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**St Brendan’s NS Policy on Physical Intervention**

**Rationale-** This policy was put together in Jan 2020 by the Principal and staff to address staff concerns about their own safety, the safety of the children in their care and the perception of others in relation to physical intervention incidents that occur in school.

Since opening our ASD unit in 2015, these incidents have increased in frequency, which we understand is to be expected among children who experience sensory overload alongside social and communication difficulties. However, many of the children who started as infants in the ASD classes are getting physically bigger and stronger, causing us to re-evaluate their needs and care procedures.

We also have enrolled pupils over the years in mainstream, some of whom are also presenting with serious aggressive and challenging behaviours.

This policy was put together following Studio 3 training from the ASD services; in-house training on challenging and aggressive behaviour; advice from SESS; research from the INTO; staff training on the Incredible Years Programme; consultation with NEPS and numerous staff meetings throughout 2017/2019.

The main concerns addressed in this policy are:

* Physical intervention may carry the risk of injury to the child or to the adult involved;
* Physical intervention carries the possibility of being interpreted as an assault;

**Aim-**

* To have definite procedures in place for physical intervention that are clearly understood by staff and parents
* To protect the safety of pupils in the first instance
* To minimise risk to staff from physical injury
* To minimise anxiety for staff who are working with pupils who may require physical intervention.
* To formalise reporting and recording procedures
* To ensure staff have the necessary training needed
* To ensure that ALL staff are aware of the policy, not just those who are working directly with a pupil who may require physical intervention
* To have a policy which parents can read and agree to, to ensure there can be no error in understanding between all parties of what is acceptable/unacceptable when physical intervention is needed

**Policy Considerations:**

* Any consideration of the use of restraint or containment should only occur, as a last resort, where no other intervention is feasible or effective.
* The intention of any physical intervention must be clear.
* Staff should be acting in good faith in the best interests of the child.
* It is important to keep in mind that only a minority of pupils will ever require physical intervention.

**Staff should only intervene physically to restrain or contain a child:**

* Where there is a clear and immediate danger to the child or others;
* Where all other interventions (deflection, distraction, de-escalation etc) have failed or are not feasible;
* With the clear intention of removing the child from danger; and
* With the minimum force required to ensure the child’s safety.

**Physical Intervention must be:**

* Proportionate to the risk
* Carried out in a calm and measured way
* Should entail the very minimum of forces needed
* In the best interests of the child
* Staff should use the manual handling and protective techniques adopted from the Studio 3 low-arousal programme for dealing with aggressive and challenging behaviours.
* Other pupils should be removed (when possible) if it is necessary to ensure safety and wellbeing

**After physical intervention:**

* Child should know that the incident is over and be given the support needed to recover
* Staff should be offered time to recover and advice from counselling services eg Carecall offered if required
* The record of physical intervention form must be completed and submitted to the Principal
* Parents should be informed asap
* If relevant, the behaviour code should be enacted

**Risk Assessment:**

As part of the school’s health and safety policy, Risk Assessment in relation to Physical Intervention should be carried out annually or when a new pupil with challenging behaviour enrols:

* Risk assessment should entail proactive planning rather than reactive
* The Risk Assessment Template laid out below should be completed as soon as the risk has been identified
* All staff who work with the child, parents and other agencies involved with the child’s care should be involved in completion of the Risk Assessment template.
* Parents and Principal will sign and date agreement of the procedures to be put in place.
* The Risk Assessment includes:
  + Identification of the hazard – including the risk of violence or injury and who might be at risk and how.
  + Evaluation the severity, likelihood, frequency of a violent or injurious incident occurring
  + State the appropriate control measures to be put in place to eliminate or minimize the risk. (How can risks be controlled so that injury is less likely)
  + Specify who actions this
* Record findings and implement them. (Must be agreed and written down.)
* Review the assessment and update if necessary, and in particular after an incident requiring physical intervention has occurred.
* Monitor on an ongoing basis to evaluate implementation

**Principal’s Role-**

It is the Principal’s Role to:

