



Policy on Flight Risk and Physical Intervention

Introduction:

This policy was drafted by the staff and Board of Management of Gaelscoil Moshíológ to provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the school when a child absconds or attempts to abscond from a class or from the school premises or while on a school trip.

Rationale and Relationship to school ethos

Gaelscoil Moshíológ is an inclusive Multi-denominational Gaelscoil committed to the holistic education of all of our pupils. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our pupils and staff are of paramount importance.

Different pupils can present with various needs or behaviours which can, on rare occasions, cause them to behave in a way that is a threat to their own or others safety. While every measure will be taken to prevent incidents, safety of pupils and staff will be prioritized if and when incidents occur.

This policy was formulated by consultation with staff and the Board of Management of our school and reflects the need for clarity around the procedures relating to absconding of a pupil.

AIM

To ensure that procedures around serious incidents of absconding are understood by all stakeholders.

Guidelines and General procedures:

- Staff will use the 'Continuum of Support' to put in place behaviour plans for all children who may pose a risk of absconding in consultation with parents/guardians.
- Prevention, in terms of sensory breaks, breaks of other sorts if a child appears to be overwhelmed, calm stance and facial expression, tone of voice, distraction/diversion, verbal support, rewards, praise and close supervision will be prioritised as per Dept. of Ed. Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools.
- Staff will refer to Dept. of Ed. Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools when implementing Reactive Strategies to de-escalate and manage behaviours of concern.

Figure 26 Pg. 183 – 185 (copy attached).

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- Environmental alterations and specialist 1:1 teaching may be put in place – sensory area in classroom, mindfulness teaching, movement breaks.
- If required, specialist training / support will be applied for from NCSE to support staff in dealing with a medium to high risk of absconding and/or ongoing challenging behaviours.
- A staff member may need to intervene physically (guarding / blocking) to prevent (a) a pupil from harming him or herself, another pupil, or a staff member or (b) to prevent the pupil from absconding from the school. Physical intervention (guarding / blocking) will be measured and appropriate.
- In the event that the pupil manages to abscond from the school, the school will contact the pupil’s parents. If the school is unaware of the pupil’s whereabouts, the school will contact the community Garda. If possible, the school will attempt to keep track of the location of the pupil (within staffing constraints). All staff dealing with the pupil will carry communication device at all times Walkie Talkie / mobile phone therefore enabling communication to school office at all times.

Outline of procedures when choosing physical intervention:

ACT	BALANCE	CHOOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a calm, non- threatening stance and posture • Use a slow controlled voice • Give clear verbal directions • Pause and allow time for compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely outcomes if physical intervention is used against the likely outcomes if it is not • Short term risks versus long term risks • Best interests of the child against the best interests of other children and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons who are most likely to succeed • Best place available • Best time available • Minimum use of force necessary to achieve the desired result

Records and Discipline

Any serious incidents of violence or any incidents of absconding or attempted absconding will be documented and recorded on the child’s file and communicated to the parent/guardian. The Code of Discipline may be invoked for any incident if deemed necessary and appropriate, up to and including suspension.

Communication with parents

The school seeks to engage positively with parents/guardians regarding all aspects of their child's education, care and management. Parents/guardians of pupils who engage in high risk or ongoing challenging or oppositional behaviours are prioritised for meetings/phone calls etc. with the Class Teacher, S.E.T, Principal or Deputy Principal. The school will endeavor to keep parents informed in a manner that is reasonable and in the best interests of the child. This will take the form of meetings, phone calls, diaries or letters.

This policy will be available in the school and supplied to parents/guardians of pupils who may provide a risk of physical violence, absconding from the school or other challenging behaviours.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be launched in June 2023 and implemented fully from 13/06/2023

The policy will be reviewed on a two-year cycle.

The school management team and the teachers will implement this policy.

The Board of Management ratified this policy on 12/06/2023

Cathaoirleach:

Melanie Ní Dhuinn

Príomhoide:

Carol Scott

Date of Implementation: 13/06/2023

Review Date: June 2025

As per Dept. of Education Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools

Despite considered and thorough use of proactive intervention strategies, behaviours of concern may still arise and reactive approaches may be needed. These behaviours are often the student's way of trying to gain control over a situation that is overwhelming for them.

Figure 26 Pg. 183-185

Reactive strategies to de-escalate and manage behaviour(s) of concern

Baseline (maintenance strategies)

Continue to use proactive PBS strategies

(i.e. steps to ensure autism- friendly environment for all)

Response reminders for supporting adults

Pay attention to the student's behaviours and consider what the behaviours are telling you about their feelings and emotions

Continue low arousal strategies with a further reduction in demands, stimuli and interactions

Provide access to sensory activities/resources which regulate the student

Allow more space for the student

Take deep breaths, think positively (e.g. 'The student is not doing it on purpose', 'I can help them through this').

Triggering stage (regulatory strategies)

Describe exactly what the student is doing (e.g. biting their nails, rocking, pacing, change in facial expression, tone of voice)

Response reminders for supporting adults

Seek to understand what the student is trying to communicate and use regulating strategies e.g.

-Redirect to a special interest or to schedule

- Offer a break (e.g. calm space or movement activity), providing or modelling a visual support to request a break

- Provide a visual reminder of a rule
- Acknowledge and empathise
- Offer choices and incentives (if appropriate)
- Model calm breathing
- Use low arousal strategies: Reduce demands, minimise verbal interaction
- Be flexible

Acceleration stage (strategies to de-escalate situation)

Describe what the student is doing. The student may become irritable, demanding, act impulsively. They are less able to cope with everyday demands.

Response reminders for supporting adults

Pay attention to the student's behaviours and consider what the behaviours are telling you about their feelings and emotions

Continue low arousal strategies with a further reduction in demands, stimuli and interactions

Provide access to sensory activities/resources which regulate the student

Allow more space for the student

Take deep breaths, think positively (e.g. 'The student is not doing it on purpose', 'I can help them through this').

Peak stage (safety strategies)

Describe what the student is doing at peak stage
(e.g. hitting, kicking, head-banging)

Note that at this stage the student may have little control over their behaviour. Their body is in flight/fight/freeze

Response reminders for supporting adults

Support mutual regulation and model how to stay calm

Respect their space, remove other people and remove any dangerous objects

Provide cushions to reduce likelihood of injury Minimise interaction

Be aware of your nonverbal cues which could be perceived as threatening e.g. you might wish to sit down

Ensure you use strategies to remain calm yourself Wait calmly for the student to de-escalate Remember not to take this personally

Recovery (de-escalation and repair strategies)

Describe what the person is doing now they are feeling calm. For example, lies down, falls asleep, apologises, or they may have no recollection of their behaviour

Response reminders for supporting adults

Allow student time and space to calm down

- Return to routine when student is ready*
- Direct student to low demand and highly preferred task*
- Take time to calm yourself*
- Debrief with a colleague*
- Schedule time to reflect on how to repair the relationship and prevent the cycle recurring*
- This is **not** the time to talk through the events with the student*