



# **Managing Challenging Behaviour and the Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling**

**Reviewed September 2017**

## **Rationale:**

This policy has been devised in order to create a learning environment in which all of our pupils and young people feel safe and to ensure the protection of everyone from harm. The policy aims to reflect the ethos and values of the school in promoting positive behavioural interventions as well as providing direction and guidance for all staff in managing and addressing challenging/aggressive behaviours in school. This policy aims to reflect school procedures in managing more significantly challenging behaviour which may require specific behaviour management plans on the completion of appropriate Risk Assessments.

## **Aims of the Policy:**

To create a happy, caring and supportive learning environment for pupils in which they can reach their potential and feel emotionally and physically safe.

To foster positive caring attitudes towards everyone where all achievements are recognised and celebrated.

To encourage independence and self-discipline so that each pupil will learn to accept responsibility for their behaviour and understand the consequences of their behaviour.

To model attitudes of respect, tolerance, honesty and empathy.

To protect everyone in school from harm.

To ensure a consistent approach to behaviour throughout the school.

To put in place explicit guidance for staff so that they are clear about how the management of challenging/aggressive behaviour should be addressed.

## **Implementation/Practice**

### **Preventative Strategies**

Cedar Lodge School actively promotes positive behaviour management (preventative) strategies thus reducing the need for the use of any form

of physical intervention except in an emergency situation. All classrooms have their own classroom rules and there are different reward systems appropriate to the pupils throughout the Key Stages, as well as incentive schemes such as pupil of the week etc. Within these approaches there is a recognition of structured approaches in managing routine and communicating with our pupil about expected behaviours and presented activities. This is particularly of relevance to those pupils with severe learning difficulties and especially those with a diagnosis of ASD.

Existing Supports to manage and promote positive behaviour include:

- ★ Ethos of support and reconciliation
- ★ Clear communication of rules and appropriate behaviours
- ★ Effective routines and structured teaching approaches
- ★ Reward Systems and effective recognition of achievement
- ★ Consistency in dealing with behaviour/discipline difficulties
- ★ Positive Teaching approaches including modelling good behaviour
- ★ Close supervision at all times
- ★ Targets established within IEPs to manage and review behaviour
- ★ Effective monitoring and recording of pupil progress/ observations
- ★ Effective and meaningful links with parents/guardians

As a Special School we recognise that some behaviours are closely linked to a pupil's condition. In managing challenging behaviour, the ability, and understanding of the pupils, as well as the environmental factors which can impact on behaviour will be considered.

## **Behaviour Risk Assessment/Behaviour Support Plans**

In Cedar Lodge School staff have been trained in Team Teach. This supports staff in the development of proactive strategies to support pupil's individual needs. A clear behaviour cycle is in place to outline the processes and procedures required should a behaviour management issue arise.

### **Required Record Keeping**

Staff are required to record incidents of challenging or concerning behaviour. Staff will work to develop a picture of the behaviour through observation records and effective links with parents.

In recording challenging behaviours and following observation and class monitoring, teachers and CA staff should complete a risk assessment for ongoing, concerning behaviour or any behaviour which presents as a risk.

The risk assessment should aim to identify and highlight specific behaviours and those at risk from those behaviours. In order for staff to plan accordingly risk assessment will be considered only for those pupils who constitute a risk to themselves and others.

A team approach should be used to complete the risk assessment and in developing an appropriate Behaviour Support Plan for pupils. Parents will be fully consulted in the development of the plan and should provide written consent for its implementation. Staff will work with Mr McCrory to finalise the agreed plan and its implementation.

Within the Behaviour Support Plan any requirement for the Use of Reasonable Force or Safe Handling will be cited. School staff will record and review plans on a termly basis or as required and complete records of incidents or concerns in the development and implementation of the plan.

## Use of Reasonable Force

### Definition of Reasonable Force

The Education(NI) Order states:

A member of a grant aided school may use in relation to any pupil at the school such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

- ★ Committing any offence
- ★ Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the pupil himself): or
- ★ 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.

