



Behaviours of Concern

In Sandymount Park Educate Together Secondary School, we strive to create a vibrant, welcoming school community in which every student feels a sense of belonging. Our aim is to become a school of teaching and learning excellence where students will flourish; enabled to reach their full potential whilst becoming confident, considerate, active members of society. We focus on providing students with opportunities to develop their own identity, both as individuals and as learners and to build strong bonds with others and the wider world.

Our values include: Kindness, Respect, Empathy, Hard Work, Participation, Curiosity, Creativity, Democracy, Community.

Ratified: May 2023

Review date: August 2024

What are Behaviours of Concern?

Behaviours of concern can be defined as “behaviours that indicate a risk to the safety or wellbeing of the people who exhibit them or to others”.

What is a crisis situation?

A crisis situation can occur when behaviours of concern present serious risk of imminent physical harm to the student concerned and/or others within the school environment.

Our Rationale

Sometimes students may have such highly complex and challenging behaviour, social or education needs that they need extra help and support. This policy aims to support the student exhibiting Behaviours of Concern, other students, staff, and the relevant parents. This policy is complimentary to the school Child Safeguarding Statement, Code of Behaviour, and Health & Safety Statement.

Code of Behaviour

Our school Code of Behaviour aims to positively support students in the first instance but reserves the right to impose sanctions particularly when the health and safety of students and staff are a concern.

Child Safeguarding Statement

Our school Child Safeguarding Statement places a statutory responsibility on registered teachers to report child protection concerns that are at or above a threshold of harm. An accompanying Risk Assessment identifies possible situations where students may be at risk and the control measures that our school puts in place to address such concerns.

Health & Safety Statement

Our school Health & Safety Statement underpins the entitlement of all students and staff to coexist in a safe environment.

Training

Staff received training from Mason Hayes and Curran on the 13th of December 2022

How we react to a Behaviour of Concern Incident?

- Make sure everyone is safe
- Prevent the situation deteriorating further
- Put an immediate plan in place that will link to an effective and sustained behaviour plan



Support Services

Here is a list of State Agencies (not exhaustive) that we consult for advice, assistance and additional supports.

- Túsla
- CAMHS: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Department of Education
- Education Welfare Officer: (Attached to EWS)
- Education Welfare Service (Now part of Túsla)
- Gardaí
- NCSE National Council for Special Education
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Special Schools National Behaviour Support Service (SESS now part of NCSE)
- Special Education Needs Organiser (member of NCSE staff)

We may also contact our relevant Management Body and or Principal's Association for advice and guidance.

POSSIBLE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

There is always a reason for, or purpose to behaviours of concern, such as:

Anxiety and Stress: Students may become anxious for a myriad of reasons. Worries about friendships, home situations etc. can be overwhelming for a student, leading to stress. While most children are able to identify the cause and put in place strategies to reduce their stress levels, some cannot.

Communication difficulties: These can range from not being able to speak at all, shyness, social inhibition to being very articulate but not understanding the social variations and conventions in a conversation. Behaviours of Concern are often a substitute means of communication for such students.

Sensory issues: Some students can be over- or under-sensitive to any of their senses. This is often referred to in the literature as hyper (over) or hypo (under) sensitivity.

Social understanding: Not all students have the same understanding of social rules. Not all students grow up in environments with social rules like those in most schools.

Inflexible thinking: We all adapt to routines and can find them comforting. Some students struggle with changes in routine.



Recording of Behaviours of Concern

Where behaviours of concern are an issue, we ensure that the parents are aware of the school's policy and procedures on recording such behaviours. Parents should understand that the school seeks to record and analyse these behaviours to understand what the triggers are and to put in place a plan to support the student to develop more socially acceptable behaviours. Parents should be assured that they will be fully included in this process. It is important to emphasise that students who exhibit behaviours of concern make life difficult for themselves and inhibit social interaction with their class peers.

See Appendix A

Examples of Behaviours of Concern (not exhaustive):

- Student with a weapon and intent on using violence.
- Physically attacking another or about to
- Throwing furniture or breaking glass close to others.
- Putting themselves in danger, running onto a road or trying to self-harm

Physical Intervention

When will our school use physical intervention?

We will only use physical intervention when there is a crisis.

A physical intervention: is the use of a physical act or restraint to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of a student's body.

Examples of physical intervention:

- Presence
Standing in front of a student
- Touching
Lead, guide, usher, block-door handle
Student retains a lot of mobility.
- Holding
Student's handheld by one adult but retains a level of mobility.
- Restraint
Completely restrict mobility - 2 adults holding legs & arms
(Am I using minimum force for the shortest time?)

