



## **Naíscóil Íde, Raheny**

### **Behaviours of Concern Policy**

#### **Our Rationale**

Some pupils have such highly complex social, emotional or educational needs that they need extra help and support and may exhibit challenging behaviour. This policy aims to support pupils exhibiting behaviours of concern, the other pupils, staff and the relevant parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Health and Safety Statement, Child Safeguarding Statement and Code of Behaviour.

#### **Health and Safety Statement**

Our school Health and Safety Statement underpins the entitlement of all pupils and staff to coexist in a safe environment.

#### **Child Safeguarding Statement**

Our school Child Safeguarding Statement places a statutory responsibility on registered teachers to report child protection concerns that are at or above a threshold of harm. It includes a risk assessment which identifies possible situations where pupils may be at risk and the control measures that our school puts in place to address such concerns.

#### **Code of Behaviour**

Our school Code of Behaviour aims to positively support pupils in the first instance but reserves the right to impose sanctions particularly when the health and safety of pupils and staff is a concern. All pupils are subject to the Code of Behaviour

Pupils with additional needs are required to follow our school Code of Behaviour but staff use their professional judgement in relation to the regularity and level of sanctions. While staff must be seen to be fair in the eyes of other children who may have exhibited the same type of behaviour, they also show leniency and understanding in relation to children with specific learning/behavioural/emotional difficulties. Ultimately, all pupils are subject to the Code of Behaviour

#### **Minor Misbehaviours**

Minor misbehaviours are everyday instances of a minor nature that are dealt with by the class teacher/staff through restorative practice. Examples include behaviours that interfere with the teaching and learning of all, such as talking out, ignoring directions, not completing work etc.

#### **Behaviours of Concern**

Behaviours of concern can be defined as behaviours that indicate a risk to the safety or wellbeing of pupils who exhibit them or to others. A crisis situation can occur when

behaviours of concern present serious risk of imminent physical harm to the pupil concerned or to others within the school environment.

### Examples of Behaviours of Concern

- Physically assaulting/hurting another such as throwing objects, hitting, kicking, biting, punching, pulling hair or threatening to hurt another
- Throwing furniture or breaking objects close to others
- Seriously damaging property
- Putting themselves in danger, for example running onto a road or trying to self-harm
- Using an object as a weapon.

### Possible Underlying Causes of Behaviours of Concern

There is always a reason for, or purpose to behaviours of concern, such as:

- **Dysregulation:** When a pupil is unable to control or regulate their emotional responses to situations/feelings.
- **Anxiety and Stress:** Pupils may become anxious for a myriad of reasons. Anxiety about school, friendships, crowds, noise, home situations etc, can be overwhelming for a pupil, leading to stress. While most children are able to identify the cause and put in place strategies to reduce their stress levels, some cannot.
- **Communication Difficulties:** Behaviours of concern are a substitute means of communication for some pupils.
- **Sensory Issues:** Some pupils can be over- or under-sensitive to any of their senses. This is often referred to in the literature as hyper(over) or hypo(under) sensitivity. Pupils with additional needs often become so overwhelmed, they display behaviours of concern.
- **Social Understanding:** Not all pupils have the same understanding of social rules. Not all pupils grow up in environments with social rules similar to those in most schools.
- **Inflexible thinking:** Most pupils adapt to routines and can find them comforting. Some pupils struggle with changes in routine.

### Procedures for Managing Behaviours of Concern

\*Staff try to avoid the behaviour of concern happening in the first place by putting supports in place for the pupil.

If an incident occurs, staff should:

- try to make sure everyone is safe
- prevent the situation deteriorating further
- bring the pupil displaying the behaviour of concern to the 'calm room' to give them the opportunity to regulate
- contact the pupil's parents by phone and inform them about the incident.
- withdraw the child from the class where they can continue to work in a small station-like group or in the office

- record the incident (see below)
- put an immediate plan in place that will link to an effective and sustained behaviour plan
- seek advice from outside agencies, if necessary.
- If the behaviour of concern continues, staff should keep a walkie talkie with them at all times so they can contact the principal or other staff members in case of an emergency situation occurring (these are available in the office).
- If the behaviours of concern are of a physical nature where staff could be hurt, staff should wear protective clothing (arm/body covers) provided by the Board of Management.
- In extreme situations, two staff members may be assigned to the pupil

#### **Recording Behaviours of Concern:**

- Where a pupil is displaying behaviours of concern, staff ensure that the parents are aware of the school's policy and procedures on recording such behaviour.
- Parents are notified of behaviours of concern via a 'notice' to parents on the Aladdin app. This notice is written by the teacher or whoever witnesses the incident.
- The purpose of recording and analysing these behaviours is to understand what the triggers are and to put in place a plan to support the pupil to develop more socially acceptable behaviours.
- Parents should be assured that they will be fully included in this process.
- When a serious incident occurs, the staff member who witnessed the behaviour of concern fills out a **Behaviour of Concern Incident Report (Appendix A)**. Staff should be aware that parents are entitled to access notes about a child so careful, considered use of language is needed.
- The Behaviour of Concern Incident Report is stored by the Principal in the office.
- Following a serious behaviour of concern incident, the incident should be reviewed by the Principal and the staff working with the child, to see how the situation was handled. Consideration should be given to what can be done to reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

#### **Guidance Note on filling out a Behaviour of Concern Incident Report**

There are three main reasons for filling out incident forms following a behavioural incident:

1. To provide a clear, factual account of what happened
  2. To reduce the risk of the incident occurring again
  3. To provide information for Behaviour Support Plans
- An incident form should be filled out following serious behavioural incidents but not during the reflection and recovery process for pupils or staff.
  - If SNAs only are present during an incident, it is good practice to fill the incident form out with the class teacher so that the class teacher is fully aware of the incident.

