

St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017

St. Ronan's PS (Newry)



Reasonable Force Policy

March 2017

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Mission Statement

We the Governors and Staff of St Ronan's believe the school to be a vital part of the Catholic Community. We are firmly committed to:

- the aims of Catholic Education
- providing a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that our children develop their full potential
- developing positive relationships within our school and with our parents and the wider parish community
- creating a welcoming educational community centred on Christ so that His values and Gospel message pervade the whole life of our school
- establishing a caring Catholic ethos with a positive pastoral care system
- fostering within our children the ideals of tolerance of, respect and understanding for different faiths and cultures

Our School Values:

- Happiness and enjoyment
- Effort, attitude and perseverance
- Team, school and community spirit
- Honesty, fairness and trustworthiness
- Respect and tolerance
- Politeness, kindness and caring
- High standards of behaviour
- Partnership

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

School Ethos

St Ronan's Primary School sets out to create a caring and supportive environment, where all children can develop intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially, morally and spiritually.

In addition, the delivery of the curriculum is designed to develop interest and motivation in children using enthusiastic teaching and interesting and relevant learning activities.

- Children are encouraged to achieve high standards and are given as much help as they may need in order to achieve success.
- There are many extra curricular activities that encourage co-operation and discipline through team games. Children are further encouraged through a variety of musical/dramatic productions to develop self-discipline.
- Within this context there is a code of discipline that is consistently enforced to ensure that the education of children take place in an orderly and caring environment.
- Through continual monitoring of individual children's achievements, class teachers provide work pitched at a level that challenges each child yet does not frustrate.
- Good relationships within the School are vital. The staff set an example by working well together with a harmony of purpose and providing an interesting and caring environment within their classrooms.
- As part of the pastoral dimension of the School, children are taught how to care for others, to respect other people's points of view and to respect property. Children are encouraged to contribute to charity and to help people who are less fortunate than themselves.

We are a catholic maintained co- educational school seeking to promote throughout the school community an ethos, which reflects the Christian teaching and values.

We see the school as part of the wider community, responsible to it and providing an important community service. We take seriously our links with the community and encourage the involvement and interests of parents and others in the welfare of individual children and the school as a whole.

We seek to provide an excellent educational service - one that is planned and developed to the highest professional standards so that each pupil may benefit to the full.

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

Principles

St. Ronan's Primary School believes that:

1. Each child has the right to be educated in a safe and secure environment where each child's moral, intellectual, personal, social and emotional development is promoted.
2. Parents and carers are informed and reassured that their children are being educated in a safe, caring and respectful atmosphere.
3. All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment.

These principles underpin our school ethos and culture.

Purposes

The following purposes underpin St. Ronan's Primary School and practices to:

- create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe;
- protect every person in the school community from harm;
- protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful; and
- develop and implement guidance for staff (teaching and non-teaching) so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied.

St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017

We in St. Ronan's Primary School have a responsibility for the Pastoral Care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. All staff, teaching and non-teaching should be alert to the signs of possible abuse and should know the procedures to be followed. This Policy sets out guidance on the action, which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and outlines referral procedures within our school.

Legislative Framework

This policy has been formulated with due consideration to the following legislation:

- Children (NI) Order 1995 - duty to protect and child protection responsibilities/ fulfilling responsibility;
- UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child 1989 - (Articles 12, 16 and 19); UK 1991;
- Education (NI) Order 1998 (Part II Article 4(1));
- Human Rights Act 1998 - Articles 3 and 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights;

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

- Health and Safety at Work Act (NI) Order 1978;
- Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 - Articles 17, 18, 19.

Links With Other Policies

This policy is one of the overall pastoral policies and dovetails into the school's existing policies on:

- behaviour
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- staff Code of Conduct
- special needs
- health and safety
- complaints

It also takes account of the staff development and the teaching, learning and assessment policies and the various curricular policies.

Definition of Reasonable Force

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (part II Article 4 (1)) states:

"A member of the staff 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);**
- 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 which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

Practices

Preventative Strategies

St. Ronan's Primary School actively promote positive behaviour management strategies thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention, except in emergency situations.

Preventative strategies for inappropriate behaviour(s) are detailed in our schools behaviour management policy especially - defusing and de-escalating conflict/confrontation or aggression.

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is one of our preventative strategies to minimise the risk of an incident escalating unnecessarily and will be a normal practice for our school where a pupil or a small number of pupils are known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour (EBD).

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

Risk assessment will be considered only for those pupils where there is a foreseeable risk and enables the school to plan and train accordingly. Risk assessment will be considered from two perspectives (a) environmental risk assessment or (b) individual risk assessment. This should form part of the pupil's education plan.

Procedures - Support Structures

The following procedures have been agreed by the staff and adopted by the board of Governors. Parents and pupils will be informed of the school's procedures and support structures.

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, e.g. teachers, classroom assistants, supervisory assistants. The principal will confirm with all staff those who are authorised to be in charge of pupils at any given time.

St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017

Insurance

Schools in all sectors would be advised to clarify with their **employing authority** that **all staff and any other adult** authorised by the principal to supervise pupils are adequately covered by insurance and have followed the schools policy and practice.

