



## PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL, BALLYPHEHANE

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*Principal: Mr. Barry O'Shea*

*Deputy Principal: Ms. Gillian Murphy*

### Positive Handling Policy

#### 1. Introduction

In keeping with the ethos of Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane, this policy reflects our commitment to providing a safe, secure and positive learning environment for all students. Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane promotes the use of positive approaches with students. Where these strategies are not working it is foreseeable that a student might engage in high-risk behaviours requiring a physical intervention or restrictive practice. On occasion, the use of restrictive interventions may be required as a last resort and for the purpose of protecting a student's wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, but this is always the least restrictive approach possible, for the shortest period of time possible and proportionate to the risks. Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane uses these restrictive practices, in exceptional circumstances, as outlined in this policy.

Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane has embraced inclusion from the outset and has sought to provide the best possible education to enable all students to achieve their potential. Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane will ensure that any sort of physical contact with a student is considered exceptional. The school's 'duty of care to all' means that, as a last resort, it may also be necessary to use physical contact to prevent or protect students from engaging in behaviours that harm themselves or others or cause significant harm to school property.

#### The policy is based on guidance from the following:

- Education and Welfare Act 2000
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, (as well as other statutes and standards)
- Children First Guidance 2011
- Department of Education Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017
- Guidelines for Schools on Supporting Students with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties – An information guide for Primary Schools: DES 2013
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

*Striving for Excellence in a Christian Environment*

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- NCSE (2015) Policy advice paper No. 5: Supporting children with ASD in schools

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and structures:**

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Admissions and Enrolment
- Health and Safety

## **2. Definition of 'Restrictive Physical Intervention'**

"Restrictive Physical Intervention" is the term used to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a staff member has to, in specific circumstances, use "reasonable force" to control or restrain students.

The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident make it necessary to intervene. The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent .

## **3: Prevention**

Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane seeks in the first instance to be proactive at all times to prevent and minimise the need to use physical interventions and restrictive practices by employing de-escalation strategies and environmental alterations as follows:

### **De-escalation Strategies**

Sensory breaks, calm stance and facial expression of staff, careful use of tone of voice and choice of words by staff, change of staff, distraction/diversion, use of humour, negotiation, offering choices, outlining limits/boundaries, positive reminders, planned ignoring, reassurance, short tasks only, time given to process/cool down, verbal supports, visual schedules, praise, use of rewards, close supervision.

### **Environmental Alterations**

Comfort areas, student 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 student/staff ratios, increased access to specialist staff, opportunities provided to 'burn off energy', fixed furniture in some areas, high handles on some doors, locks on some doors, reduced access to equipment in some rooms

## **4. Situations when the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate**

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical management may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain students may

become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well being of all staff and students are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

Staff who may use restrictive physical intervention in Presentation Secondary School, Ballypnehane

The following staff are authorised to use restrictive physical intervention

Names of authorised staff

Name	Position within school	Date of Training by Dynamis
Mary Forrest	Teacher	7th December 2023
Janine Urquhart	SNA	7th December 2023
Josephine Devlin	SNA	7th December 2023
Rita O'Brien	SNA	7th December 2023
Paula Blake	SNA	7th December 2023
Orla Skally	SNA	7th December 2023
Kerri O'Sullivan	SNA	7th December 2023
Yvonne Kelleher	SNA	7th December 2023
Marie Cronin Hackett	SNA	7th December 2023
Marie Claire Healy	SNA	7th December 2023
Aoibhin McArdle	Teacher	7th December 2023
Sarah O'Regan	Teacher	7th December 2023
Arne Rueffer	Teacher	7th December 2023
Ryan Kennedy	Teacher	7th December 2023
Barry O'Shea	Principal	7th December 2023
Gillian Murphy	Deputy Principal	7th December 2023

## 5. Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions in Presentation Secondary School, Ballypnehane

Staff will use force which is reasonable in the circumstances that is believed to be necessary to restore safety.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows:

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions.
- Staff will only use it when there are reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary. The safety of all students at the school and the staff team will be balanced with the best interests of the student.

- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through de-escalation strategies.
- Force will only be used where it is necessary as a last resort and then in a way which is proportionate to the risk in the immediate circumstances.
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was in keeping with the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the student to regain self-control
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual student will always be taken into account
- In developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each student's circumstance

Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing students and staff after incidents of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times

## **5. Acceptable forms of intervention in Presentation Secondary School, Ballypheane**

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with students for a variety of reasons, for example:

- To comfort a student in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age)
- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc)
- In an emergency to avert danger to the student or students
- In rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

In all situations where physical contact between staff and students takes place, staff must consider the following:

- The student's age and level of understanding
- The student's individual characteristics and history
- The location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

Physical contact is never made as a punishment. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited.

## 6. Developing a Positive Behaviour Plan in Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane

If a student is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Behaviour Plan will be completed. This plan will help the student and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.

The plan will include:

- Any medical conditions or known injuries which the student has which could preclude the use of certain physical interventions or inform a team about decisions they make during an incident.
- Involving parents/carers and students to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- A risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- Managing the student, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention is to be used
- Identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected.
- Seek medical advice about the safest way to hold a child with specific medical needs.

## 7. Guidance and training for staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. In Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane this is arranged at a number of levels including:

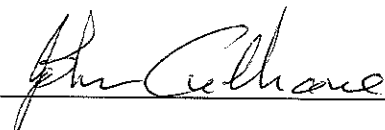
- Awareness for Board of Management, staff and parents
- Behaviour management - relevant staff
- Managing conflict in challenging situations - relevant staff
- Specific training on Restrictive Physical - relevant staff
- Intervention techniques - relevant staff

## 8. Recording Incidents of restrictive physical intervention in Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane

Every use of restrictive physical intervention is to be reported the same day to the Principal and the parents of the student involved. This will be done by the person leading the intervention.

The details of each use of physical intervention must be recorded on the Incident Report Form (In Press 2 in the Staff Room) The person leading the intervention must complete this form. This form must be given to the Principal.

Signed

  
Chairperson

Date:

