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St. Declan's School Code of Behaviour

last ratified by the board: 15/12/25)

Introduction

1. This Code of Behaviour was drafted, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and using the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), 2008 and the Bí Cineálta document.
2. This policy was formulated by the staff in consultation with parent representatives and input from the pupils. The staff would like to acknowledge the advice and support of Dr. Bill Rogers (Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management) who advised on developing a school wide framework for behaviour and whose work and annual training has strongly influenced our approach to behaviour in this school.
3. This policy is in keeping with the school ethos through the provision of a safe, secure and caring school environment and the furthering of positive home – school links.
4. The Code of Behaviour applies to all pupils, staff and personnel during school hours, break times, and on all school-related activities.
5. The Code of Behaviour was reviewed by the Board of Management on 15/12/25.

The Ethos of St. Declan's School

6. St. Declan's strives to create a supportive, safe and caring environment for each pupil. The school caters for pupils who, for one reason or another, are achieving below their potential at school and helped by some time in St. Declan', can return to mainstream schools.
7. Each pupil comes with their own individual challenges. St. Declan's caters for pupils with mild, emotional and behavioural difficulties and high functioning autistic spectrum disorders. Our aim is to help them to come to love and accept themselves as they are. We try to build their self-confidence to give them the academic, social and emotional skills to enable them to better realise their true potential when they return to their own schools, and for their future role in society.
8. As a Jesuit school we offer a rich, inclusive and holistic approach to education in the Catholic tradition that is inspired by the life and teachings of St. Ignatius, and which has been refined over four centuries of growth. We offer this to all those who come, Catholics and others, those of all faiths and those of none.
9. This Code of Behaviour is in keeping with the school ethos through the provision of a safe, secure and caring school environment and the furthering of positive home-school links.

The Aims of this Code of Behaviour are to:

10. Provide a school wide framework to support positive behaviour and establish preferred practices which maintain a consistent approach to behaviour throughout the school.
11. Work for what is in the best interest of every pupil, respecting their voice, involving them in decision making, taking into account their evolving capacity and their right to dignity.
12. Enable individuals to take responsibility for their behaviour and be accountable for the choices they make within the school environment; to respect mutual rights and to do so within the context of

workable relationships with other members of this school community.

13. Core rights accorded to all members of the school community include: the right to feel safe; the right of pupils to learn (without undue distraction or disruption) and the right to respect and fair treatment. These rights entail responsibilities by all: pupils, parents, teaching and support staff. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to behaviour in the school. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist in pupils and endeavours to accommodate these differences within the school wide framework for management of behaviour.
14. A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents. With this in mind, we have formulated **The St. Declan's Code** which is based on the following five key premises:
 - a. **Being Respectful:** being kind and caring, being helpful, listening, using nice manners, working quietly, using appropriate language, following teacher's directions, waiting your turn to speak.
 - b. **Being Responsible:** arriving on time, having the things you need, following class and school rules, making appropriate judgements about what should be at school, doing homework, eating a healthy and nutritious lunch, taking care of property, putting litter in the bin.
 - c. **Being Safe:** acting in a kind and considerate safe manner, playing safely, being careful not to be rough or harm others in any way.
 - d. **Being Honest:** telling the truth even when it's tough, 'owning up' when you're in the wrong. Telling when you see someone being unkind or being hurt deliberately.
 - e. **Being the Best You Can Be:** Having a positive attitude, always trying to do your best - even when it's not your favourite thing to do.
15. This code is to be adhered to by all members of the school community: Teachers, SNAs, Pupils, Parents, Management and ancillary staff. The code is displayed in each classroom.
16. In order to establish a shared professional consistency across the school, all staff adhere to common behaviour management and discipline practices across all areas of the pupil's school day.

Recognition of Positive Behaviours (Academic and Social)

17. We support hard work, great effort, improvements and positive choices made by pupils both in class and at play. All staff endeavour to comment on and affirm genuine academic effort and desired social behaviours.
18. Teachers use a range of incentives to recognise and encourage pupil's efforts. These include homework pass; golden time; a positive note in the homework diary; a phone call home.
19. In addition to the above we have a school wide bonus system in place. This includes points for: healthy lunch; homework completed; schoolwork completed; appropriate behaviour in class; appropriate behaviour outside of class; weekly prize giving assemblies award individual pupils and whole classes.
20. In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationship with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are not only told when their pupils are in trouble but also when they have behaved particularly well.
21. In St. Declan's the staff and parents work in collaboration to support each pupil to be the best they can be, every day.

Behaviour Management Strategies

22. A list of classroom rules, responsibilities and consequences will be drafted in collaboration with the pupils based on an age-appropriate framework and within the premises of the Code of Behaviour of St. Declan's.
23. These rules will be developed with the pupils at the beginning of the year. The teacher will also establish the **core routines** necessary for the smooth running of classroom learning. This process will culminate in a **Classroom Behaviour Agreement** This agreement will be sent home and signed by both pupils and parents.
24. When an inappropriate behaviour needs to be addressed with a pupil, staff members will endeavour to minimise *any* unnecessary confrontation and instead work with the pupil using a least-to-most intrusive intervention approach. Behaviour management strategies include:
 - a. Moving closer to the pupil
 - b. Visuals, verbal cue, eye contact
 - c. Praising another pupil exhibiting the preferred behaviour
 - d. St. Declans Code reminder, Choices, Sensory Regulation options offered
 - e. Filling out a behaviour management worksheet
 - f. Observe desired behaviour
 - g. Modelling desired behaviour
 - h. **Staff are trained** to minimise any unnecessary confrontation with a pupil and instead work with the pupil using a least-to-most intrusive intervention approach. These are informed by:
 - i. Knowledge of the pupil's individual early signs of escalation.
 - j. Student specific.
 - k. Developmentally sensitive.
 - l. Based upon an understanding of what is being communicated by the behaviour.

Examples of prevention and de-escalation techniques used by staff include:

- a. Active listening, moving closer to the pupil.
- b. Acknowledging what the student is experiencing emotionally.
- c. Reducing the communication load on the student.
- d. Using a preferred mode of communication by the student, e.g. objects of reference, choice board, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), picture cue, verbal cue, eye contact.
- e. Physical redirection to an alternative activity.
- f. Problem solving if appropriate (if the student is able).
- g. Offering clear simple choices, which would include selfregulation options.
- h. Allowing adequate personal space. Adopting nonthreatening body language such as hands by your sides or in pockets.
- i. Avoiding direct or sustained eye contact in most cases.
- j. Going to an alternative space with the student that is less stimulating, or which removes access to the triggers. (P. 36 of the Code)

Behaviour management strategies also include:

- m. Praising another pupil exhibiting the preferred behaviour
- n. Rule reminder, Time out within the class
- o. Filling out a behaviour management worksheet
- p. Instructing the pupil to remain silent in class and observe desired behaviour
- q. Modelling desired behaviour

25. If the issue is not resolved, the following interventions are used and consequences are imposed:
- Informal behaviour conversation (Mirroring, Role Play)
 - Formal time out in another room (Supervised)
 - In-school suspension (supervised, generally reception area or other available room)

Positive Support Plan

Definition of Behaviour of Concern

26. Behaviours of concern do not include behaviours that reflect cultural differences, neurodiversity, individual interests and unique expression or functioning where such behaviours do not negatively impact on health, wellbeing and quality of life.¹
27. All behaviour is communication. Behaviours of concern can be defined as “behaviours that indicate a risk to the safety or wellbeing of the people who exhibit them or to others” (Chan et al., 2012)
28. “Behaviours of concern” are actions that pose risk to the safety or well-being of the pupil or others.²

Consequences of Behaviours of Concern

29. When imposing consequences for behaviour of concern, the class teacher intervenes with consequences that where possible, relate directly to the pupil's behaviour. Where necessary the pupil is asked what they could do to address the behaviour in question. The pupil can then move forward with a clean slate.
30. Where a pupil's behaviour of concern is of an ongoing nature, a Student Support Plan is developed. This plan may include dedicated teaching time to help the pupil own and change their behaviour, on their road towards self-discipline.
31. Behaviours of Concern will be addressed by the following actions, not necessarily in sequential order, depending on the circumstances:
- Reasoning with the pupil
 - Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
 - Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
 - Loss of privileges
 - Prescribing additional work
 - Detention during a break or after school hours*
 - Referral to Principal
 - Communication with parents
 - Suspension (temporary)
 - Expulsion

