



Code of Behaviour and Disciplinary Process

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of Midleton Educate Together National School are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

1. Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
2. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
3. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
4. Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
5. Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression by an individual or group against others. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation and taunting. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be

expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Strategies/Incentives

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.

Discouraging Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive and discourage misbehavior. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
- Prescribing extra work.
- Loss of privileges.
- Detention during break.
- Communication with parents.
- Referral to Principal.
- Principal communicating with parents.
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety

Categories of Misbehaviour

Along with discouraging misbehaviour and creating a positive school climate the school follows three levels of misbehaviour. They are recognised as Minor, Serious and Gross. (Appendix 1 highlight the steps taken and the clear and open communication with home)

Suspension/Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

We acknowledge the additional challenges within Bláthú (our Special classes for pupils with Autism). Following specific Crisis Prevention Training (CPI) by staff within Bláthú a specific document has been formulated for the prevention of or use of restrictive interventions. (**Appendix 3**). It is also acknowledged that a Code of Behaviour for students in Bláthú will also be respectful to the needs that are met on a daily basis. (**Appendix 2**)

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

School Rules

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly. Pupils In classrooms are encouraged with their teachers to design a class charter that will support positive attitudes and behaviours.

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of -- a.m. or after the official closing time of -- p.m. (infants) -- p.m. (other classes) except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times. It is parents' responsibility to inform

class teachers in writing if there is a change in after-school routine. All parents who allow their child to walk home must give written consent to the class teacher at the start of each academic year.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow the '5 Golden Classroom Rules'

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.

Reviewed and Ratified by the Board of Management May 2022

Appendix 1

Addition to code of Discipline / School Behaviour Policy

Categories of Misbehaviour: Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross.

- Examples of minor misbehaviours may include (this list is not exhaustive):
- Talking out of turn
- Inappropriate comments
- Lack of attention in class or yard
- Distracting others in class or yard
- Interfering in others games in yard
- Leaving seat without permission
- Homework not done or incomplete (unless an explanatory note is provided).
- Mobile phones out/switched on eating during lesson
- Chewing gum
- Mock fighting
- Jostling and pushing
- Shouting and loudness in class or within the school building
- Spitting on the ground throwing things (other than at people)
- Unsupervised climbing / running in the school building
- Bad or derogatory language
- Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour (this list is not exhaustive):

- Bullying (including cyber bullying as well as any form of alienation and/or intimidation)
- Racism
- Verbal /physical abuse of adults and children
- Theft
- Damage to property
- Use of explicit sexual language
- Any behaviour which poses harm to themselves or others
- Continuous and on-going minor misbehaviour may be treated as serious misbehaviour.

Examples of gross misbehaviour (this list is not exhaustive):

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Bringing a weapon on to school property
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Continuous and on-going serious misbehaviour may be treated as gross misbehaviour

Sanctions* May include but are not limited to;

Step 1	Sanctions may include: Discussion with pupil and agreement on a more appropriate way to act in future Verbal and / or written apology Verbal and / or written undertaking to improve Reasoning with the pupil Verbal warning Confiscation of item Time out in the classroom Extra work Loss of privileges, for example, not being allowed to do jobs, not being allowed to sit on the school council, etc. Loss of yard time (5 minutes for juniors for either morning or afternoon break/ 5 minutes for seniors at morning break, or 10 minutes for seniors at afternoon break.) Informal word with the principal, who has a quiet word with the child Teachers may also use the strategy of planned ignoring (ignoring attention seeking behaviour, that is not a danger to other pupils), followed by discussion.
Step 2	Child persists with misbehaviour = child is moved to another classroom and parent is informed via a parent/teacher note in the homework journal.
Step 3**	Child persists with misbehaviour = Child is given extra homework to be signed upon completion by parent. Parents are requested to meet with Teacher.
Step 4	Child persists with misbehaviour = Parents informed by note in homework journal and are requested to meet with teacher and Deputy Principal. Child's name is placed in the Principal's Behaviour Record Book.
Note	Before a child progresses to Step 5, teacher is required to present principal with their recording of Step 1 to 4 and any evidence therein.
Step 5	Child persists with misbehaviour = Principal reprimands pupil and parents informed by the class teacher
Step 6	Child persists with misbehaviour = Principal meets with teachers, parents and pupil.
Step 7	Child persists with misbehaviour = may lead to suspension. BoM is informed. In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Principal may suspend a pupil (immediately if necessary) for up to five days and retrospectively inform the BoM. The health and safety of all is paramount in this decision.
Step 8	If repeated interventions do not result in co-operative behaviour then expulsion may be considered. Procedures for suspension and exclusion are laid out in the NEWB (National Educational Welfare Board) report 2008 and the DES (Department of Education and Science) circular and will be followed by Midleton Educate Together National School. Parents have the right of appeal.