* Ensure Risk Assessment takes place and sign completed template alongside parents
* Ensure adequate supports are in place for pupils, liaising with the SENO, NEPs, SESS, ASD services and whatever other agencies necessary.
* Liaise with SEN co-ordinator in relation to time-tabling to ensure staff are not left alone with a child who has been identified as a flight risk, engages in harmful meltdowns/tantrums or engages in harmful outbursts.
* Ensure knowledge of and use of strategies to reduce challenging behaviour.
* Ensuring that staff has access to training and professional development in managing challenging behaviour, including the use of safe and effective physical interventions (e.g. MAPA, Studio3).
* Assess access and security issues in the school building.
* Ensure that this policy is updated regularly
* Ensure that this policy is made known to all staff members and parents concerned

**Staff Training-**

* Care procedures are reviewed each month during scheduled Principal-led SNA meetings.
* Physical Intervention will remain a regular agenda item on the quarterly Full Staff Meeting agenda.
* Studio 3 training will continue through ASD services, or through any other agency required to ensure staff feel confident in the principles of de-escalation, low-arousal care and safe physical intervention
* Studio 3 training will continue as in-house staff training at least once annually – to be delivered by the Principal/SEN Co-ordinator
* The principles of the Incredible Years Programme, focusing on creating a positive learning environment and de-escalation techniques will continue to be espoused throughout the school at staff meetings, SEN meetings, SNA meetings etc and training opportunities offered to new staff members whenever possible.

**Success Criteria:**

* Challenging behaviours are handled in a controlled, calm and consistent way by all staff members
* Children with challenging behaviour feel safe and are relaxed about coming to school.
* Staff feel safe and empowered to deal with challenging behaviour.
* Challenging behaviours reduce in frequency and severity for individual pupils.
* Good and positive relationships between staff and pupils with challenging behaviour is obvious and evident.
* Parents feel informed and empowered to be part of a team approach to the management of challenging behaviours.
* There are tools and strategies readily available for the safe management of individual pupils with challenging behaviours eg safe spaces, sensory room, moon chair, swing, planned escape routes, packs of materials that are specific to the emotional regulation needs of specific pupils etc

**Review and Evaluation:**

This policy was reviewed in Dec 2020. The opening of our full ASD building facilities is helping to address some of the needs of pupils and staff in relation to physical interventions.

Recommendations-

* More training on Studio 3
* Development of targeted strategies for individual pupils who display challenging behaviour more regularly.
* The strategy for how best to deflect, de-escalate and successfully conclude an episode of challenging behaviour, meltdown or tantrum for individual pupils should be drawn up and clearly known to all staff members and parents.

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Principal and SEN Co-ordinator and presented to Board of Management.

**Physical Intervention Risk Assessment Template:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pupils’ Name** | **Class:** | **Academic Year:** | **D.O.B.** | |
| **Teacher:** | **SNA:** | **Date of Risk Assessment:** | **Assessed Need:** | |
| **Hazard/Risks:** | **Liklihood/Severity level:** | **Control measures:**  (How can risks be controlled so that injury is less likely | **Who is**  **Responsible:** | |
| **1.** |  |  |  | |
| **2.** |  |  |  | |
| **3.** |  |  |  | |
| **4.** |  |  |  | |
| **5.** |  |  |  | |
| **Signed : Principal:** | **Signed: Relevant Staff:** | **Signed Parent 1:** | **Signed Parent 2** | |
| **Staff Training Record/Support Sought:** | | | | |
|  |  |  |  | |
|  |  |  |  | |
| **Incident Record:** | | | | |
| **Brief description:including strategies used to de-escalate** | **Date/Time/Place:** | **Resulting Action:** | **Recorded Yes/No** | **Parents Informed: Yes/No** |
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**RECORD OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION/RESTRAINT**

Date of Incident: Time of Incident:

Pupil Name: DOB:

Member(s) of Staff Involved:

Adult Witnesses to Physical Intervention/Restraint: Pupil Witnesses to Physical Intervention/Restraint:

Outline of event leading to Physical Intervention/Restraint:

Outline of other strategies used:

Outline of incident of Physical Intervention/Restraint:

Outline of method of Physical Intervention/Restraint:

Outcome of of Physical Intervention/Restraint:

Description of any injury sustained by pupil:

Outline of any subsequent treatment:

Date/ time parent/guardian informed of incident:

By whom informed:

Outline of response of parent/guardian:

Signature of Teacher/Staff completing report: Date:

Signature of Principal: Date:

Description of any subsequent complaint or action: Date: