

# Use of Reasonable Force Policy



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# **Lisnadill Primary School**

## **Policy On The Use Of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling**

### **PRINCIPLES**

All schools have a pastoral responsibility towards their pupils and should take all reasonable steps to ensure that they promote and secure good behaviour and discipline on the part of these pupils.

Article 4 of the Education (N.I.) Order 1998 enables staff to use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from:

- a) committing an offence;
- b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil);
- c) engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline during a teaching session or otherwise.

### **RATIONALE**

We in Lisnadill Primary School attempt to provide a safe and healthy environment where positive re-enforcement is the main element of promoting good pupil discipline.

We recognise that on rare occasions it may be necessary to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property. Such force will be used only when absolutely necessary and will attempt to preserve the dignity of all concerned..

### **AIMS**

We wish to provide an atmosphere in which children will learn and play together and with staff, in harmony and without conflict.

Children will be restrained or controlled physically only when other behaviour management strategies have failed – first and foremost we will use all means possible to defuse and de-escalate conflict/confrontation or aggression.

### **AUTHORISED TO USE REASONABLE FORCE**

Teachers, Office Staff, Supervisors, Classroom Assistants and Library Staff are authorised to use reasonable force as a last resort and in emergency situations.

## **EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE FORCE**

Reasonable force is not a means of disciplining a child and should not be used as a substitute for good behaviour management. It might include:-

- physically interposing between pupils who are fighting or about to fight
- blocking a pupil's path
- breakaway techniques (e.g. where someone is grabbed by a pupil)
- leading a pupil by arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- using more restrictive holds (in extreme conditions)

Staff should avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent or in a way that might cause injury.

## **WHEN MIGHT REASONABLE FORCE BE USED**

Examples of situations where reasonable force may be unavoidable:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- pupils are fighting
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- a pupil is running in a way in which he/she might cause an accident or injury
- a pupil attempts to abscond from class or school
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a normal school situation

Where staff feel there is a risk to their own personal safety they should not intervene but seek additional help from colleagues.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

School staff will carry out risk assessment throughout the year. Where particular pupils are identified parents will be consulted and methods of risk prevention/reduction agreed. Appropriate performa will be completed.

In the case of children with special needs the Special Needs Co-ordinator will also be consulted.

Substitute teachers will be informed where appropriate as with health matters.

## **RECORD OF INCIDENTS**

Immediately following an incident the member of staff should report the matter to the Principal or his deputy.

A record of all incidents of reasonable force will be kept by the Principal and reviewed annually by the Chairman of Governors.

### **INFORMATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Parental involvement and support will be sought in relation to all such incidents by the Principal or his deputy and where appropriate the member of staff.

### **TRAINING FOR STAFF**

Where training is made available in the Use of Reasonable Force, Lisnadill Primary School will avail of same.

Reference:                      Education (NI) Order 1998 (Articles 3 & 4)  
   Dept of Education Circular 1999/9  
   Regional Policy Framework – May 2004