Note: It is recognised that for some children serious/gross misbehaviour may be related to a specific diagnosis. Such children will be subject to the steps outlined in this policy but with equal consideration given to their individual behaviour plan (IBP). The latter forms part of the child's individual education plan (IEP) to be implemented in consultation with class teacher, parents, SEN team and principal . Where there is no existing diagnosis, but both parents and staff agree that an assessment is required, they can liaise with the school support team to assist with a referral, as outlined in the school's SEN policy.

*Progression through these steps can be accelerated depending on the level/ frequency of misbehaviour in particular situations.

**As infant classes do not always receive specific homework this step may not apply.

Appendix 2

Introduction

This policy stems from Bláthú's commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment in our ASD special classes. This policy is designed to uphold the rights of children in the ASD classes and the staff who support them, to learn and develop in an environment that is positive, respectful, safe and inclusive. This stems from the Educate Together inclusive ethos of "Learn together to live together". Promoting positive behaviour and preventing and managing challenging behaviour is vital to ensuring the safety of all children, staff and families. As a staff we believe that children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. As a school community we will endeavour at all times to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and fostering positive relationships with pupils.

Rationale – Why devise it?

- *Support the children of Bláthú.*
- *It is a priority area identified by the Staff.*
- *Need and behaviours are constantly changing.*
- *To have a policy to provide for the complexity of needs that are within the Autism unit.*
- *To ensure the safety of staff and pupils.*

Autism and Behaviour

Challenging behaviour is "behaviour, within the context of the school, which prevents participation in appropriate educational activities; often isolates children from their peers; affects the learning and functioning of other pupils; significantly reduces the opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities; makes excessive demands on staff and resources; places the child or others in physical danger" (Harris, Cook and Upton 1996).

Bláthú's approach to Behaviour Support acknowledges that the student's behavioural difficulties may be linked to the dyad of impairments, sensory sensitivities, and cognitive abilities of the individual. The school acknowledges that the students may have a dual diagnosis and the impact this may have on their behaviour. All of the above factors will be assessed and will inform the approach taken when providing behaviour support for individual students. The school is committed to working with parents to help reduce unacceptable or unsafe behaviours; however, the complex needs of individual students will always inform the ultimate approach adopted. We aim to focus on the promotion of positive behaviours to create a safe and educational environment for our pupils.

Overview:

Pupils attending Bláthú at Midleton Educate Together have varying needs and abilities and what we expect of them is to be the best they can be.

Expectations

The expectations for students, staff and parents and how they will treat each other:

- *It is expected that students, staff and parents will work together in a positive proactive manner, treating each other with dignity and respect.*
- *Parents provide staff with invaluable advice, information, support and reinforcement.*

- *School staff should work together with parents as partners in the process of developing behaviours that are appropriate and acceptable in so far as this is possible for our students.*

Limitations and utilization

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations which may arise nor to state all the possible consequences of unacceptable behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the student, the teacher, and the principal to be used to solve individual problems.

