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**Lisnasharragh Primary School**

**Use of**

**Reasonable Force**

**Policy**

April 2023

**Use of Reasonable Force**

The Education Order (NI) enables a member of staff to use reasonable force in the circumstances to prevent children from:

* committing an offence
* causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person or self
* displaying behaviour, which is unacceptable to proper school discipline either in or out of class

The right to use reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil applies:

* when a member of staff is on the school premises
* elsewhere, when in charge of the child
* to all school staff with the authority of the principal

(volunteers would only be expected to alert the member of staff in charge)

**Reasonable Force**

Reasonable force cannot be precisely defined but three areas should be considered before reasonable force is applied:

* the use of force is only reasonable when prevention of the incident cannot be resolved without force
* the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident
* the use of reasonable force must be in keeping with the physical strength of the pupil as defined by age, sex or disability of the child

**Predicting the Need for Reasonable Force**

Initially, it is assumed that all good behaviour management strategies have been deployed. In order that staff may make the correct decision at short notice the school will have considered, in advance, circumstances when they should and should not use reasonable force.

**Need for Reasonable Force**

The use of reasonable force can be considered when:

* the school’s behavioural management strategies have failed
* when self-defence is necessary
* when there is a risk of injury
* when an imminent behaviour risk if predicted
* when significant damage to property is likely

Examples of the above include:

* a child attacking a member of staff of other pupil
* children are fighting
* children are at risk of injury
* rough play or use of dangerous objects
* running in an inappropriate situation
* a child’s behaviour is seriously disrupting a lesson
* a child persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom
* a child attempting to leave the school

**Conduct During the Application of Reasonable Force**

Having considered and applied all possible alternatives members of staff should:

* inform the child what action he/she will be taking
* continue by word and action to diffuse the situation
* secure the well-being of all other children, if necessary by removing them from the area
* send for assistance

**Physical Intervention**

Physical Intervention could include:

* standing between children
* blocking a child’s pathway
* holding a child without excessive force
* leading a child by the arm
* shepherding a child by placing hand in the centre of the back
* in extreme cases, using more restrictive force

**Unacceptable Restraints**

Staff should never act in a way that might lead to injury of the child.  It would be therefore unacceptable to hit, slap, punch, twist limbs, hold inappropriately, or throw an object as means of constraint. It is understood that all adults will act in good faith in cases of extreme emergency.

**Physical Contact**

Teachers should use their professional training and judgement as to when when physical contact is appropriate such as in PE lessons when coaching techniques or consoling a child in distress.

**Reporting of the Use of Reasonable Force**

* the Principal, Vice-Principal or other SLT member should be informed immediately
* the appropriate report form should be completed when the situation has been diffused
* a parent of the child should be contacted and informed of the incident

**Record of the Use of Reasonable Force**

The report on the ‘Use of Reasonable Force’ will contain:

* date of incident
* outline of events preceding incident
* outline of incident including reason for use of reasonable force
* action taken to subdue the incident
* record of any injury or treatment
* names of any adults present
* signatures of member of staff reporting incident