

SAFE HANDLING (REASONABLE FORCE) POLICY

FOR

Carrickfergus Academy



Version	Date	Revision Author	Summary of Changes
1	Staff made aware 20 Feb and to BoG 27 2019)		
2	November 2025	A Irvine	Layout only

Procedural Statement

Digest of DENI Circular 1999/9 (Full document available from the Principal)

A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from –

- Committing an offence;
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil) OR
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintenance of good order and discipline in class or otherwise.

This right applies

- On the premises; or
- Elsewhere when teacher has lawful control of the pupil e.g. bus queue, field trip, sporting event, educational visit;
- Any other member of staff who has the principal's authority for lawful control including learning support assistants and supervisors.

'Volunteers' normally work under the direction and supervision of a teacher. The teacher in charge should be alerted and their judgement deferred to as to the appropriate action. School visits, holidays and residential activities may put such individuals in charge and they should receive appropriate training and guidance.

The need to use reasonable force should be rare and only as a last resort. It does not prevent, however, the exercise of the common law right of self-defence using proportionate force.

- Only if the incident warrants it;
- That the degree of force is appropriate to the circumstances and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent;
- Dependent on the age, level of understanding, sex, disability of the pupil;
- Not to be used automatically or as a form of discipline;
- In a non-urgent situation when other strategies have failed.

When might it be appropriate?

- In self-defence or where there is imminent risk of injury;
- Developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property; e.g.
 - Pupils fighting
 - Attack on a pupil or a member of staff;
 - Pupil causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
 - Running in a corridor or stairway in a way that might cause accident or injury;
 - Pupil absconding from class or school but only if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom.
- Where pupil is compromising good order and discipline e.g. refusing to obey an order to leave a classroom, seriously disrupting a lesson.

Practical considerations

- Member of staff should try other behaviour strategies first and that the situation is approached in a calm and measured way.
- Sometimes assistance must be sought unless in an emergency e.g. with older pupils or more than one pupil. Colleagues should be summoned or in extreme cases the Police will be notified by a senior teacher. In the meantime, the situation should be defused orally. (An emergency response procedure could include a message sent by a trusted pupil).

What might constitute reasonable force?

- Physically coming between two pupils;
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Leading a pupil by the arm;
- Shepherding a pupil away by a hand in the centre of the back;
- (in extreme cases) more restrictive holds.

Avoid causing injury e.g. by –

- Holding by neck, collar or other ways that could impede breathing;
- Slapping, punching, kicking or using any implement;
- Throwing any object at a pupil;
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- Tripping up a pupil;
- Holding or pulling by the hair or ear;
- Holding face down on the ground;
- Holding or touching in a way that could be considered indecent.

Self-defence or emergencies

The right to self-defence under common law as explained earlier is not diminished. The purpose of this circular is to make it clear that teachers can intervene in less extreme situations.

Physical contact in other situations

Some such contact may be necessary during PE, sports, coaching, Music or Technology classes or in giving first aid. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Teachers should use their own professional judgement.

Recording incidents of reasonable force

- Must be a detailed, contemporaneous, written report of any occasions (except minor or trivial incidents) where reasonable force is used;
- Member of staff should inform the Principal as soon as possible in a short factual report that includes –
 - Name of pupil(s)
 - Location
 - Witnesses' names
 - Reason
 - Description of action and development of incident
 - Pupil's response
 - Outcome
 - Injury to pupil or others and/or damage to property
 - Incident records must be kept for at least FIVE years
 - Advisable to inform parents unless trivial incident.

All incidents must be recorded on the attached proforma (Appendix 3)

A copy of the completed proforma MUST BE returned to the Principal within 48 hours of the incident occurring.

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; and
- individual risk assessment.

Environmental Risk Assessment

- Identify situations or locations where there is an increased risk 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 SMT 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 school is aware that a pupil is likely to 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;
- implementing Plan and review;

- reviewing the Plan.

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.

Risk Assessment Proforma

NAME OF PUPIL: _____ D.O.B. _____
 AGE: _____

SEN REGISTER CODE OF PRACTICE STAGE: _____

SUPPORT TO DATE:

EDUCATION / BEHAVIOUR PLAN IN PLACE:

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/carers	
with staff	

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICE Risk Reduction: Action Plan

This Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP) is informed and guided by the outcomes arrived at by working through the attached DE risk assessment grids.