Aims

Ideally, the introduction of this Policy in Bláthú will facilitate the achievement of the following:

- *To enhance the learning environment where every child can make progress in all aspects of their development.*
- *To allow the School to function in an orderly and harmonious way.*
- *To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our ethos.*
- *To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support positive behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.*
- *To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.*
- *To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.*
- *To recognise the differences between children, and to accommodate these differences.*
- *To ensure that intervention in managing behaviour emphasises rewarding of desirable behaviours rather than the punishment of undesirable ones.*
- *To ensure that all Individual Education Plans (IEPs), promote the development of desirable behaviours rather than the suppression or elimination of undesirable ones.*
- *To promote self-regulation.*
- *To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the School Community*
- *To assist Parents and Pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures*
- *To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.*
- *To ensure that every student has access to the items/activities they find most powerfully reinforcing, to increase their chances of success with any goals or objectives that have been designed for them to achieve.*

Promoting positive behaviour in Bláthú

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often, it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication. Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate, which is supportive of positive behaviour. In Bláthú we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour. The positive school and restorative ethos extends to all members of the school community adopting a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every

effort should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.

The following are some of the strategies that will be used to promote positive behaviour in our ASD class:

- *Develop language and communication skills – including PECS, Lámh, reduced language, requesting and sentence building.*
- *A structured environment/ TEACCH environment*
- *Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions*
- *The use of timers/visuals to plan for transitions*
- *Restorative practice & language*
- *Visual schedules/ Timetables*
- *Positive reinforcement & Reward systems*
- *Praise and encouragement*
- *First/Then boards*
- *Choice boards*
- *Frequent/ communication with parents*
- *Goal setting through Individual Education plans (IEPs) in collaboration with parents.*
- *The teaching of social skills and acceptable behaviours through work tasks and social stories.*
- *Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members*
- *Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour*
- *Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.*
- *Access to preferred items and motivators to reinforce preferred behaviours*
- *Talk and discussion of behaviour with the child (where applicable)*
- *The teaching and reinforcing of appropriate replacement behaviours that serve the same function for the child (e.g. teaching the student an appropriate means of asking for a break from a demanding task without resorting to challenging behaviour).*
- *Building positive relationships with the children and families.*
- *Continued professional development (CPD) in managing challenging behaviours and promoting positive learning environments.*

Examples of misbehaviour are categorised into three areas minor, serious and gross. Sanctions and consequences of misbehaviour will take into account the complexity of the individual's needs, their intent, cognitive functioning and frequency of the behaviours. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure they have provided the individual with opportunities to succeed and are doing their utmost to teach

Examples of misbehaviour

Minor misbehaviour

Excessive noise disruption
Purposely disrupting classroom
Swearing
Diving
Dropping
Name calling
Refusal
Rude gestures
Running away
Throwing
Climbing

Serious misbehaviour

Damage to property/classroom
Hitting /slapping pupils/ SNAs/ teacher
Spitting
Scratching
Racism
Running away within school grounds
Verbal abuse of adults and children
Resulting from the behaviour of a child, classroom activities are continually disrupted
Disruptive behaviour where the safety of the child / other children or staff cannot be guaranteed due to the intensity of the child's behaviour.
Continuous and on-going minor misbehaviour may be treated as serious misbehaviour.
Indecency

Gross misbehaviour

Spitting
Serious damage to property
Serious assault to children or adults
Running away out of school property or on outings
Throwing furniture
Biting
Bringing a weapon to school property
Theft
Continuous and on-going serious misbehaviour may be treated as gross misbehaviour

This list is not exhaustive.

replacement appropriate behaviours

Consequences of unacceptable behaviour, responses and sanctions.

Please note that because of the difficulties associated with autism many of our students are unable to understand consequences of their behaviour and will need a detailed behaviour plan relevant to their individual needs. However, for individual students who understand about consequences the following responses and sanctions may apply.

Possible sanctions to consider:

1. Use of facial expression.
2. Use of firm tone (not shouting)
3. Quiet time – removal from group under supervision of an adult.
4. Removing others from the vicinity of the child.
5. Giving the child notice of a possible consequence of their behaviour – last chance!
6. Asking the Principal to talk to the child.
7. Where the behaviour is very aggressive threatening or violent towards staff and other pupils the parent may be asked by the Principal to take the child home for the rest of the day. This is termed as an informal suspension and is undertaken to ensure the safety of the pupils involved and the pupils and staff of the class who may be exposed to this behaviour.
8. Where the behaviour or the distress of the child is effecting their well-being and having a negative impact on their school experience the parents may be rung and asked to take their child home for the day.