**In the case of detention after school hours, this sanction will only be invoked after consultation and with the co-operation of the pupil's parents. Care will be taken to always follow Pupil Protection guidelines.*

32. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom, and all staff share a common

¹ From 'Understanding Behaviours of Concern and responding to Crises Situations Guidelines for Schools in supporting Students' Department of Education, p. 7, published 12 December 2024.

² Ibid, p. 7.



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responsibility for good order within the school premises. A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

33. Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their pupil's case. For gross behaviour of concern or repeated instances of serious behaviour of concern suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or another pupil will be regarded as serious or gross behaviour of concern depending on circumstances.
34. Where there are repeated instances of **serious** behaviour of concern, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed, and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with NEWB (National Education Welfare Board) guidelines and within the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.
35. In the case of gross behaviour of concern, the Chairperson shall authorise the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension (up to 3 days), pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6). (see Appendix 3)
36. In keeping with good Public Health Practice, intentionally and deliberately spitting, coughing, sneezing, biting or expelling any other bodily fluids onto another student or staff member will be seen as serious behaviour of concern and could result in suspension, depending on the gravity of the circumstances.
37. Every effort will be made to have a pupil who exhibits serious oppositional behaviours referred for psychological assessment by the school, with parental agreement, without delay. Help will be sought, also, from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care services provided by Health Boards and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). NEPS provides advice and support to schools through its casework, support and development services and their assigned NEPS psychologist.
38. This code will be reviewed on an annual basis. Ratified by the Board of Management of St Declan's School on 15/12/25.



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School Discipline

1. The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. This code should be formulated by the Principal and the teaching staff, in consultation with parents and be approved by the Board.

Forms of Suspension

2. Immediate suspension: In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.
3. Automatic suspension: A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose suspension for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

The Period of Suspension

4. A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.
The Board of Management should provide guidance to the Principal concerning the kinds of circumstances under which suspensions of longer than three days might be approved.
5. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. However, a Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School).

Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice

6. All schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the Constitution of Ireland, international Conventions and case law. Fair procedures have two essential parts:
 - a. the right to be heard
 - b. the right to impartiality.

The right to be heard means:

 - i. the right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
 - ii. the right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be considered
 - iii. the right to know how the issue will be decided
 - iv. the right to respond to the allegations
 - v. where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body
 - vi. where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts.

The right to impartiality means:

 - vii. the right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker
 - viii. the right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making.

- ix. Freedom from bias entails ensuring that a person with an interest in the matter is not involved in the investigation or decision-making. If a person has pre-conceived opinions, a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter, they should not attempt to settle that matter.
- x. An impartial process is one that allows a decision to be made based on an unbiased evaluation of information and evidence. Generally, impartiality requires that the investigation is separated from the process of making a decision so that the decision-maker comes to the task with an open mind.

Applying fair procedures in school

7. In a school, fair procedures apply to the investigation of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion and the process of decision-making as to:
 - a. whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and
 - b. what sanction to impose.
8. The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in the context of a particular school.
9. The principles of fair procedures always apply, but the degree of formality required in implementing fair procedures will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools page 67 sanction).
10. Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to make provision in the code of behaviour to deal with any pupil whose behaviour is continuously of concern, or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the Chairperson or Principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school, the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school days.
11. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupil's or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.
12. No pupil shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the Patron and unless alternative arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school.

Appendix 2

Policy Guidelines for Using and Reducing Restrictive Physical Interventions

Introduction

1. These guidelines reflect the school's ethos and are written in consultation with the following partners: teachers, SNAs, parents and Board of Management. It is noted that the pupils attending this school have been assessed as having an Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). Some pupils have additional special educational needs including ADHD, ASD.