The plan has been drawn up in consultation with:

Pupil: _____ Year: _____ Date: _____
Principal: _____ Date: ____/____/____
VicePrincipal: _____ Date: ____/____/____
BSA: N/A Date: ____/____/____
Chair (BOG): _____ Date: ____/____/____
Other: _____ Date: __/__/__

Code of Practice Stage: ☐
IEP Linked: Yes: ☐ No: ☐ (please tick)
Review process: **Weekly**/Monthly/Termly (please circle)
By whom: _____
Risk Reduction Plan Review Date: __/__/__
Further action required: Yes: ☐ No: NO (please tick)

RISK FACTOR (RF): RF = Likelihood (L) x Frequency (F)

Score	Level	Behaviour 1	L x F <i>Eg, 5x5</i>	RF	Score	Level	Behaviour 2	L x F <i>Eg, 5x5</i>	RF	Score	Level	Behaviour 3	L x F <i>Eg, 5x5</i>	RF
21-25	V High		5X1		21-25	V High		5X4		21-25	V High			
15-20	High				15-20	High				15-20	High			
8-12	Medium				8-12	Medium				8-12	Medium			
6-10	Low				6-10	Low				6-10	Low			
1-5	V Low				1-5	V Low				1-5	V Low			
								25						25

SUMMARY BOX: The behaviours to be targeted are:

- Refusal to follow instructions Severity score: 1 2 3 **4** 5
- Severity score: 1 2 3 4 5
- Severity score: 1 2 3 4 5
(Circle: 1 = Lowest, 5 = Highest)

Member of staff with responsibility for conducting a post-incident de-briefing session with all relevant pupil(s)/staff is:

Name: _____
Post held: Vice Principal / HOY

Risk Reduction: Action Plan

Targeted Behaviour & Context (RF of 15 & above)	Risk Factor L x F = ?/25		Current Strategies	Additional Strategies	Action By Whom/ When	Success Criteria	Review/Outcomes 25/6/19
	Current RF	Desirable RF					
	25	25					
	25	25					

Risk Reduction: Action Plan

Types of behaviour causing concern: Level of Risk, Frequency, People to whom behaviour exhibited.

BEHAVIOUR	5 Very Likely	4 Likely	3 Quite Possible	2 Possible	1 Unlikely	Frequency H – Hourly – 5 D – Daily – 4 W – Weekly – 3 M – Monthly – 2 T – Termly – 1
DISRUPTION:						
Vandalism						
Bullying						
Fighting						
Violent & aggressive						
Angry outbursts						
Impulsive Dangerous Behaviour						
Self-harms						
Medically related behaviour						
Threatening & abusive						
Other						
PEOPLE TO WHOM BEHAVIOUR IS MOST LIKELY EXHIBITED						
Classroom teacher						
Subject specific teacher (please specify)						
Classroom Assistant						
Technician						
Ancillary Staff (lunchtime supervisors, caretakers)						
Member of SMT						
Male staff						
Female staff						
Other pupils in class						
Other pupils in school						
Male pupils						
Female pupils						
Young/Older pupils						
Ethnic Minority pupils						

Risk Reduction: Action Plan

Environments and times of greatest risk – flash points/hot spots

LOCATION AND TIME OF BEHAVIOURS	Vandalism Disruption	Bullying	Fighting	Violent & aggressive	Angry outbursts	Impulsive dangerous behaviour	Self-harms	Medically related behaviour	Threatening & abusive	Other (<i>please specify</i>)
Behaviour during lessons										
Behaviour in practical lessons (<i>please specify</i>)										
Behaviour going between lessons										
Behaviour in Library										
Behaviour in Canteen/Lunch										
Behaviour at break times										
Behaviour in playground/lunchtime										
Behaviour on educational trips										
Behaviour off-site disappplied programmes										
Behaviour in PE/Games Hall										
Behaviour on school/public transport bus										
Behaviour in taxi										
Behaviour if medication not taken										
Other behaviours (<i>please specify</i>)										