting to.
 - This judgement will take into account the circumstances of the incident. All staff should be aware that the use of physical intervention in response to a clear or developing danger of injury will always be more justifiable than the use of force to prevent damage or misbehaviour.

- Staff will view physical intervention or restraint of pupils as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.
- Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment which is generally calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs which may increase their despair and aggression.
- All staff will be cognisant of the importance of understanding that often perceived undesirable behaviour is an attempt to communicate feelings, particularly for children where communication is a challenge.

Best practice regarding a child attempting to abscond

- A staff member may attempt to intervene physically to prevent a pupil from absconding from the school. If physical intervention is deemed impossible or likely to result in injury to the pupil or the staff member, it may not be possible to intervene physically.
- In the event that it is deemed impossible to intervene physically and the pupil manages to abscond from the school, the school will attempt to keep track of the location of the pupil, the staff member present will first contact the principal or class teacher who will then arrange for the school to contact the pupil's parents and the community Garda. The school management team will refer to the Critical Incident Plan until the child has been located.

Outline of procedures when choosing physical intervention:

ACT	BALANCE	CHOOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture - Allow the child space - Use a slow controlled voice - Give clear verbal directions, limited language - Pause and allow time for compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The likely outcomes if physical intervention is used against the likely outcomes if it is not - Short term risks versus long term risks - Best interests of the child against the best interests of other children and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persons who are most likely to succeed - Best place available; i.e. remain in/exit the room with the child or remove other children - Minimum use of force necessary to achieve the desired result

Physical Intervention/Restraint Approaches which can be regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances

The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances:

- Holding for security and to reduce anxiety, where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. This is best used when the pupil is anxious or confused. Its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation. Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the pupil as aggression.
- Physically interposing between pupils
 - Blocking a pupil's path
 - Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
 - Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
 - In extreme cases and in order to keep a pupil safe, a restrictive hold may be used for the minimum time possible or the child may be physically removed from an area where to not do so would represent danger to the child or others

School Records and Procedure

Any serious incidents of physical/verbal aggression by a student or any incidents of absconding or attempted absconding will be documented and recorded on the child's file and communicated to the parent/guardian. The school Code of Behaviour may be invoked for an incident if deemed necessary and appropriate. Communication and follow up support will be provided in line with the school ethos, with the ultimate aim of using restorative practice to support the student and family.

Complaints and Allegations

The school seeks to engage positively with parents/guardians regarding all aspects of their child's education, care and management. Parents/guardians of pupils who engage in high risk challenging behaviours are prioritised for meetings/phone calls etc. with the Class Teacher, S.E.T teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal. The school will endeavour to keep parents informed in a manner that is reasonable and in the best interests of the child. This may take the form of face - to - face conversations, meetings, phone calls, Aladdin messages or emails.

How to make a Complaint:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint should in the first instance refer to the [Parental Complaints Procedure](#), available on the school website or can be requested in hard copy at the school office.

- 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 Grievance Procedure.

Communication with parents

This policy will be shared with all parents after its initial ratification. It will also be available on the school website and a hard copy can be requested from the school office.

Implementation and Review

This draft policy was shared in draft form in February 2024 and after feedback from parents and staff will be brought for ratification by the Board of Management in May 2024. The policy will be reviewed over a three year cycle. The school management team and the teachers will implement this policy and will also ensure particular support and guidance is given to new members of staff or substitutes. The Board of Management ratified this policy on the below date:

Su Kelly
Chairperson

31/05/24
Date

Date of Implementation: 17/06/24

Review Date: MAY 2027