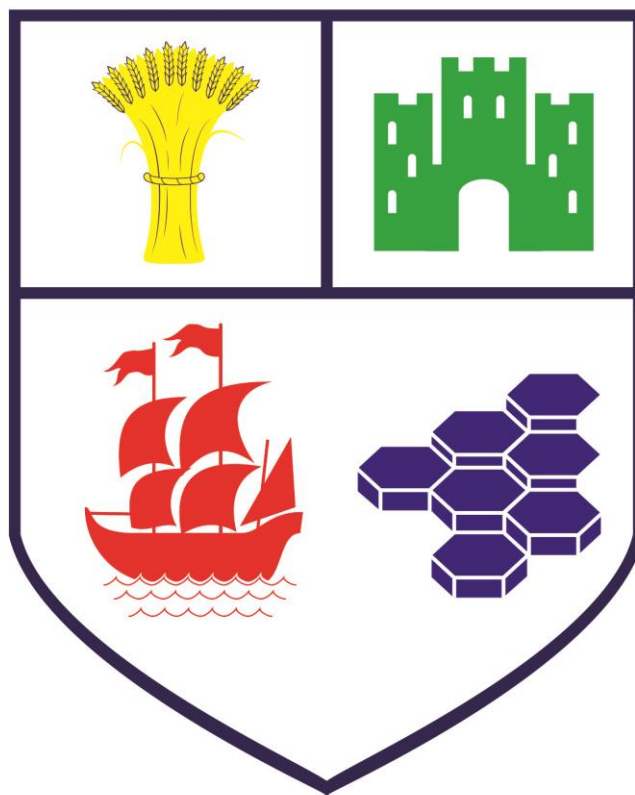


# Dunseverick Primary School



## Safe Handling & The Use of Reasonable Force Policy

This policy was reviewed & adopted by the BOG

November 2023

Signed by the Principal

Signed by the Chair of the BOG

Review Date

November 2024

# SAFE HANDLING AND THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE WITH CHILDREN POLICY

## *RATIONALE*

Dunseverick Primary School aims to deliver a broad and balanced education for each of its pupils. The paramount responsibility of every person connected with the school is the safety and welfare of its children. Through a sense of order and a sense of purpose the care and education of our children are made more effective.

It is within this context that safe handling and the use of reasonable force may, on occasion, be necessary. Accountability for the use of reasonable force/restraint will lie within the aims which we have made clear for such circumstances.

## *AIMS IN RELATION TO SAFE HANDLING AND THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE*

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To create a learning environment in which children and adults feel safe.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide both teaching and non-teaching staff with guidance relating to circumstances in which reasonable force might be used and how such reasonable force might be applied.
- To maintain a clear detailed record of when and why reasonable force has to be applied.

## *REASONABLE FORCE AS A POSSIBLE NECESSITY*

The Department of Education Circular 1999/9 quotes Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. On any occasion where a member of staff has responsibility for a pupil (in school or outside the premises) this order permits the member of staff to use 'such force as is reasonable' in the circumstances 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 himself/herself)
- c) 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.

At Dunseverick Primary School the use of reasonable force with children will always be as a last resort or in an emergency where it is possible that significant harm will occur if action is not taken immediately. It will never be used as a punishment.

### **Situations where reasonable force might be necessary include:**

- a pupil attacking another pupil or a member of staff
- to stop pupils fighting
- a pupil causing, or likely to cause damage or injury by rough play, accident, wilful action or misuse of dangerous materials and items
- a pupil running in a corridor where there is a risk of an accident
- a pupil trying to leave school
- a pupil defying repeated instructions to leave a classroom
- a pupil seriously disrupting a lesson

### *DEFINITION OF SAFE HANDLING AND REASONABLE FORCE*

The use of reasonable force is only lawful if circumstances warrant it. The degree of force used will be the minimum appropriate to the seriousness of the behaviour or incident that it is intended to prevent. It will be employed calmly and in a professional manner. This might include:-

- physically separating pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- holding
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil with a hand on the back or shoulder
- (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

### **UNACCEPTABLE AND UNREASONABLE FORCE**

The following uses of force will always be considered unreasonable and therefore will not be used in Dunseverick Primary School:

- holding around the neck
- any hold that might restrict breathing
- kicking, slapping or punching
- forcing limbs against joints
- tripping
- holding by the hair or ear
- holding the pupil face down on the ground

### *ANTICIPATING THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE*

Having completed both an individual risk assessment and an environmental risk assessment for the purposes of pupil safety and promoting positive behaviour, the situation will continue to be monitored. All staff will be encouraged to report concerns relating to routines, individuals and situations that have the potential to lead to incidents requiring the use of reasonable force. In particular all members of staff have been briefed on the necessity for monitoring risk in their own teaching environment.

If it is considered likely that a pupil will be sufficiently disruptive to require the use of reasonable force (whether for medical, special needs or another reason), the parents/carers will be consulted and an appropriate action plan agreed.

Teachers and supervisory assistants will only exercise the use of reasonable force in extreme circumstances. **In an emergency any member of staff will have the authority to use reasonable force.**

#### *COMPLAINTS*

Any complaint following the use of reasonable force will be considered according to the procedures outlined in the school's policy for dealing with complaints made against a teacher. (Contained in Safeguarding Policy)

#### *REVIEW*

This policy has been written and agreed in response to the Department of Education Circular 1999/9 and updated in light of guidance materials issued by DENI and NEELB in 2003. It will be reviewed annually in relation to ongoing individual and environmental risk analysis, advice and training. It will be available to parents as appropriate.

## Dunseverick Primary School Incident Requiring the Use of Reasonable Force (RF1)

Pupil:		Class:
Member(s) of staff who employed reasonable force:		Date:
		Time:
Name of adult witness(s):		Status:
Reasons for use of reasonable force		
To ensure safety <input type="checkbox"/> To preserve order <input type="checkbox"/> To prevent destruction <input type="checkbox"/>		
Account of incident (include description of incident, reasonable force, pupil response, outcome)		
Details of injury and/or damage:		
Details of any measures introduced following the incident:		
Signatures of staff involved:	Copies to: <input type="checkbox"/> 1. child <input type="checkbox"/> 2. staff involved <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Chairman of B of G <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Parent/Carer (if required)	
Principal's Signature:	Date .....	