Restraint:

- Cannot be used in schools except in the case of a crisis where there is a serious risk of imminent physical harm to the student concerned/others.
- Should not be the first option and if used should be timely, measured and proportionate.
- It should be carried out by appropriately trained persons if possible.
- If used should be documented, reported to the board of management.



Sandymount Park ETSS — Behaviours of Concern

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 31/05/23
Date of next review: August 2024

Vaessa Barcroft,
Chairperson BOM

Date

Paula Mulhall,
Principal

Date



Behaviour of Concern Incident Report / Risk Review

Student _____ Location _____

Date _____ Time _____

What happened? _____

What triggered the incident? _____

Whom/What was at risk? _____

Student Welfare

List any deescalation/positive intervention strategies that you used to diffuse the incident. (See over) _____

Did you need to use a restrictive practice or physical intervention? _____

Why was this in the best interests of the student? (See over) _____

How effective was it? _____

Was the student distressed? Yes / NO _____

How was the student assisted to recover / repair relationships with staff / other students? _____

How can we reduce the risk of this happening again? (Consult with relevant staff / parents) _____

Staff Welfare

How many staff were needed to manage this incident safely?

Were you or another staff member hurt?

Yes / NO

Describe:

Did you or another member of staff find this incident distressing?

Yes / NO

If yes, rate this on a scale of 1 to 5:
(1 = little or no distress, 5 = very distressing)

Which other staff were present?

Signed:

Date:

Please review form and ensure all questions are answered before submitting to the Principal / Deputy Principal

Review by Principal / Deputy Principal

Parents Notified

Yes / NO

Medical intervention needed / sought:

Yes / NO

Signed by Principal or Deputy Principal:

Dated:



Guidance notes on filling in *Behaviour of Concern Incident Report / Risk Review*

There are three main reasons for filling out incident forms following a behavioural incident:

- To provide a clear, factual account of what happened.
- To reduce the risk of the incident occurring again.
- To provide information for Positive Handling Plans and Behavior Support Plans.

An incident form should be filled in following serious behavioural incidents but not during the reflection and recovery process for students or staff. If SNAs only are present during an incident it is good practice to fill the incident form out with the class teacher so that s/he is fully aware of the incident. An element of professional judgment may be required to decide whether an incident merits the filling in of an incident form. It is better to err on the side of caution and fill out the form. If in doubt consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

The following are examples of incidents that require reporting:

- 'Near miss's – the situation had the potential to be a risk to safety.
- Someone received an injury from a kick, bite, thrown item, etc.
- A restraint/force was used.
- Liberty was restricted.
- A student became significantly emotionally distressed.

A good incident form describes the incident briefly, factually, and honestly, identifies triggers (if known), suggests risk reduction measures and takes account of the welfare of both students and staff. Judgmental or 'blaming' language should be avoided. Examples are provided in the appendix below.

The information is reviewed by the Principal and/or Deputy who will check on the welfare of all involved and discuss/implement risk reduction measures if applicable.

It is good practice to inform parents of incidents, but the incident forms may not be given to parents without the consent of the Principal. This is necessary because the incident report may contain information relating to other students or staff and may need to be redacted.

- **Helpful phrases for 'What happened?'** Asked for assistance - drew towards - eased away - encouraged - guided – used a help hug - led student to the support room/yard/sensory room where s/he could be monitored/observed - moved student away from the area of the incident – (see paragraph 3 below) used physical prompt - used visuals/schedules/timetables - reassured – secured the door - supported - talked student down - withdrew other students – cleared the area of items that could be thrown – moved other students away from danger – asked for help – cleared the area of other students – sent for a senior member of staff – asked other staff to withdraw from the area – withdrew myself to a safe distance – kept an eye out for members of the public who might be at risk – prevent emotional/psychological distress to other students.
- **De-escalation techniques to try:** Move away: reduce requests; redirect to schedule; sensory/movement breaks; calm stance/voice; calming scripts; change of staff; 1:1 close to student; 1:1 supervision from afar; time out of class; distraction/diversion; facial expression; first/ then; humour; negotiate; offer choice; outline consequences; outline limits/ boundaries, positive reminders; planned ignoring; removal to support room using friendly hold (student comes willingly); reassure; short tasks only; time given to process; use of reward; verbal support/prompts; praise.
- **Helpful phrases for 'How was this in the best interests of the student.** Maintain dignity of the student - prevent negative social outcome for student - prevent distress - prevent pain – reduce risk of injury - reduce possibility of - unsafe situation for - welfare of students(s)/staff – prevent emotional/psychological distress.

