

St. Patrick's N.S Castletara
Roll No.14073G



Behaviour of Concern Policy

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St Patrick's National School, Castletara

1. Introduction

St Patrick's National School, Castletara is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive and nurturing learning environment where every child is enabled to achieve their full potential academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

This Behaviour of Concern Policy provides a clear, structured and regulation-first framework for supporting pupils where behaviours interfere with learning, wellbeing or safety. It reflects the school's Catholic ethos and duty of care to all members of the school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement, SEN Policy, Wellbeing Policy, SPHE Plan and Bí Cineálta Action Plan.

2. Legislative and Policy Context

This policy is informed by and aligned with:

- Department of Education Circular 0081/2024
- Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations (DES, 2024)
- NCSE Relate: A Regulation-First Approach

- Education Act (1998)
- Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- EPSEN Act (2004)
- Children First Act (2015)
- Developing a Code of Behaviour (NEWB, 2008)
- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES)
- Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying

3. Definition of Behaviour of Concern

Behaviour of concern refers to behaviour that significantly interferes with learning, wellbeing or safety. Behaviour is understood as communication and may reflect unmet needs, emotional distress, trauma, sensory overload or difficulty with regulation.

4. Guiding Principles

- Behaviour is communication
- Regulation before reasoning
- Adults act as co-regulators
- Respect for dignity and rights of the child
- Prevention, de-escalation and restoration
- Collaboration with parents/guardians and external supports

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management: Ratification and review of the policy

Principal: Oversight, coordination and liaison

Staff: Implementation, monitoring and recording

Parents/Guardians: Collaboration and support

6. Classroom-Based Preventative Strategies (Whole-School)

Across all classrooms, staff employ proactive strategies to support regulation and wellbeing, including:

- Clear routines and positively framed class rules
- Explicit teaching of behaviour expectations
- Movement and sensory breaks throughout the school day
- Breathing, grounding and calming strategies
- Calm or regulation spaces (not seclusion)
- Zones of Regulation and emotional literacy
- Bí Cineálta values: kindness, respect and inclusion
- Differentiated teaching and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

6A. Classroom Strategies by Age Group

Junior & Senior Infants

Preventative:

- Visual schedules, routines and first/then boards
- Frequent short movement breaks and action songs
- Modelling kind behaviour and gentle hands

Supportive:

- Adult-led co-regulation
- Simple breathing strategies
- Calm corners with sensory resources

Restorative:

- Naming feelings
- Simple repair conversations
- Supported return to routines

Middle Classes (1st–3rd)

Preventative:

- Zones of Regulation language and visuals
- Scheduled movement and regulation breaks
- Co-created class rules

Supportive:

- Guided breathing and grounding
- Access to calm spaces
- Adult reassurance and co-regulation

Restorative:

- Reflective conversations
- Restorative chats and collaborative problem-solving

Senior Classes (4th–6th)

Preventative:

- Student-led regulation and mindfulness breaks
- Explicit teaching of self-regulation strategies
- Leadership and responsibility roles

Supportive:

- Independent access to regulation tools
- Journaling or quiet reflection

- Adult check-ins as needed

Restorative:

- Restorative conferencing
- Solution-focused planning for future situations

7. Prevention and Early Intervention – Regulation-First (NCSE Relate)

In line with NCSE Relate, pupils must feel safe, regulated and connected before learning and positive behaviour can occur. Teachers recognise their role as co-regulators, intentionally using calm presence, predictable routines and positive relationships to support regulation.

8. Continuum of Support and Response

Support for All (Whole-School and Classroom Support)

- Positive behaviour reinforcement and encouragement
- Clear expectations, routines and consistent responses
- Visual supports and structured classroom environments
- Explicit teaching of social, emotional and self-regulation skills
- Regular movement and regulation breaks
- Restorative conversations following minor difficulties

Support for Some (Targeted Support)

- Follow Relate Guidelines
- Follow code of behaviour
- Use of Stressors tools to support pupil
- Consultation with the Principal and SEN team
- increased monitoring and structured recording
- Identification of triggers, stressors and communicative intent
- Targeted strategies such as check-in/check-out systems
- Small-group or individual regulation and social skills support
- Planned communication and collaboration with parents/guardian
- Short-term behaviour targets reviewed regularly

Support for a Few (Individualised and Intensive Support)

- Development of an Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP)
- Clear identification of proactive strategies and de-escalation supports
- Agreed responses during dysregulation and crisis situations
- Collaborative planning with parents/guardians

- Engagement with external professionals where appropriate
- Regular review, reflection and adjustment of supports

9. Recording, Monitoring and Confidentiality

- Behaviours of concern are recorded using agreed school procedures
- Records are factual, objective and confidential
- Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis
- All data is stored and managed in compliance with GDPR

10. Crisis Situations, Physical Restraint and Suspension

Crisis Situations

A crisis situation is defined as a situation where a pupil's behaviour presents an imminent risk of serious physical harm to themselves or others. In such circumstances, the school's priority is the immediate safety, dignity and wellbeing of all involved.