Restrictive practices include:

- Seclusion
- Restricted access
- Restrictive restraints
- Exclusionary time out
- Physical intervention (physical restraint) procedures (safety intervention strategies)

Restrictive practices should only be used as a **last resort** and the **least restrictive and least intrusive** option should be used. Where restrictive practices are being considered, referrals should be made to relevant multi-disciplinary professionals and when implemented should only be carried out by suitably trained and qualified staff. The role of the restrictive practice is to make the current situation safe while the team addresses the underlying causes and maintenance for the restriction. Please see Middleton Educate Together policy on safety interventions.

School Procedures for dealing with gross misconduct:

1. Keep incident reports.
2. ABC charts/ Frequency charts

3. Meetings / phone calls with parents as part of the process to manage behaviour and to keep parents informed.

4. Support from the disability services.

4. Establishing of an Individual Behaviour Support Plan in consultation with parents and members of the Multidisciplinary team.

5. Consider if additional relevant training is required for staff.

6. Deal with behaviour in situ with all necessary support if possible. If behaviour cannot be dealt with in situ, it should be dealt with in alternative setting (e.g. quiet room, sensory room, gross motor room, outdoor area or rainbow room) within school with necessary support.

9. Inform SENO if additional resources are required.

10. Possibility of a reduced day as a strategy to promote the well-being of the child and to promote a high chance of daily success and positive school days for that individual.

11. Where Principal and Deputy Principal in consultation with the multi-disciplinary team determine that the risk of damage to children or staff is high the child may be suspended for 3 days. H.S.E. representative will be informed by the Principal in case immediate supports are required for the family. Board of Management sanction is required to suspend a child beyond 3 days. The child can be accepted back into school if his / her behaviour can be managed in safety as determined by the multi-disciplinary team.

Factors to consider before suspension are:

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
2. The context of the behaviour.
3. The impact of the behaviour.
4. The interventions tried to date and whether suspension is a proportionate response.

Expulsion:

In extreme cases when there are repeated serious incidents of gross misconduct such as threatening or violent behaviour towards other pupils or staff which cannot be resolved within the existing resources and when all the internal school procedures listed above have been exhausted and the Board is of the opinion that the student should be expelled for gross misconduct, the Board will follow the procedures and guidelines as stipulated in the Education and Welfare Act 2000, Section 24.

Appendix 3

Policy for the prevention of or use of restrictive interventions

Midleton Educate Together NS promotes a restrictive free environment and in the first instance applies the principles outlined in our Code of Behaviour Policy which provides guidelines to staff on the use of day to day positive behavioural management strategies. These are designed to help all students to modify/manage their own behaviour in the long term. Where these strategies are not working and it is foreseeable that a student may engage in high risk behaviours requiring a physical intervention or restrictive practice, this policy applies.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child committee has recognised “that there are exceptional circumstances in which teachers and others working with children in institutions may be confronted with dangerous behaviour which justifies the use of reasonable restraint to control it”

(Human Rights Committee, General Comment 20, Article 7 (Forty-fourth session, 1992), Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopt ed by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, UN).

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to identify roles and responsibilities of staff and to provide guidance in relation to the use and management of restrictive interventions in line with best practice.

The paramount concerns are for the safety and welfare of the pupils in the school as well as for the safety and welfare of the adults who look after them.

For the purpose of this policy a child is defined as any child attending the school regardless of age.

Other associated school policies:

- *Health and Safety Statement*
- *Child Safeguarding Policy*
- *Anti -Bullying Policy*
- *Intimate Care Policy 2*
- *Code of Behaviour*
- *Enrolment Policy*

The aims and objectives of these policy guidelines are to:

- *Prevent/reduce injuries to pupils, staff and others and prevent significant damage to property that could lead to an unsafe environment for pupils and staff.*
- *Provide clear guidelines to staff, pupils and parents regarding the use of restrictive physical interventions.*
- *Emphasise a culture within the school of prevention and reduction of the use of restrictive physical interventions.*

- Promote the development of effective relationships, mood management and interpersonal skills.
- Manage serious incidents when they occur.
- Help and encourage staff to pre-empt the need to use restrictive practices by being observant of pre-cursors that may lead to a challenging situation.

