

# BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN POLICY TEMPLATE

OCTOBER 2023

**School: Monasterevan Convent N.S. (Scoil Eimhín Naofa)**

**Roll No: 15769C**

**Principal: Declan Costello**

## **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 complementary to the school’s 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’s 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**

Training was provided to whole staff on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## **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 (CPSMA) and/or Principal's Association (IPPN) 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/Guardians 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

**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 student's body or part of a student's body.

Examples of physical intervention:

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

Restraint:

- (1) 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
- (2) Should not be the first option and, if used, should be timely, measured and proportionate
- (3) It should be carried out by appropriately trained persons, if possible
- (4) If used, should be documented and reported to the Board of Management

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting held on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

It will be reviewed in October 2024 or beforehand, as may be necessary.

## Appendix A: Behaviour of Concern Incident Report / Risk Review

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What happened?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What triggered the incident?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Who/what was at risk?**

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Student WELFARE**

List any de-escalation/ 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 Principal/DP**

**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:

1. To provide a clear and factual account of what happened.
2. To reduce the risk of the incident occurring again.
3. To provide information for Positive Handling Plans and Behaviour 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 judgement 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 misses – 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. Judgemental 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/Guardians of incidents, but the incident forms may not be given to Parents/Guardians 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.

1. **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.
2. **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 (pupil comes willingly); reassure; short tasks only; time given to process; use of reward; verbal support/prompts; praise.
3. **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.