Procedures

We understand that there may be circumstances when a member of staff may have to decide between making an intervention/using reasonable force by placing him/herself in a dangerous situation or standing back and thereby allowing colleagues or pupils to face a potential danger. There will always be an element of personal judgment in these decisions and there is the possibility of someone being injured. However, 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 safeguard property.

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by a teacher or other authorised person(s) on the school premises or when authorised elsewhere eg, supervision of pupils in bus queues, a field trip, on other authorised out of school activities such as a sporting event or educational trip.

Reasonable force should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when all 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 is compromising good order and discipline.

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

Examples that fall into the above categories are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- a pupil is running in an area in which s/he might cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (Note: this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school);

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Forms of Reasonable Force

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

The use of reasonable force/ safe handling should involve a calm and measured approach at all times appropriate to the particular pupil and be in accordance with the schools agreed strategies and the following procedures:

- tell the pupil to stop the inappropriate behaviour;
- ask the pupil to behave appropriately, clearly stating the desired behaviour;
- tell the pupil that physical intervention will take place if inappropriate behaviour continues;
- during the incident repeatedly reassure the pupil and tell him/her that physical contact will stop as soon as he/she is ready to behave appropriately;
- if the teacher, classroom assistant or supervisory assistant feels at risk, e.g. from a large or older group of pupils, send for the nearest staff support.

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

The forms of reasonable force that our members of staff may use will depend on the individual circumstances and are:

- separating pupils who are fighting, or who are about to fight;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding;
- leading a pupil by the arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing hands on the backs of elbows;
- using more restrictive holds (in extreme circumstances).

Forms of Safe Handling

The forms of safe handling that our members of staff may use will depend on the individual circumstances and are:

- teaching a child to hold an adults arm appropriately whilst walking down a corridor or a staircase; or on a visit outside school;
- reacting instinctively to a situation by holding or restraining a child who is running onto a busy road or into a place of danger;
- physically prompting a young child as part of an educational or behaviour programme;
- assisting a child with toileting.

Health and Safety

When using reasonable force/physical intervention/restraint/safe handling, the pupil's health and safety must always be considered and monitored.

Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the pupil.

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 a punishment or to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation would contravene our Safeguarding and 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 implement;
- 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.

The use of reasonable force is only to be employed in exceptional circumstances or an emergency where a pupil appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and whose behaviour is presenting a threat to himself/herself or others. 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.

Record Keeping

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded in our pro-forma "**Record/Report Of The Use Of Reasonable Force**". The Principal, Mr Donaghy will keep an accurate up-to-date record of all such incidents. Immediately following any incident the member of staff concerned must inform the Principal or a senior member of staff and provide the contemporaneous written record/report.
(Appendix 2 Incident Record Form)

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Principal will review **annually** the entries in the incident book. Records of incidents will be kept until the date of the child's twenty-first birthday. In the event of the young person being over 18 when they leave school, records should be kept for 3 years after their date of leaving. Confidentiality and the young person's right to privacy will need to be ensured. The pupil's views should also be recorded as soon as possible, preferably on the same day. Ref Appendix 2 Specimen Incident Record Form.

The use of physical intervention can be upsetting to all concerned, therefore, it is important to ensure that staff and pupils are given emotional support and where required basic first-aid treatment. Immediate action should be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require more than basic first-aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with the school's procedures - parents/carers must be informed and allowed an opportunity to discuss.

Where it is clear that the teacher/member of staff concerned needs further support, advice or training, the Principal should take prompt action to ensure it is provided.

Contacting Parents

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This must also be recorded in the "**Record/Report Of The Use Of Reasonable Force**" as defined in the school policy. Any complaint from a parent will be dealt with within the school's complaints policy/procedures as detailed below.

Complaints

If an incident occurs in St. Ronan's Primary School involving the use of reasonable force/restraint by a teacher, the procedures governing such incidents should be followed. This will include informing the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child as outlined above.

In the event of a subsequent complaint made against a member of staff either by or on behalf of the child, this will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy/Procedure and in accordance with the Circular 1999/10, Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection.

Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault should be supported, as appropriate, in taking any necessary action against an assailant.

Training and Development

The Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection, the Deputy Designated Teachers together with the Principal, will have special responsibility for providing guidance to other staff on the use of reasonable force/safe handling and for implementing and supporting the schools procedures.

All staff will have regular awareness raising of issues relating to the use of reasonable force/safe handling, procedures and practices relating to behaviour management and child protection policy and procedures. All staff will receive appropriate training and development, in line with the school's staff development policy, in the use of preventative strategies and approaches for managing difficult situations when they may arise.

Policy Development and Guidance

Consultation

The following people will be consulted about this policy:

- children and young people;
- parents and carers;
- all members of staff
- Board of Governors.

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the reasonable force policy, in order to ensure that all it is consistently applied.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the Reasonable Force policy.

Appendix 1 Risk Assessment

A small number of pupils may exhibit disturbed or distressing behaviour which may require some form of physical intervention by staff. To minimise the risk of incidents escalating unnecessarily due to lack of foresight, planning and training, schools should carry out a risk assessment from two perspectives:

- environmental risk assessment;
- individual risk assessment.