Definitions

Restrictive interventions are defined as deliberate acts on the part of other person(s) that restrict a service user's movement, liberty and/or freedom to act independently, in order to: take immediate control of a dangerous situation where there is a real possibility of harm to the person or others if no action is undertaken, and end or reduce significantly the danger to the person or others. (Restrictive Interventions Policy, NHS Foundation Trust).

Any intervention that meets this definition falls within the scope of this policy.

Restraint Any physical, chemical or environmental intervention used specifically to restrict the freedom of movement or behaviour perceived by others to be antisocial.

Physical Restraint: The use of physical force (by one or more persons) for the purpose of preventing the free movement of a pupil. (Mental Health Commission, 2006 b)

Environmental Restraint: Environmental restraint, which is the intentional restriction of a person's normal access to their environment, with the intention of stopping them from leaving. This also includes denying a person their normal means of independent mobility, means of communicating, or the intentional taking away of ability to exercise civil and religious liberties. 4 (Guidance for Designated Centres: Restraint Procedures Health Information and Quality Authority

The following practices are in operation and approved by the board of management of Midleton Educate Together NS:

Environmental

- High handles or 2-way locks on some classroom or other room doors where a pupil is at risk of absconding.
- Locks on presses
- Fencing around playground.
- Locking a door in school for health and safety (rare and must be agreed with Principal).
- Coded locks on entrance/exit points to Bláthú.

Physical

- Holding a pupil's hand or/and elbow (not wrist) when transitioning is for safety and providing manual assistance to a pupil when walking.
- Holding a pupil's hand(s) during intimate care is allowed to prevent the pupil from disrupting the changing process and/or inappropriately accessing their private areas.

- *Staff are allowed to impede a pupil's free movement by standing in front of a danger or between two pupils to prevent injury.*

Mechanical

- *Side rails on plinths when they are used to prevent a pupil accidentally falling out.*
- *Use of seat belt lock/harness on school transport- see bus transport policy.*
- *Clothing to restrict socially unacceptable behaviour and to preserve the dignity of the pupil.*
- *Safety belts on wheelchairs/buggies.*

Roles and responsibilities

Principal It is the responsibility of the Principal to:

- 1. Promote restrictive free interventions within the school.*
- 2. Ensure this policy is available to all staff.*
- 3. Induct staff about the content and application of the policy.*
- 4. Ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the role of assessment, the method of restrictive intervention and circumstances where it is sanctioned for use. Ensure an audit is carried out annually by each class team.*
- 5. Ensure that a comprehensive assessment is completed and that any restrictive intervention which is prescribed (by appropriately qualified staff) is approved by Principal. The only exception to this is when a restrictive intervention is deemed necessary in an emergency situation. All unplanned emergency restrictive interventions must be referred to the Principal.*
- 6. Ensure that all staff attend appropriate and continuing training and education as required. Provide supervision, support and review in respect of the implementation of the policy. Co-ordinate a review in respect of any emergency use of restrictive interventions.*
- 7. Identify problems that may prevent the full implementation of the policy, to bring them to the attention of the Board of Management and agree ways in which to address the problems identified.*

Staff Members

It is the responsibility of staff to:

- 1. Be fully aware of the content of the policy and to adhere to the content.*
- 2. Promote a restrictive free environment at all times*
- 3. Ensure that risk assessments are completed and sanctioned by the Principal prior to the implementation of any restrictive intervention (except in the case of an emergency situation) 6*
- 4. Familiarise themselves with, understand and act in accordance with the pupil's intimate care plan and behaviour plan in line with the pupil's best interest.*
- 5. Ensure that they do not resort to using restrictive interventions in order to compensate for any deficiency of service, lack of professional skill or defects in the environment.*

6. Have a duty of care to protect pupils from the risk of physical or psychological harm associated with the use of restrictive interventions

7. Attend training when it is required.

Behaviour Plans: These are devised for Pupils as being of greatest risk of needing restrictive interventions.

