



Regent House Preschool

Reasonable Force & Safe Handling Policy

At Regent House Preschool we believe in promoting the moral, intellectual, personal, social and emotional development of each child in a safe, caring and respectful environment. In light of the current legislative framework, we recognise our responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for the entire school community, staff and pupils, and to promote and sustain appropriate behaviour. We accept the definition of Reasonable Force as stated in the Education Order (NI)1998 and DENI guidance Circular 1999/9 as being the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

1. The staff's dual responsibilities are:

- to provide safe and secure environment for the entire Preschool community (pupils and staff)
- to promote and sustain appropriate behaviour; taking account of:
 - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12); International 1989 (UK 1991)
 - the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Article 3) which requires Board of Governors to ensure that policies are designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of the pupils;
 - the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Article 4) which clarifies the powers of members of staff of a grant-aided school regarding the use of reasonable force;
 - the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 (Articles 17 & 19) which imposes a duty on Boards of Governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils; and
 - the Human Rights Act 1998 which provides for the right to education.

This policy and procedures have been developed in line with guidance from:

- The Department of Education NI circular 1999/9;

- DE document “Towards a Model Policy in Schools on the use of Reasonable Force” August 2002;
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001);
- Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection: Code of Conduct for Staff (1999/10) paragraphs 69 to 72; and
- DE Circular 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils.

2. Definition

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (part II Article 4 (1)) states:

“A member of the staff of a grant-aided school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

- committing any offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil her/himself); or
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the Preschool or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a session or otherwise.”

Based on this legal framework, the working definition of “reasonable force” is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

3. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect every person in the Preschool community from harm
- provide guidance for all staff so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied in order to protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe

4. Procedure

Reasonable force / safe handling may be used by any member of Preschool staff who is authorised by the Registered Person in Charge to have lawful control or

charge of pupils. Reasonable force should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted. Staff will receive appropriate training and development in line with the Preschool's staff development policy in the use of preventative strategies and approaches for managing difficult situations when they may arise.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the Preschool's policy review schedule.

Reviewed:
14/05/23

Approved by BOG:
21/09/23