

BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN POLICY 2026

School: Talbot Senior National School

Roll No.: 19510E

Principal: Caitríona Wynne

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. All students are subject to the Code of Behaviour.

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

Training was provided by David Ruddy BL of Mason, Hayes & Curran Legal Advisors and Siobhan Allen on 7th March 2024 and reviewed at January 2026 Staff meeting.

How we react to a Behaviour of Concern Incident?

1. **Make sure everyone is safe.**
Elicit help from another staff member – send two children to ask principal, deputy or support teacher for help.
Isolate the child if possible.
If not possible to remove child from situation – evacuate the class.

Parents contacted.

If child is trying to run out of the school – block exit if safe to do so, calmly give choices to return and make safe choice.

Children at risk of concerning behaviour will have a safe space earmarked for them to go to if they need time to regulate – encourage use of this space.

2. Prevent the situation deteriorating further.

Use a calm voice.

Reduce demands on the child.

Cajole where feasible

Distract with a job where possible.

3. Put an immediate plan in place that will link to an effective and sustained behaviour plan.

Complete Incident Report with actions taken outlined and actions to be taken planned.

Green: Record on Alladin – incidences of disruption/defiance (Bookings)

Yellow: Incident Log – more serious, needs to be removed from the class for regulation/movement break.

Red: Incident Report – class needs to be evacuated, child restrained, verbal abuse and aggressive behaviour to others or assault.

ALSOP – solution focused planning with the child

Care Team Group Consultation

Meeting with Parents

Engage with support services

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, OIDE
- Education Welfare Officer: (Attached to TESS)
- Education Welfare Service (Now part of Túsla)
- An Garda
- NCSE National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- 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 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
- Verbally abusing classmates repeatedly
- Aggressive/Intimidating behaviour towards others in the class

A physical intervention: is the use of a physical act 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) Will only be used by the school in the case of a **crisis** where there is a **serious risk of imminent physical harm** to the students 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, reported to the board of management.

***Restraint Training was provided in academic year 24/25 to SNAs.*

Seclusion

Seclusion will never be used by our school.

	Name	Signature
Principal	Carltona Wyane	Carltona Wyane
Chairperson	Noel Doherty	Noel Doherty.

Date this policy will be reviewed	
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Date ratified by the Board of Management:	23.01.26
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Appendix A: 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 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, 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 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, '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.

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.