

**Policy on 'Zero Tolerance' for Uncontrolled Anger and Physical or Emotional Destruction and Force:**

In extreme cases staff will assess the risk and immediate physical or emotional danger to the child in question, others and oneself and take the appropriate action to minimize short term and long term harm to all involved. If deemed to be a Critical Incident a report will be written and it will be reported to D.E.S within 48 hours. Follow-up will be essential and parents and other agencies interested in the wellbeing of the child may be involved. For serious behavioural breaches that significantly affect other children and adults in the room, as well as impacting on that child's learning and relationships to others, a further procedure will need to be devised and followed with the educator, child, parents and other agencies involved as partners in supporting that child within the classroom context. Both the short and long term effects upon other children and adults in the room will be considered.

We will have a 'Zero Tolerance Policy' on children or any adults:

- using physical strength , including pushing in uncontrolled anger and throwing objects,
- force,
- aggression,
- uncontrolled screaming or
- verbal abuse or emotional degradation to display anger or rejection.

The implementation of this Zero Tolerance Policy is at the discretion of the staff involved with their knowledge of the children; it is not up to the children or parents to invoke. Children in late middle and upper Primary will be most affected by this policy due to their increasing physical size, strength and potential to seriously damage themselves, their target and other bystanders. This includes both physical strength and emotional destructiveness which children in this age group should be more likely to be able to control. Children towards the upper primary and should have more strategies and skills to deal with anger in a more controlled manner. The Early Years will generally not be affected by this policy unless in extreme cases of unresolved loss of control which endangers self, other children and staff- once again this is at the discretion of staff.

Children using 'reasonable' physical force in physical and verbal self defence (not in retaliation which involves their own anger and loss of control) and who have tried other safety strategies of 'flight' away from the situation, calling for help or warning the 'attacker' will not be subject to the consequences of this Zero Tolerance Policy. Once again it is up to the discretion of the staff, not parents or the children. Staff have the general well being of the group and individuals and self to consider in both the short and long term. Parents will be a part of the process and have opportunities to share and receive further information and to discuss (yet not negate) decisions.

**Steps for 'Zero Tolerance' of uncontrolled anger resulting in physical force or verbal abuse:**

- Assess situation.

- Adults use loud voice to convey 'authority' to separate parties and warn of consequences (including police involvement if necessary.)
- Ensure safety of other children.
- Send for another staff member.
- Adult intervention and separation if physically safe for adult to do or if necessary (often anger lasts in short bursts and children will separate quickly).
- Remove (verbally) parties to physically separate areas to cool down and give them time to regain emotional control or stay close by if in distress- staff to use knowledge of each party/child to try and make best decision at time what to do.
- Counsel all involved, including bystanders and rest of group when practical ASAP after incident **and** reflect upon again when calm, even days later.
- Contact parents ASAP
- Parties directly involved need reconciliation meeting when 'reasonable'.
- Record Critical Incident if deemed so, report to D.E.S within 48 hours and make parties aware of this permanent record.
- Parents or emergency contacts for family will need to come in ASAP for debriefing, support of all involved (especially own child) and for follow up steps.

After counselling, the parent or adult family member (designated by the family) will need to shadow 'aggressor' (or both parties will need a family member to 'shadow' them if deemed necessary by staff). **'Shadowing'** means that the child will be followed by their parent and complete work together until the end of the school day, to make message clear that we have lost 'temporary' trust in that individual to control behaviour, words, actions, anger... Sending the 'aggressor' home is often just what that child wants or is an easy way to avoid the issues and can also make it more stressful for them to return to the group at a later stage due to 'perceptions' of what is being said in their absence. The educator will use their discretion to make a decision about being removed for a set period of time, in consultation with senior educator and administrator. 'Shadowing' will also send a clear message for the other children in the group that their well-being is being respected and that parents care enough to help that child become reintegrated into the group. Shadowing also allows staff to get back to their roles and to focus on the well-being and learning at hand for the rest of the group to minimize disruption to their learning. Shadowing should also send a clear message to the parties involved that they need adult help to control themselves. If parents refuse to 'shadow' their child (or are unable to because of younger siblings etc at the time) the aggressor may need to go home but families will have to make arrangements to shadow their child when they return for a specified period. Shadowing also puts into practice the parent/educator team approach- "It takes village to raise a child"- and parents often have far more influence over their child than an educator has. Ultimately serious breaches of safety conduct and uncontrolled behaviour are the parents and that child's responsibility and staff must be satisfied that whatever the reason for the instigation of the incident that the child will not lose control again. Staff need confidence that the child will approach conflict resolution/bullying issues/the reason for their anger in a more controlled manner.

**"The Future comes from what you do now."**

We cannot wait for the situation to just resolve itself or the child/ren to just forget about it when calm, it must be actively worked upon by parents, child, staff and reasons identified why it happened in the first place. If parents are too inconvenienced by this 'shadowing' or if it ceases to be effective or if the staff member feels tension with the parent being around due to their stress and frustration at the situation then alternatives (including suspension for period of time with a reintegration period) will need to be formulated (including parents making a decision whether this school philosophy and practices are compatible to their family's philosophy and practices. We all acknowledge that children are 'inconvenient' and that they need us most when we are busy and they are the most stressed. Children need parents!)

Support will be given as much as humanly possible. Emotions will run high and we accept that everyone wants the best solution (long term) for the child/parties involved and for the rest of the class group to feel safe, be able to work and to trust individuals to retain control over their bodies and words. Parents and staff need to be reminded they are on the same 'team' on the child's 'side' which means not just ignoring problems and letting the child take the easy way out. It is tough to be accountable for one's own behaviour. Parents also need to remember that the **group well-being** is also the educators' priority so one individual cannot take up an unbalanced proportion of time or energy for the long term.

Resources to access:

- National Safety Schools Framework – restorative justice process
- Maggie Dent's materials
- School psychologist.
- Louise Porter's materials

VERSION	DATE REVIEWED	DATE RATIFIED	CHANGES MADE	AUTHOR OF CHANGES
1	Oct 2011	26/10/2011	Policy created	LO
2	Sept 2013	18/9/2013	No changes made	KM
3	April 2016	29/6/2016	Inclusion 48hour reporting time for critical incidents	KM