All crisis responses are guided by the principles of prevention, de-escalation and least-restrictive practice.

De-escalation

Wherever possible, de-escalation strategies are used before any other response. These include:

- Calm, regulated adult presence and tone of voice
- Active listening and acknowledgement of distress
- Reducing verbal demands and simplifying language
- Offering clear, simple choices
- Allowing personal space and time
- Adjusting the environment to reduce stimulation

Staff recognise that regulation must be restored before reflection or reasoning can occur.

Seclusion

Seclusion, defined as the involuntary confinement of a pupil **alone** in a space they are prevented from leaving, **is not permitted under any circumstances.**

Please note that pupils may need their own space to regulate for their own safety and the safety of others, if an adult is with a pupil in a space to support regulation, this is not deemed seclusion.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint may be used only as a last resort in a crisis situation where there is an imminent risk of serious physical harm and where all other de-escalation strategies have failed.

Physical restraint:

- Is an act of care to protect safety, not a disciplinary measure
- Is used only to prevent serious harm
- Employs the least amount of force necessary
- Is proportionate and time-limited
- Is never used as punishment, for compliance, or to manage non-dangerous behaviour

Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) approaches

A small number of staff members have received training in Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) approaches and the whole staff will eventually be trained in some or all of the course as needed. This training emphasises prevention, early intervention, de-escalation and, only where absolutely necessary, the safe and proportionate use of physical intervention. CPI-informed practice supports staff to act within Department of Education guidance and to prioritise dignity, safety and reflective practice.

Physical restraint is not planned as a routine response and is not included in behaviour plans except as a risk-management measure where appropriate and agreed.

Crisis Prevention Model

CPI also identifies four core responses that align with four levels of behavior. When a person exhibits Anxiety, staff respond with supportive strategies to reduce stress and offer reassurance. During Defensive behavior, a directive response is used to set clear, respectful limits and provide choices. If Risk Behavior occurs and there is immediate danger, physical intervention may be used as a last resort to maintain safety. Finally, during Tension Reduction, staff focus on therapeutic rapport to support recovery, process the incident, and help prevent future crises.

Behaviour	Response
Anxiety	Supportive
Defensive	Directive
Risk Behaviour	Physical intervention
Tension Reducation	Therapeutic Rapport

De-escalation principles

De-escalation principles focus on preventing crisis behaviors from escalating into physical interventions. These principles include remaining calm and respectful, using nonjudgmental and supportive language, maintaining appropriate personal space, and actively listening to understand the individual's needs or concerns. By recognizing early

warning signs and responding with empathy and clear limits, staff can help individuals regain emotional control and promote a safer environment.

Physical restraint

Physical restraint is used only when disengagement and de-escalation strategies have failed and there is an immediate danger to the individual or others. CPI emphasizes that any physical restraint must be safe, least restrictive, and time-limited, with continuous monitoring of the person's physical and emotional well-being. The focus remains on maintaining dignity, minimizing harm, and releasing the restraint as soon as the individual regains control, followed by support and reflection after the incident.

Post-Incident Procedures

Following any incident involving physical restraint:

- The pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing is monitored
- The incident is recorded factually and objectively
- The Principal is informed as soon as practicable
- Parents/guardians are notified in a timely manner
- The incident is reported to the Chairperson of the Board of Management
- From September 2025, incidents are reported to the NCSE
- A reflective review takes place to identify learning and reduce recurrence

Suspension

Suspension may be considered only in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Department of Education guidelines. It is used as a last resort and is accompanied by a plan for reintegration and support.

11. Staff Support and Wellbeing

The school recognises the impact managing behaviours of concern can have on staff wellbeing. Professional support, consultation and relevant training opportunities are promoted and supported.

12. Review and Ratification

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management or earlier if required.

Ratified on: 22.10.2025

Signed: Eddie Conolly Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: 22/10/25 Principal

