

Bohermore National School

Physical Restraint / Restrictive Intervention Policy

Document Control

Policy Title	Physical Restraint / Restrictive Intervention Policy
School Name	Bohermore National School
Developed by	In-School Management Team
Approved by	Board of Management
Date Ratified	
Review Date	

Policy Statement

Bohermore National School is committed to providing a safe, positive and inclusive learning environment where all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect.

This policy sets out the school's approach to the use of physical restraint (restrictive interventions) in line with the Department of Education's guidance document "Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations" (2023).

The use of physical restraint will only occur in rare and exceptional circumstances, and only as a last resort to prevent imminent risk of serious physical harm to the student or to others. The dignity, rights and wellbeing of the student must be preserved at all times.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All school staff and any adults working on behalf of the school.
- All school settings and school-related activities (on and off site).

Definitions

- Behaviour of Concern: Behaviour that poses or could pose a risk to the safety, wellbeing or rights of the person or others.
- Crisis Situation: A situation in which behaviours of concern present an imminent risk of serious physical harm.
- Physical Restraint / Restrictive Physical Intervention: Any method of responding to a student's behaviour that involves the use of physical force to restrict the student's movement or normal access to their own body.
- Seclusion: Placing a student involuntarily in an area from which they are physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion is not permitted in any recognised school setting.

Guiding Principles

- Child-Centred: The child's best interests, rights and voice must be at the centre of all decisions.
- Safety and Wellbeing: The physical and emotional safety of all students and staff will be prioritised.
- Prevention First: Emphasis will be placed on proactive and positive behaviour support to prevent behaviours of concern.
- Least Restrictive: If restraint is required, it will be the least restrictive intervention, for the shortest time, and only by trained staff.
- Respect and Dignity: All students will be treated with respect, and their dignity protected at all times.
- Legal and Policy Compliance: All practices will comply with relevant legislation, DES and Child Protection Guidelines.

Prevention and De-Escalation

The school promotes a whole-school approach to behaviour and wellbeing that includes:

- Positive behaviour expectations and consistent routines.
- Early identification and support planning for students with additional behavioural needs.
- Access to quiet spaces or sensory regulation activities.
- Use of de-escalation techniques including: active listening, acknowledging feelings, non-threatening body language, offering choices, reducing stimulation, and giving space.

Staff will use these strategies to prevent escalation and avoid the need for physical intervention.

Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint may only be used when:

- There is imminent risk of serious physical harm to the student or others; and
- All other less restrictive options have been attempted or are deemed inappropriate due to the urgency of the situation.

Physical restraint must never be used:

- As a punishment or sanction.
- To manage non-compliance or low-level disruption.
- For the convenience of staff.

Restraint must always be:

- Carried out by trained staff members wherever possible.
- Proportionate, measured and time-limited.
- Discontinued as soon as the risk has passed.

Prohibited Practices

- Seclusion of any student.
- Use of physical restraint for disciplinary or behaviour management purposes.
- Use of restraint in a manner that restricts breathing or risks injury.

After an Incident

- Ensure immediate safety of all involved.
- Provide medical assistance if required.
- Inform the Principal and parents/guardians as soon as practicable.
- Complete the school's Incident Report Form.
- Conduct a debrief with staff involved and, where appropriate, with the student and parents/guardians.
- Review the student's support plan if applicable.

Recording and Monitoring

- All incidents of physical restraint must be fully recorded using the school's standard incident form.
- The Principal will review all incident reports and maintain a central log.
- The Board of Management will receive anonymised summaries of incidents for oversight purposes.

- Incidents will be analysed for patterns to inform training and preventative planning.

Training

- All staff will receive training in positive behaviour support, de-escalation techniques and crisis management.
- Designated staff will receive specific training in safe physical restraint techniques.
- Training will be refreshed regularly, and after any incident requiring restraint.

Roles and Responsibilities

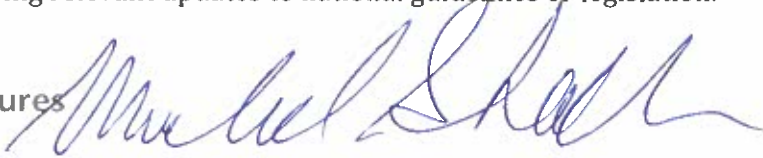
- Board of Management: Ratifies policy, ensures compliance and oversight.
- Principal: Implements policy, ensures staff training, monitors and reviews incidents.
- Staff: Follow policy, use de-escalation strategies, apply restraint only as a last resort, complete incident reports.

Review of Policy

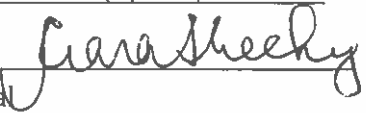
This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually, or
- Following any incident involving the use of restraint, or
- Following relevant updates to national guidelines or legislation.

Signatures

Signed: 
Chairperson, Board of Management
(Michael Sheehan)

Date: 16/10/25

Signed: 
Principal
(Ciara Sheehy)

Date: 16/10/25