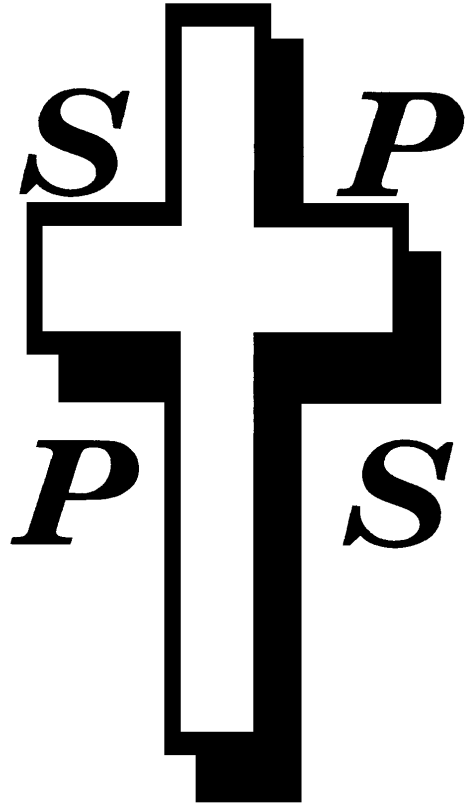


# St Patrick's PS



## Safe Handling and the Use of Reasonable Force Policy

## **Rationale**

The aim of St. Patrick's Primary School is to ensure all our pupils receive a broad and balanced education with the safety and welfare of our children being paramount. Through a sense of order and purpose, the care and education of children are made more effective.

The Department of Education Circular 1999/9 quotes Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. On any occasion where a member of staff has responsibility for a pupil (in school or outside the premises) this order permits the member of staff to use "such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an 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 during a teaching session or otherwise."

In St. Patrick's PS the use of reasonable force with children will always be as a last resort or in an emergency where it is possible that significant harm will occur if action is not taken immediately.

### **Force will never be used as a punishment.**

Situations where reasonable force might be necessary include:

- a pupil attacking another pupil or a member of staff;
- pupils fighting;
- a pupil causing, or likely to cause, damage or injury by rough play, accident, wilful action or misuse of dangerous materials and items;
- a pupil running in a corridor where there is a risk of accident;
- a pupil trying to leave school;
- a pupil defying repeated instructions to leave a classroom;
- a pupil seriously disrupting a lesson.

It is within this context that safe handling and the use of reasonable force may, on occasions, be necessary.

### **Aims in Relation to Safe Handling and the Use of Reasonable Force:**

- to protect every person in the school community from harm;
- to create a learning environment in which children and adults feel safe;
- to protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful; and
- to provide both teaching and non-teaching staff with guidance relating to circumstances in which reasonable force might be used and how such reasonable force might be applied.

### **Definition of Safe Handling and Reasonable Force**

The use of reasonable force is only lawful if the circumstances warrant it. The degree of force used will be the minimum appropriate to the seriousness of the behaviour or incident that it is intended to prevent. It will be employed calmly and in a professional manner. This might include:

- physically separating pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding;
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- shepherding a pupil with a hand on the back or shoulder; or (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

### **Unacceptable and Unreasonable Force**

The following uses of force is unacceptable and will not be used in school

- holding around the neck;
- any hold that might restrict breathing
- kicking, slapping, poking or punching;
- forcing limbs against joints;
- tripping;
- holding by the hair; and
- holding the pupil face down on the ground.

### **Anticipating the Use of Reasonable Force**

All staff will be encouraged to report concerns relating to routines, individuals and situations that have the potential to lead to incidents requiring the use of reasonable force.

Teachers and classroom assistants or supervisors will only exercise the use of reasonable force in extreme circumstances. In an emergency any member of staff will have the authority to use reasonable force.

If it is considered likely that a pupil will be sufficiently disruptive to require the regular use of reasonable force (whether for medical, special needs or another reason), the parents/carers will be consulted and an appropriate action plan agreed and reviewed regularly. With the agreement of a parent, completion of form RF1 would only be required following incidents not accounted for within the action plan.

## **Responsibility for Reasonable Force**

Staff will use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself); or
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils whether during a teaching session or otherwise applies to teachers at the school and to any other members of staff, who with the authority of the principal, have lawful control or charge of pupils – this might include classroom assistants, midday supervisors, caretakers or voluntary helpers accompanying pupils on school visits.”

## **Recording/Complaints**

If Reasonable Force is used by any member of staff, form RF1 will be completed without delay and copied to relevant parties.

Complaints may be made through the school’s Complaints Procedure.

## **Review**

This policy has been written and agreed in response to the DE Circular 1999/9 and updated in light of guidance material issued in 2003. It will be reviewed bi-annually in relation to ongoing individual and environmental risk analyses, advice and training.

It will be made available to parents upon request.



**Measures taken to avoid harm to the pupil:**

**1.2 Description of physical intervention / control / restraint used, including the degree of force used, how was that applied and for how long (Team Teach techniques):**

**1.3 Record of any injuries to the pupil / staff should be attached or indicated below:**

<b>School Accident/Incident Report Form</b>	<b>Yes / no</b>
<b>HS1</b>	<b>Yes / no</b>
<b>Body Map</b>	<b>Yes / no</b>

**1.4 Record of any damage to property:**

**1.5 Measures taken to ensure that the pupil was calmed down after the incident:**

**1.6 Signature:**

**Time / Date:**

**Report passed to;**

**Designation:**

**Parents informed?**

**Yes / No**

**2. ACTION TAKEN BY SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER**

**2.1 Name: Designation:**

**2.2 Accident Book / Sims Record completed? Yes / No**  
**Signed / initialed by headteacher? Yes / No**  
**Incident discussed with pupil? Yes / No Date / Time:**

**Other professionals informed? Yes / No**  
**(give name/designation/date)**

**2.3 Action Log (any other action / follow up taken? E.g. review of pupil's Positive Behaviour Management strategy)**

**Signed Head Teacher**

**Date:**