

Scoil Mhuire Cúl an Áirne



Physical Intervention /Restraint Policy

Aggressive and violent behaviour is not a normal occurrence in **Scoil Mhuire Cúl an Áirne** but it can and may happen. When such incidents occur they are serious and can cause a great deal of stress for all involved. When a member of staff is faced with a potentially violent situation the following steps may prove useful in de-escalating the potentially dangerous situation:

- Where possible the child should be isolated. This may involve the child being exited from the classroom, perhaps with a Special Needs Assistant, or with the assistance of another teacher. An alternative is that the rest of the class is removed from a potentially disruptive situation.
- The child should be spoken to calmly, assertively and respectfully.
- The teacher/SNA should stay at a safe distance. Only one adult should talk to the child with the other adult nearby as a support.
- It should be made clear that you are listening to the child. In this way it may be possible to find out how the situation has developed, or how it may be resolved.
- The child should be asked to consider possible positive outcomes and behaviours.
- The child should be given space and time to cool off and to respond to requests.

It is important that any violent incident is recorded. The most serious form of misbehaviour is assault, whether it is an assault on a teacher, staff member or another pupil.

The guidance issued by the DES Circular 40/97 "Assaults on Teachers" should be followed in the case of an assault on staff members.

Physical Control/Intervention/Restraint

There are no specific guidelines available from the NEWB for the use of physical intervention, control or restraint in schools so we take our advice

from the INTO Guidelines on Managing Challenging Behaviour in Schools 2005 which lays down clear guidelines in this area.

The question of whether a child should be physically restrained or contained if they pose a danger to themselves, other pupils or teachers is addressed in the INTO Guidelines "Managing Challenging Behaviour in Schools"(2005)

It advises to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence;
- Injuring themselves or others;
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise." It must be emphasised that the vast majority of pupil misbehaviour can be managed without any use of containment / restraint.

Situations in which reasonable physical intervention may be appropriate include:

- When the child is behaving in such a way that they are presenting a risk to themselves or to others.
- When action is necessary in self-defence e.g. when the pupil attacks another pupil or adult.
- When there is an immediate or imminent risk of injury to another child or an adult. e.g. when pupils are fighting or there is rough play or misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- When there is immediate risk of significant damage to property-when a pupil is about to vandalise property.
- Where behaviour jeopardises good order and discipline.
- A pupil persistently refuses to leave an area e.g. the classroom or a playground etc
- Behaviour which seriously disrupts a lesson.

Examples of such interventions might include holding back a child who runs out in to traffic or intervening between two children fighting.

The following principles must be borne in mind when considering any use of physical restraint:

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

- Any consideration of the use of restraint or containment should only occur, as a last resort, where no other intervention is feasible or effective; and
- The intention of any physical intervention must be clear.

In short, teachers and staff in **Scoil Mhuire Cúl an Áirne** should only intervene physically to restrain or contain a child:

- Where there is a clear danger to the child or others;
- Where all other interventions 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.

In **Scoil Mhuire Cúl an Áirne** the use of physical restraint may be part of the school's policy on challenging behaviour if individual pupil circumstances warrant it.

Where such a need exists in the school, staff will normally be required to undertake training in the use of restraint. However, it is important to keep in mind that restraint is used as a last resort and only according to the guidelines detailed above. Any potential policy on restraint in an individual pupil behaviour management plan will be risk assessed, discussed with parents and relevant support agencies involved with the pupil and written up by a delegated member of staff before such a plan is implemented.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2018

Signed Cormac Guinan (Chairperson B.O.M.)

Date: 11/06/2018

Signed: Frances Lynch (Principal / Secretary B.O.M.)

Date: 11/06/2018