- An element of professional judgment may be required to decide whether or not an incident merits the filling in of an incident form. It is better to err on the side of caution and fill out the form. If in doubt, staff should consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- The following are examples of incidents that require reporting:
  - 'Near miss' – the situation had the potential to be a risk to safety
  - Someone received an injury from a kick, bite, thrown item, etc.
  - A physical intervention was used
  - Liberty was restricted
  - A pupil became significantly emotionally distressed
- A good incident form describes the incident briefly, factually and honestly, identifies triggers (if known), suggests risk reduction measures and takes account of the welfare of both pupils and staff. Judgmental, 'blaming' language should be avoided. Examples are provided below:

Helpful phrases when answering questions on the Incident Report Form:

**1.What Happened?**

- asked for assistance, drew towards, eased away, encouraged, guided, led pupil to the support room/ yard/ sensory room where they could be monitored/observed, moved child away from the area of the incident (see paragraph 3 below), used physical prompt, used visuals/schedules/timetables, reassured, secured the door, supported, talked pupil down, withdrew other pupils, cleared the area of items that could be thrown, moved other pupils away from danger, asked for help, cleared the area of other pupils, sent for a senior member of staff, asked other staff to withdraw from the area, withdrew myself to a safe distance, kept an eye out on member of staff who might be at risk, prevent emotional/psychological distress to other pupils.

**2.List any de-escalation/positive intervention strategies you used to diffuse the incident**

-move away, reduce requests, redirect to schedule, sensory/movement breaks, calm stance/voice, calming scripts, change of staff, 1-1 close to pupil, 1-1 supervision from afar, time out of class, distraction/diversion, facial expression, first/then, humour, negotiate, offer choice, outline consequences, outline limits/boundaries, positive reminders, planned ignoring, removal to support room using friendly hold (pupil comes willingly), reassure, short tasks only, time given to process, use of reward, verbal support/prompts, praise

**3.How was this in the best interests of the pupil**

- maintain dignity of the pupil, prevent negative social outcome for pupil, prevent distress, prevent pain, reduce risk of injury, reduce possibility of unsafe situation for welfare of pupils/staff, prevent emotional psychological distress.

- Incident reports are reviewed by the Principal who will check on the welfare of everyone involved and discuss/implement risk reduction measures if applicable.
- It is good practice to inform parents of incidents. Incident forms may not be given to parents without the consent of the Principal. This is necessary because the incident report may contain information relating to other pupils or staff and may need to be redacted.

### **Physical Intervention**

A physical intervention is the use of a physical act to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a pupil's body or part of a pupil's body. Staff will only use a physical intervention when there is an absolute crisis situation. A crisis situation can occur when behaviours of concern present serious risk of imminent physical harm to the pupil concerned or others within the school environment.

#### **Examples of physical intervention:**

1. Presence: Standing in front of a pupil
2. Touching: lead, guide, usher, block door handle – pupil retains a lot of mobility
3. Holding: pupil's hand/s held by one, two adult/s – pupil retains a lot of mobility
4. Completely restrict mobility: 2 adults holding legs and arms (using minimum force for the shortest time in exceptional dangerous circumstances)

This intervention:

- cannot be used in schools except in the case of a crisis where there is a serious risk of imminent physical harm to the pupil concerned/others.
- should not be the first option and if used, should be timely, measured and proportionate.
- should be documented, reported to the Board of Management

#### **Procedures if a pupil /staff member is injured by a pupil displaying behaviours of concern**

- The pupil displaying the behaviour of concern will be removed from the situation and given time to calm down in the 'calm room'.
- The pupil's parents will be contacted by phone and informed about the incident.
- The pupil will be withdrawn from the class and will continue working in a small station-like group or in the office.
- The pupil will discuss the situation with a member of the SET team during the reflection period.
- If another pupil is injured, the parents of the injured pupil will be contacted by phone and informed of the incident.
- If it is established following investigation by the Principal, that the pupil seriously injures a staff member or another pupil, the parents of the pupil displaying the behaviour of concern will be asked to come to the school and take the pupil home. The pupil will be suspended on health & safety grounds. (Tusla/NEWB Guidelines do not facilitate informal arrangements).
- If a staff member is injured, however minor, they should remove themselves from the situation and take a short break.
- Medical help will be sought if necessary. Transport home will be arranged if necessary. The insurance company will be notified if there is a serious injury. Staff will be advised that if necessary, they can apply for Leave of Absence Following Assault as outlined in Circulars 0061/2017 and 0062/2018.

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- The Board of Management will be informed of any serious incidents.

### Support Services

Here is a list of outside agencies (not exhaustive) that staff can consult for advice, guidance, assistance and additional supports:

- National Council for Special Education (NCSE) including:
  - Special Education Support Service (SESS)
  - Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- CAMHS: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Education Welfare Service : (part of TúsIa)
- Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA)
- Irish Primary Principal's Network (IPPN)

Signed: John Swords  
Chairperson of BOM

Nora Mescol  
Principal

Date : 19/2/24

19/2/24

**Pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What happened?:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What triggered the incident?:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Whom/What was at risk?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**List any de-escalation/positive intervention strategies that you used to diffuse the incident (see Guidance notes)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Did you need to use a physical intervention?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Why was this in the best interests of the child? (See Guidance notes)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How effective was it?**



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Was the child distressed? (Yes/No)

How was the child assisted to recover/repair relationships with staff/other pupils?

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How can we reduce the risk of this happening again? (Consult with relevant staff/parents)

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How many staff were needed to manage this incident safely?

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Were any staff hurt (Yes/No)

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Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please review form and ensure all questions are answered before submitting to Principal

Review by Principal

Parents notified: (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

Medical interventions needed/sought (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_