Duty of Care

2. Where a teacher-student relationship exists, teachers have a special **duty of care**. The duty of care arises from the fact that parents have entrusted their pupils to the care and control of the school – the “*in loco*

parentis" principle (Glendenning, 2012, page 282). As outlined in The Code of Conduct for Teachers (page 7), teachers should "take all reasonable steps in relation to the care of students under their supervision, so as to ensure their safety and welfare" (Code, p 15).

For the purpose of this policy a pupil is defined as any pupil attending the school regardless of age.

3. Any misconception that physical contact between staff and a student is in some way unlawful should be dismissed. Physical contact to support students is an everyday occurrence in schools – it should not be avoided, if in a supportive capacity and in some cases, it is entirely necessary. For example, for some students, close contact is important when tending to care needs, or for others, a gentle hand on shoulder can be comforting when upset. It is important that such contact with students is appropriate to the adult's professional role (Code, p 15).
4. Our school, in the first instance, applies the principles outlined in our Code of Behaviour³, which provide guidelines to staff on the use of day-to-day positive behavioural management strategies. These are designed to help all pupils to modify and manage their own behaviour in the long-term. Staff at St. Declan's use consistent strategies to help pupils understand and regulate their emotions. By developing these self-management skills, pupils are better able to engage in learning and move toward successful participation in mainstream education. This daily, proactive approach contributes to a **safe, positive, and calm school environment** for everyone.
5. This Policy applies where these strategies are **not** working, and it is foreseeable that a pupil might engage in high-risk behaviours of concern requiring a restrictive physical intervention.
6. Our duty of care to others means that it may be necessary to use a restrictive physical intervention to prevent pupils from harming themselves or other pupils or staff or causing significant harm to school property.

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 teachers and support staff.

Other associated school policies include:

- a. Health and Safety Statement
- b. Pupil Protection Policy
- c. Anti-Bullying Policy
- d. Code of Behaviour
- e. Admissions and Enrolment
- f. Grievance Procedures.

7. The policy is based on guidance from the following:
 - a. Education and Welfare Act (2000)
 - b. Health and Safety at Work Act (2007), and Safety, Health and Welfare At Work Act, (2005) (as well as other statutes and standards)
 - c. Physical Contact; Care, Comfort and Restraint, by Bernard Allen, 2011
 - d. Pupils First Guidelines, 2011
 - e. Guidelines for Schools on Supporting Students with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - An information guide for Primary Schools: DES, 2013
 - f. 'Physical Interventions: A Policy Framework': British Institute of Learning Disabilities
 - g. Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations: DES (2024)

Staff Training

³ Our Code is informed by and is compliant with the Department of Education's Understanding behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crises Situations (January 2024)



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8. Dynamis (Positive Handling Course) training delivers comprehensive training that teaches management and intervention techniques to cope with escalating behaviour in a professional and safe manner.
9. Dynamis (Positive Handling Course) training: Teaching staff and SNA staff attend a one-day course led by qualified trainers with a single day refresher. Dynamis (Positive Handling Course) provides structured training in conflict management, personal safety, and safe physical interventions. It teaches staff how to prevent escalation and respond with minimal force. Methods are lawful, risk-assessed, and aligned with duty of care standards. Training increases confidence and reduces incidents of harm. It gives teams a shared, consistent approach in crisis situations. This supports safer learning environments and protects staff and students.
10. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) 'Behaviour for Learning and Wellbeing' also provides a number of supports for schools to support behaviour. Their 'Relate framework' will provide a comprehensive resource to proactively support students and to support schools to implement preventative and holistic approaches to reduce the occurrence of behaviours of concern. Their resources provide seminars to support students, including Pathways to Prevention and Understanding Behaviour, and advisory services. St. Declan's will engage with the NCSE to avail of their training and advisory services.

NEPS support

11. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) also provides advice and support to schools through its casework and support and development services. Schools may contact their assigned NEPS psychologist or local NEPS office in this regard (NEPS Contact).