Based on this legal framework the working definition of 'reasonable force' is:

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

As a school Cedar Lodge recognises that the use of Reasonable Force/ Safe handling needs to be considered in

- ★ Planned intervention where staff employ where necessary pre-arranged strategies based upon a risk assessment and considered Behaviour Support Plan

- ★ Emergency or unplanned use of force/intervention which occurs in response to unforeseen circumstances or events.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by any member of staff who is authorised by the Principal to have lawful control or charge of pupils eg teachers, classroom assistants, supervisory assistants.

There will always be an element of personal judgement in decisions to use reasonable force. It should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted and where:

- ★ Action is necessary in self-defence or because there is imminent risk of injury to another pupil or person
- ★ There is a developing risk of injury to another pupil or person or significant damage to property
- ★ A pupil is behaving in a way that compromises order and effective safe management of the environment.

In some circumstances a member of staff may have to decide between making an intervention/using reasonable force by putting themselves in a dangerous situation or standing back and thereby allowing colleagues or pupils to face a potential danger. It is reasonable to expect a member of staff to engage in some risk where there is evidence of danger to others and intervention has a good chance of being effective.

Staff should not however put themselves in personal danger merely to safe guard property.

## **Forms of Reasonable Force**

When other behavioural management strategies have failed it should be the minimum intervention or force that should be reasonably employed depending on **the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical condition and any special need of the pupil and used in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned.**

A calm and measured approach should be taken at all times, and it should be appropriate to the particular pupil and in accordance with the schools agreed strategies. The following procedures should be adhered to at all times.

- Tell the pupil to stop the appropriate behaviour in line with their communication/ receptive language abilities
- Advise on appropriate or alternative behaviour
- Tell the pupil of the intervention/consequences of behaviour
- Intervene in a measured way

Examples of appropriate use of reasonable force may include

- 1 Separating pupils who are fighting
- 1 Stopping or intercepting a pupil who is absconding or running away
- 1 Breakaway/Separating activities if a staff member or other pupil is grabbed
- 1 Protection of pupils from a child who is attacking another pupil
- 1 Shepherding a pupil away from activities such as throwing equipment/ climbing/ being aggressive toward other pupils or staff
- 1 Protecting a pupil who is making efforts to self-harm e.g. biting themselves, hitting or head banging.

It is recognised within this policy that within a Special School, staff will be involved in activities that require safe handling on a regular basis for educational, therapeutic, health and safety purposes.

Every effort should be made by school staff to ensure that any use of reasonable force/ physical prompting as an agreed teaching/ support measure should be communicated with parents.

### **Health and Safety**

When using reasonable force/physical intervention/restraint/safe handling the pupil's health and safety must always be considered. Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the problem and calm the pupil and situation.

### **Limits on the Use of Force**

The law strictly prohibits the use of force which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment. The use of force as punishment or to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation would contravene our Child Protection Policy. Staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- ★ Holding around the neck
- ★ Any hold that might restrict breathing
- ★ Kicking, slapping or punching or using any implements
- ★ Forcing limbs against joints
- ★ Tripping
- ★ Holding or pulling by the hair
- ★ Holding the pupil face down on the ground

- ★ Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in any way that might be considered indecent.

At all times staff should comply fully with the Code of Conduct for Staff.

### **Record Keeping**

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force **must be recorded and provided to the school Principal/Vice Principal who will maintain records.**

Parents should always be advised on incidents of significant challenging behaviour which required the use of Reasonable Force.

The chairperson of the Board of governors and the Principal will review annually all incident records.

### **Staff Training and Development**

All staff will have regular awareness training on issues related to the use of reasonable force. The policy will be regularly reviewed with staff and key points visited annually within the annual staff handbook. Staff will access training on 'Team Teach' which will support the determination of appropriate reasonable force

### **Complaints**

Any complaint from a parent or other will be dealt with according to the school's Handling Complaints Policy and in accordance with the Circular 99/10 Pastoral Care in Schools- Child Protection.

Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault will be supported as appropriate. It is important to note that a member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help if there is a risk that he/she may be injured or may endanger his/her life.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Mrs L Little(Principal) will co-ordinate and oversee the policy and its implementation. The policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through consultation with pupils, staff and parents and in line with statutory requirements or advice.