



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER  
NATIONAL SCHOOL

# Castlebar Educate Together National School

## Behaviours of Concern Policy

### 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 pupil concerned and/or others within the school environment.

### Our Rationale

A number of pupils have such highly complex and impulsive/challenging behaviour, social or educational needs that they need extra help and support. This policy aims to support the pupils exhibiting Behaviours of Concern, other pupils, staff and the relevant parents. This policy should be used in conjunction with our school Child Safeguarding Statement, Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety Statement.

### Code of Positive Behaviour

Our school Code of Positive Behaviour aims to positively support pupils in the first instance but reserves the right to impose sanctions particularly when health and safety of pupils 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 pupils may be at risk and the control measures that our school puts in place to address such concerns.

### Health and Safety Statement

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

### How we react to a Behaviour of Concern Incident

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



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### **Aftercare (immediately after crisis)**

Support response to child(ren) involved, including witnesses who may be upset

1. Give child(ren) a space to relax and don't introduce demands.
2. Offer child(ren) a preferred activity to support continued regulation.
3. Administrate first aid if necessary.
4. Verbally reassure individual that everything is ok.

Support response to staff involved

1. Offer a break from the room/class for a short period to allow staff member(s) to process the incident, where possible
2. Support/Check In with a member of the leadership team.

### **Support Services**

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

- Tusla
- CAMHS: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Department of Education
- Education Welfare Officer/Education Welfare Service
- NCSE: National Council for Special Education
- NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service
- SENO: Special Educational Needs Organiser ( Part of NCSE)

We may also contact our patron-Educate Together, unions-INTO: Irish National Teachers' Organisation and FORSA, Principal's Associations etc. for 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:** Pupils may become anxious for a myriad of reasons. Worries about friendships, home situation etc can be overwhelming for a pupil. This can lead to stress. While most children are able to identify the cause and put in place strategies to reduce their stress levels, some need additional support to do so.

**Communication Difficulties:** These can range from language acquisition, shyness and social inhibition to being very articulate but struggling with social variations and conventions in a conversation. Behaviours of Concern are often a substitute means of communication.

**Sensory Issues:** Some pupils can be over, or under sensitive to any of their senses. This is often referred to as hyper ( over) or hypo ( under) sensitivity.



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**Social Understanding:** Not all pupils have the same understanding of social rules and social interactions.

**Difficulty adapting to change:** We all enjoy routines and can find them comforting. Some pupils struggle with changes in routine.

- personal life experiences
- attitudes and expectations of the individual and others
- physical and social environments
- physical, mental and oral health
- Special Educational Needs
- Neurodiversity

### **Recording of Behaviours of Concern**

Where behaviours of concern arise, 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 put in place a plan to support the pupils. Parents should be assured that they will be fully included in this process. Our recording documents are attached as an Appendix to this policy.

ABC - Antecedent, Behaviour and Consequence An analysis of the antecedent can help to identify the reason for the behaviour. The antecedent is what went on before the onset of the problematic behaviour. The pupil may have been faced with a task that he/she was unable to complete, reacted to something said by another pupil, or be distressed by something that has happened outside of school. It may be possible to identify a pattern of behaviour such as a child beginning to fidget after a certain period of time. An analysis of the behaviour of the student can help in attempting to prevent a reoccurrence of the behaviour. Analysis can also help to break down the behaviour so that it can be tackled in small steps. For example, tackling outbursts which include among other things, bad language, might focus on dealing with the bad language, before tackling other elements. An analysis of the consequences of behaviour may give clues as to how a situation occurs or develops. An extreme example might be that following a particularly bad outburst a child is sent home, which may have been the child's desired outcome. Attention seeking behaviour may be considered successful by a child in that it attracts negative attention from the teacher, or other pupils. Sometimes, the initial response to misbehaviour can serve to escalate a situation. A common example of this is where an aggressive response to behaviour may provoke further aggression from a child.

### **Examples of Behaviours of Concern** (not exhaustive):

- Pupils physically attacking another pupil or about to
- Pupils throwing furniture or equipment
- Pupils with a weapon and intent on using violence
- Pupils putting themselves in danger (climbing, running onto road etc.)
- aggression toward others – physical and/or verbal
- self-injurious behaviour
- inappropriate social and sexual behaviour – shouting, name calling, verbal abuse
- self-stimulating behaviour such as excessive rocking
- extreme withdrawal



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- noncompliance and refusal to follow instruction
- Inappropriate physical contact

### **When will our school use restraint**

We will only use restraint 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 pupil's body or part of a pupil's body.

Examples of physical intervention:

1. Presence-standing in front of a pupil
2. Touching-Lead, guide, usher, block-door handle-pupils is still mobile.
3. Holding-Pupil's hand is held by one adult but retains a level of mobility.
4. Restraint-completely restrict mobility-2 adults holding legs and arms, with the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of 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 pupils 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 at all possible
- If used, should be documented and reported to the Board of Management.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 and will be reviewed in October 2025.

Signed:

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Yvonne Coyne- Chairperson BOM CETNS