The Behaviour Support Plan should ideally contain the following:

- A brief history of the pupil
- A brief outline of known triggers and likes.
- A multi element behaviour support plan outlining environmental alterations, direct interventions, skills teaching and reactive strategies.
- De-escalation strategies to employ when behaviours start to occur.
- Recommended interventions/restrictive practices which may be employed when de-escalation strategies are unsuccessful or not possible.
- A plan for maintaining a daily log where a pupil presents with multiple incidents of behaviours that challenge e.g. ABC charts and/ or frequency tick charts.
- Planned reviews of any recommended restrictive practices.
- A list of persons to whom the plan needs to be communicated.

The plan is signed by all involved in its implementation. The plan is communicated to parents and their agreement to its implementation is obtained in writing. Parents are informed of any major changes to the plan following the initial introduction.

Staff Training:

The school uses the Safety Intervention approach to support pupils having difficulties managing their behaviour. The aim of Safety Intervention is to promote de-escalation strategies; to reduce risk and use of restraint, and to support teaching, learning and caring by increasing staff confidence and compliance, in responding to behaviours that challenge. In the absence of guidelines and funding from the Department of Education and Skills, the Board of Management has funded the training of two staff members as Safety Intervention Tutors to deliver training to staff in this approach. This behaviour support will be applied throughout the school. School provides refresher training as required and training for new staff.

Guidelines on the use of Restrictive Practices

A.) Pupils with Behaviour Plans:

Interventions used are as outlined in the plan. It is the duty of staff working in the class to be familiar with and implement strategies recommended. Should all planned interventions appear to be failing to manage a situation safely, all staff must use their judgement and take appropriate action to safeguard pupils and staff while calling for assistance from other staff. The school will endeavour to

ensure that, if possible, staff with knowledge of the pupil are available to offer advice or help manage these pupils.

B.) *Unforeseen or Emergency Situations: E.g. a pupil suddenly tries to climb over a fence or run out on a road, or attempts to hurt another unexpectedly – all staff must use their judgement and take appropriate action to safeguard pupils or staff while calling for assistance from other staff verbally or through the school alarm system. Unplanned interventions must take the following principles into consideration:*

- *Necessity/Duress of circumstances – where action must be taken but staff members are required to choose a course of action that will result in least harm.*
- *Reasonable Force – determined by the severity of the behaviour and counterbalanced by gender, size, experience etc.*
- *The best interests of the pupil.*
- *The action is proportionate to the dangers involved.*
- *Acting in Good Faith – encompasses a sincere belief or motive without any malice.*
- *Duty of Care – acting with watchfulness, attention, caution and prudence. Essentially keeping people safe.*

Deciding whether or not to use Restraint

The school requests staff to make a dynamic risk assessment before employing a physical intervention using the following guidelines:

<i>Action</i>	<i>Consider</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Selective attention</i> • <i>Adopt a calm, non-threatening stance and posture.</i> • <i>Use slow controlled voice.</i> • <i>Give clear visual or verbal directions.</i> • <i>Reduce language.</i> • <i>Pause and allow time for compliance.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The likely outcome if a restrictive practice is used against the likely outcomes if it is not.</i> • <i>The short term vs long term risks.</i> • <i>Balancing the best interests, health and safety of the pupil with the best interests, health and safety of the other pupils, staff and general public.</i> • <i>Alerting staff who are most likely to succeed in diffusing the situation.</i>

Having followed all of the above, should a restrictive practice be necessary the guiding principle of ‘The Least Restrictive Alternative in the Least Restrictive Environment’ should be applied whilst at all times striving to respect the dignity of the pupil.

Using a physical restraint.

If restraint is used staff must ask themselves the following questions:

- *Am I using the minimum effort for the shortest time?*
- *Can I reduce the amount of pressure?*
- *How best can I communicate with the pupil and with other staff?*
- *Should I ask someone else to take over?*

Last Resort / Early Intervention

Restrictive practices should always be used as a last resort. This does not mean that all other possible strategies must be tried and tested beforehand; rather it means that staff must make a considered judgement balancing the risks involved, thus allowing informed decisions to be made. Occasionally using a physical intervention early on may prevent a risk of injury to other pupils and staff thus justifying the use of that intervention in that particular situation. Some pupils may have stereotypical patterns of behaviour which alert staff to a developing crisis. Such information is ideally disseminated to all staff in their IEP or student profiles.