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of these Policy Guidelines are to:

- a) To promote positive relationships, emotional regulation, and strong interpersonal skills. By prioritising de-escalation and proactive support, we aim to reduce the need for any restrictive interventions. We do this by creating a school environment where students feel safe, connected, and valued.
- b) Staff build strong, trusting relationships with students, using positive communication, consistency, and empathy. We offer a range of sensory and calming options to help students regulate their emotions throughout the school day. Our reward systems, celebrations of growth, and shared routines strengthen students' sense of belonging and pride in our school community
- c) We foster a collective ethos of respect and care for one another, inspired by the Jesuit value of being "a person for others." This is reinforced through teamwork, shared play on the yard, and regular whole-school assemblies such as *Star of the Week*, where each student's progress is recognised and celebrated. These practices work together to support students in managing their emotions, developing resilience, and engaging positively with learning and with each other—minimising the need for crisis or restrictive intervention
- d) Prevent injury to the pupil and others and to prevent significant damage to property.
- e) Promote a culture within St. Declan's of Emotional Regulation and reduction of physical intervention, however outlined by Dynamis (Positive Handling Course) training physical intervention is necessary-
Where a pupil is harming themselves, another pupil or staff member
Where a pupil has climbed on to a height or put themselves in unsafe situation
Where a pupil is running out onto a road



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- f) Provide clear guidelines to staff, pupils and parents regarding the use of restrictive (physical) interventions in St. Declan's SNS.

Pupil Support

12. St. Declan's staff support pupils who would benefit from extra support outside of the classroom for a variety of reasons, as identified by the class teacher or other professionals. This includes pupils who need a more tailored curriculum to allow for different learning styles and/or pupils who need a low distraction environment or a break from their own classroom. Staff members endeavour to support pupils who present with behaviours that put themselves or others at risk of harm. The support to these pupils will include:

- Scheduled time away from regular class.
- Guidance for their regular class staff to manage behaviours
- Training for all staff
- Fostering whole school awareness of effective positive management strategies
- Fostering effective mood management
- Fostering integration with peers

In accordance with our Code of Behaviour, the staff first seek to prevent and minimise risk by employing de-escalation strategies and environmental alterations as follows:

De-escalation Strategies

- Sensory breaks, Brushing Protocol, WUSH, Zones of regulation checking in on emotions – Approach pupil with calm stance and facial expression of staff, careful use of tone of voice and choice of words by staff, change of staff, distraction and diversion, use of humour, negotiation, offering choices, outlining limits and boundaries, positive reminders, planned ignoring, reassurance, short tasks only, time given to process and to cool down, verbal supports, visual schedules, praise, use of rewards and close supervision.
- Environmental Alterations: Comfort areas, pupil support rooms, sensory break rooms, 1:1 teaching areas, access to preferred activities where possible, access to preferred or skilled staff where possible, timetables organised to minimise risks, reduced pupil/staff ratios, opportunities provided to 'burn off energy', high handles on some doors, reduced access to equipment in some rooms, coded access to main doors, and fenced-in playgrounds.

Student Support Plan (previously referred to as IBP)

13. These are devised by the teachers and SNAs for pupils assessed as being of greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions and for whom the strategies outlined in the Code of Behaviour are not sufficient.
14. Pupils who require such plans are sometimes supported by outside psychologists or psychiatrists. Other multi-Disciplinary support services are requested as necessary and recommended to parents.
- a brief history of the pupil,
 - a brief outline of likes/dislikes and known triggers,
 - a functional assessment of the behaviour of concern, using information from several sources such as parents, previous staff, carers, and appropriate behavioural assessments,
 - a multi-element behaviour support plan outlining environmental alterations, direct interventions, skills teaching and reactive strategies,
 - de-escalation strategies to employ when risk-behaviours start to occur,
 - recommended physical interventions which may be employed when de-escalation strategies are unsuccessful or not possible,
 - planned reviews of any recommended restrictive practices, in line with DES Guidelines 2014

- h. a list of strategies which will help the pupil to recover and repair relationships with staff and other pupils,
- i. a list of persons to whom the plan needs to be communicated, and
- j. risk assessments for specific risks including restricting liberty in a specified room or area, and proper reporting protocol.