Environmental Risk Assessment

- Identify situations or locations where there is increased risks of incidents happening.
- Analysis of past incidents to identify medium to high risk locations.
- Staff and pupils consulted.
- Individual pupil consulted.
- Decide the appropriate type and level of supervision.
- Principal and Class Teacher to make recommendations to Board of Governors on type and level of supervision to minimise risk.
- Implement plan.
- Review plan.

Individual Risk Assessment

Where a member of staff/class teacher thinks it is likely that a pupil will behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force/safe handling, the school should plan its response by:

- consulting the pupil, as appropriate;
- consulting the parents - specific action the school may need to take;
- briefing staff - what action they should be taking (may require training or guidance);
- managing the pupil - e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict;
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned wherever possible;

Risk Reduction

Risk reduction should include:

- proactive measures to support the child effectively and prevent difficulties emerging;
- early interventions to help the child in difficult situations and avert problems; and
- planned measures to manage the child and others safely, when unavoidable difficulties arise.

Appendix 2 St. Ronan's PS
Incident Record Form

Date of Incident _____

Class: _____

Staff Involved in restraint: _____ Designation: _____

Events Leading up to the Incident

Where did the incident start? _____

What was happening at the time? _____

Describe the Event that Occurred

When did the incident occur? Day: _____ Time: _____

Where did the incident occur? _____

What action did you take to try to de-escalate the situation before using restraint? _____

What behaviour was the child presenting that warranted restraint/physical intervention (Please tick appropriate box)

At risk of injury to self or other At risk of significant damage to property

Compromising good order and discipline At risk of committing a criminal offence

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

What do you believe would have happened if there had been no physical intervention? _____

How was the pupil held? _____

How long did the pupil need to be held? _____

**St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017**

Was anybody injured? YES/NO If yes, please give details

Name of member of staff who verbally checked pupil for injury after the hold :

Has the pupil been physically restrained before? YES/NO

Implications for Future Planning

Does this pupil have an individual behaviour programme/education plan? YES/NO

Do changes need to be made to any of the following?

(Please tick appropriate box)

The environment eg organisation, curriculum Targets for teaching new skills

Reinforcement strategies Defusing and calming strategies

Other Please specify _____

Do other agencies need to be involved in the future? YES/NO

If yes, please specify who and with what aim _____

Follow Up Action

_Medical intervention was needed YES/NO

Has school nurse/doctor been informed YES/NO

Please specify other recording procedures:

Accident book Accident form Child Protection Record

Parent/carer informed by: Telephone Letter Direct Contact

Form completed by _____

Post held _____

Principal's signature _____ Date _____

A copy should be sent to the chairperson of the Board of Governors.

Appendix 3 St. Ronan's Primary School

Risk Assessment Proforma

NAME OF PUPIL: _____ DOB. _____ AGE: _____

SEN REGISTER CODE OF PRACTICE STAGE: _____

SUPPORT TO-DATE: _____

EDUCATION PLAN: _____

RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY
MEMBER OF STAFF: _____

DATE: _____

SIGNED: _____ (Principal) _____ (Date)

Consultation has been carried out:

Please tick ✓ as appropriate.

With the pupil	
With other pupils	
With the Parent/Guardian	
With other staff	

St. Ronan's Primary School
Reasonable Force Policy
2017

Types of behaviour causing concern: Level of risk, frequency, people to whom behaviour exhibited

Behaviour	Very likely	Likely	Quite Possible	Possible	Unlikely	Frequency H-hourly D-daily W-weekly M-monthly T-termly
Disruption						
Vandalism						
Bullying						
Fighting						
Violent and aggressive						
Angry outbursts						
Impulsive dangerous behaviour						
Self harms						
Medically related behaviour						
Threatening and abusive						
Other (please specify)						
People to whom behaviour is most likely exhibited						
Class teacher						
Classroom assistant						
Ancillary staff (lunchtime supervisors, caretaker)						
Member of SMT						
Male staff						
Female staff						
Other pupils in class						
Other pupils in school						
Male pupils						
Female pupils						
Younger/Older pupils						
Ethnic minority pupils						

Environments and times of greatest risk - Flash points/Hot spots

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Risk Evaluation

<u>Level of Likelihood</u>	x	<u>Frequency</u>	=	<u>Risk</u>
Very Likely 5	x	Hourly (5)	=	25 greatest
Likely 4	x	Daily (4)	=	16
Quite Possible 3	x	Weekly (3)	=	9
Possible 2	x	Monthly (2)	=	4
Unlikely 1	x	Termly (1)	=	1 lowest

<u>Likelihoods</u>		<u>Frequency</u>	
Very likely	5	Hourly	5
Likely	4	Daily	4
Quite Possible	3	Weekly	3
Possible	2	Monthly	2
Unlikely	1	Termly	1

This numerical evaluation of risk is not an absolute but simply affords a pupil's predisposition and risk frequency to be compared.

RISK FACTORS

Score	Risk
25	Very high
16-20	High
11-15	Medium
6-10	Low
1-5	Very low