Using Time-Out/Withdrawal/Comfort/Environmental Restraint

Sometimes a pupil cannot manage in a classroom setting for a variety of reasons, and may need to be withdrawn to allow teaching and learning to continue for the rest of the pupils. This can happen in various ways:

1.) Time Away:

This may be used informally for pupils who need time or space to calm and/or self-regulate. The pupil is encouraged or prompted to move to another table, chair or designated classroom area for a short period of time or be sent 'on a message'. The purpose of this is to divert or distract the pupil. The goal of time away is to support the pupil to learn self-management techniques when they are upset or experiencing difficulty. Time away involves a choice on part of the pupil. This can be distinguished from environmental restraint when the choice is taken away from the pupil. Time away therefore gives freedom and choice where environmental restraint limits freedom.

2.) Withdrawal/Comfort/Environmental Restraint (accompanied)

This may be used to move a pupil to the 'leisure area' within the classroom or to another place outside of the classroom where he or she is continually supported or monitored by staff either inside or outside the area the pupil is in. This may involve physically intervening to move the pupil and/or preventing him/her from leaving the area until staff consider that it is safe to do so. Staff must continuously attempt to distract or divert the pupil and return him/her to the main classroom area as soon as it is safe to do so. This may take some time if the pupil demonstrates that he/she requires a break from activities or is still exhibiting behaviours that challenge. Doors are not secured in this instance.

3.) Environmental Restraint (unaccompanied but supervised)

Confining a pupil to an area through use of locks on doors is a major restrictive practice and is only considered in exceptional circumstances in which the pupil is presenting as a real and immediate risk to themselves or others. The use of this intervention must be proportionate to the risk presented by the pupil. It may be used at times of emergency only where the risks of significant injury to pupils or staff are very high. If the pupil cannot be removed to a support- area or if there is a real threat to fellow-pupils and staff, other pupils may go to other classrooms and the pupil presenting the risk may be environmentally restrained in his/her own classroom. In either of the above locations the door may be locked and the pupil will be continuously monitored via glass panels to ensure his/her safety. Environmental restraint is always used in line with the strict criteria and rationale outlined in the Behaviour Plan. The action is documented in an incident report which will be signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal. If the Principal or Deputy Principal is concerned for the welfare of any pupil in these circumstances, parents in exceptional circumstances may be asked to bring the pupil home. The purpose of this is to safeguard pupils and or staff in situations of very high risk to themselves or others.

Post-Incident Support

Following an incident, the priority is to look after the pupils and staff involved before reports are filled out and reviews held. Debriefing of staff and pupils is important and is facilitated by allowing for class break up – if deemed necessary, following a serious incident. Classes may call on support from an adjacent class to allow for individual staff members to step out for a short period. Ideally a formal debriefing meeting should be held in the days following a major incident.

Incident reports should be filled out by staff involved when:

- A physical or environmental restraint has been used.*
- Other pupils or staff have experienced physical assault.*
- There is significant damage to property.*

The best time to fill out an incident report is when the situation has settled and the pupil and staff have had time to recover. Group completion of an incident report enables staff to reflect together on possible triggers, appropriateness of interventions and future actions. The report is signed by the Principal or Deputy Principal who will review the interventions used by staff. This will inform any future actions.

Complaints and Allegations

The school seeks to engage positively with parents regarding all aspects of their child's education, care and management. Parents of pupils who engage in high risk behaviours that challenge are prioritised for meetings/phone calls with the Principal or Deputy Principal. The school will endeavour to keep parents informed in a manner that is reasonable and in the best interests of their child. This will take the form of meetings, phone calls, communication books or letters.

Parents or Staff wishing to make a complaint should in the first instance contact the Principal who will discuss the issue with them.