15. Staff are Authorised to use a proportionate amount of force to prevent greater harm from occurring when there is an imminent risk and no other viable options and is only used as a last resort, and physical restraint/force is not permitted except in a crises situation where there is an imminent risk to students physical safety or the safety of others

Crises (Unforeseen or Emergency) Situations: A pupil hurts, or attempts to hurt another unexpectedly, and their behaviour indicates that this will be sustained, or, a pupil suddenly tries to climb over a fence or run out onto a road. All staff must use their judgement and take appropriate action to safeguard pupils or staff whilst calling for assistance from trained staff, staff use the word **TEAM** as a safe word to call another staff member.

16. The school endeavours to encourage staff to **STOP AND THINK** before employing restraint as outlined in the following checklist.

ACT	BALANCE	CHOOSE
• STOP AND THINK. • Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture. • Use a slow controlled voice. • Give clear verbal directions. • Pause and allow time for compliance.	• Balance the likely outcomes if restraint is used against the likely outcomes if it is not. • Balance short term risks versus long term risks. • Balance best interests of the pupil against the best interests of other pupils and staff.	• Evaluate all options • Choose persons who are most likely to succeed. • Choose the best place available. • Choose minimum use of restraint necessary to achieve the desired result.

17. Crises Situations - Last Resort/Early Intervention

- a. Crises' situations are times when a pupil's behaviour is putting themselves at risk of harm, or if their behaviour is putting others at risk of harm.
- b. The use of physical restraint must be proportionate to the risk posed by the pupil's behaviour.
- c. Physical restraint should be used **as a last resort**. Physical restraint is any procedure where one or more adults restricts a pupil's physical movement or normal access to his or her own body. It is an intervention used in **crisis situations** when **not to do so** could result in serious physical harm or injury to the pupil or others.

18. This does not mean that all other possible strategies must be tried and tested beforehand, it means that **staff must make a considered judgement** balancing the risks involved, thus allowing informed decisions to be made.



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Using restraint

Any use of physical restraint must be: Timely, Measured, Appropriate, used by trained persons and be reviewed.

If a restraint is used, staff must ask his/herself the following questions.

- a. Am I trained? If not is there a trained member of staff nearby who can help?
- b. Am I using the minimum force for the shortest time?
- c. Is the hold I'm using correct?
- d. Can I/we move to a lower-level restraint?
- e. How best can I communicate with the pupil and with other staff?
- f. Can I manage this? Should I ask someone else to take over?

19. The School will use the Managing Actual or Potential Aggression categories to describe restrictive physical interventions as follows:

- a. Category 1. Direct physical contact between a member of staff and a pupil. Examples include:
 - i. A student is putting themselves in danger, for example running into a road or towards explicit danger.
 - ii. A student starts to self-injure by banging his/her head with force on a hard surface.
 - iii. A student starts to throw large items, such as computers or furniture at peers or adults.
 - iv. A student physically attacks another person.

Using Withdrawal to Recovery/Comfort Rooms

20. 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 three ways.

- a. Withdrawal to calm down: This may be used informally for pupils who need time or space to calm/cool down, for example where a 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.
- b. Withdrawal from Classroom to Recovery/Comfort Room (Blue Room): This may be used to move a pupil to a recovery/comfort room where he or she is continually supported or monitored by staff. This may involve physically intervening to move the pupil and/or preventing the pupil from leaving the area until staff consider that it is safe to do so.

21. Staff will remain in the room **if safe to do so**.

22. A Pupil Support Plan agreed with parents is needed for this practice if physical interventions are required to move the pupil from the classroom.

The purpose of this is to safeguard pupils and staff in situations that have the potential to be of high risk to themselves or others.

23. Staff should attempt to distract or divert the pupil and return the pupil to his or her 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 that he/she finds over-stimulating.

24. Removal to a Recovery/Comfort Room designated for the purpose is considered only in *exceptional* circumstances.

25. The purpose of this is to safeguard pupils and/or staff in situations of high risk to themselves or others.

26. Positive Support Plan

- a. The pupil may be moved to a Recovery/Comfort Room using an appropriate physical intervention. The door may be secured by staff holding the handle of the door, and remaining present, to prevent the pupil from charging out onto the corridor where other pupils or staff may be walking.
- b. A stopwatch should be used to measure the length of time the door is secured.
- c. To ensure their safety and emotional well-being pupils should be continuously monitored by staff. If, for exceptional safety reasons, the staff member cannot remain in the room with the pupil they will be observed continuously through a glass panel in the door.
- d. The Principal or Deputy Principal should be called as soon as possible to monitor the safety of the pupil and staff and to oversee the event.
- e. Staff should use a calm voice, stance and words to defuse, divert and de-escalate. Visual or other communication aids should be used to increase the likelihood of communication and negotiation between the pupil and staff. These strategies should be noted in the incident report afterwards.
- f. Drinks/food or other preferred items may be offered if it is judged that such offers will help the pupil to calm down. Access to adjacent toilets and to outdoors should be allowed if it is safe to do so.
- g. **All incidents involving restrictive interventions are reviewed by the Principal and Deputy Principal.**
- h. The Principal or Deputy Principal (will contact the parents) and if it is in the best interest of the pupil, ask them to take the pupil home, depending on circumstances.
- i. A doctor may be called if there are any concerns regarding the physical or emotional well-being of the pupil.
- j. The pupil should be assisted to recover from the incident afterwards and assisted to 'repair' his or her relationship with staff and other pupils.
- k. NCSE Record of Incident involving physical restraint form must be filled out for each such instance as outlined in the DES Guidelines and reported to NCSE and BOM.

27. The frequency of the use of this strategy is continuously monitored by the Principal or Deputy Principal both by observation of the event as it occurs and reviewing incident reports. The focus will always be on reducing the occurrence and frequency of the intervention. Follow-up actions are monitored by the Principal to ensure that they are put in place.

28. USE OF THIS PRACTICE FOR REASONS OF SANCTION, PUNISHMENT OR STAFF CONVENIENCE IS NOT PERMITTED. THIS MAY BE UNLAWFUL AND WILL BE NOTIFIED AS APPROPRIATE TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT, PUPIL PROTECTION SERVICES, AND GARDAI.

Post-Incident Support

29. Following an incident, the priority is to look after the pupils and staff involved before reports are filled out and reviews held.



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Appendix 3:

Incident Report/Debriefing

NCSE Record of Incident involving Physical Restraint Form

(In line with a rights-based approach the language used in this record needs to be objective, factual. and non-judgmental)

No personal details of person(s)/involved should be included in this report.

School details

School Name

School roll number

Student details

Age of student

Confirmed Special Educational Need, (if applicable)

Details of incident

Date

Time

Location

Duration

Description of the incident

DESCRIBE WHAT WAS HAPPENING IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

(e.g., activities that the student was engaged in; behaviours of other students; changes to the environment or the usual routine, etc.).



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DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INCIDENT (staff responses, reactions of students, any other consequences)	
Any other details deemed relevant in relation to the incident	
Report completed by	
Designation	
Date	
Report should be forwarded to the following dedicated email account: bocreports@ncse.ie	



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Staff Reflection Form following an incident of physical restraint

For use by individual teachers for self-reflection to inform future actions and/or

For use by groups of teachers for staff reflection at a meeting to inform future actions

(The language used in this record needs to be objective, factual and non-judgmental)

Events leading to the incident - Describe what was happening before the behaviour started to escalate. What was the student doing? What do you think might have triggered the behaviour? How were other students reacting to the student?

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Behaviour of the student - What did you notice about the student's behaviour that alerted you that they were struggling to cope? Think about the way they looked, for example, facial expressions, physical signs, language.

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What message do you believe the student was trying to communicate during this incident?

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SAINT DECLAN'S SCHOOL

35 Northumberland Road,
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Dublin 4

What did you try before the restraint? - Describe the alternative techniques and interventions tried to prevent the emergency, including a description of the de-escalation strategies you used. What was the response of the student?

The restraint method used - Describe the nature of the physical restraint. Include the type of restraint, the duration and the number of people that participated.

Monitoring - Describe how the student's physical and emotional distress was monitored while they were restrained.

After the restraint ended - Describe the mood of the student following the restraint. What help and support were they offered or did they request.

Review Procedures

This policy will be reviewed annually in the light of changing information and in consultation with the wider community.

Signed:
Chairperson

Signed:
Principal

Date of last review: _____