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Crisis Prevention and Intervention Policy

This policy outlines how St. Nicholas School prevents and responds to crisis situations involving pupils, in line with the principles and practices of the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). Our goal is to ensure the Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security® of pupils and staff through proactive, respectful, and consistent strategies.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how the school prevents and responds to crisis situations involving pupils, using the CPI framework as directed by the Department of Education.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, including teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff, and leadership, who have completed CPI training as directed by the Department of Education.

3. Guiding Principles

All actions taken during a crisis must:

- Prioritise de-escalation and prevention over physical intervention.
- Protect the dignity and safety of the pupil.
- Align with CPI training and Department of Education guidance.
- Be recorded, reviewed, and debriefed after any incident.

4. CPI Framework for Crisis Prevention and Management

CPI outlines a staged approach to managing escalating behaviours, progressing only as necessary. Staff must intervene at the least restrictive level possible.

A. Supportive Phase – Early Prevention

Objective: Prevent escalation by recognising and responding to early signs of distress.

Staff Actions:

- Use empathetic listening and calm body language.
- Provide personal space and reduce environmental triggers.
- Use supportive statements and a non-judgmental tone.
- Modify demands or provide choices to help the student regain control.

B. Directive Phase – Setting Limits

Objective: Provide clear structure when behaviour begins to escalate.

Staff Actions:

- Maintain calm, respectful tone and clear instructions.
- Offer simple, reasonable choices.
- Use CPI limit-setting strategies—balancing safety and empathy.

C. Defensive Phase – Verbal Escalation

Objective: Manage increased agitation or verbal aggression safely.

Staff Actions:

- Use verbal de-escalation techniques (acknowledging feelings, offering time and space).
- Avoid arguing or power struggles.
- Reduce audience and environmental stimulation.
- One trained staff member should lead communication.

D. Risk Behaviour Phase – Potential for Physical Harm

Objective: Ensure immediate safety.

Staff Actions:

- Assess risk and move to safety procedures if danger is present.
- Use CPI-approved disengagement skills if physically threatened.
- Seek assistance from trained staff.
- Continue verbal de-escalation throughout.

E. Crisis Phase – Physical Intervention

Objective: Use CPI-approved physical interventions (restraints) only as a last resort.

Staff Actions:

- Use only CPI techniques taught and approved during training.
- Employ least restrictive holds, for the shortest duration possible.
- Monitor pupil's breathing, comfort, and distress levels.
- Release the hold once the risk subsides.
- Record and report the incident according to school policy.

F. Tension Reduction Phase – Recovery and Debriefing

Objective: Restore relationships and learn from the incident.

Staff Actions:

- Offer the pupil space and time to recover.

- Conduct supportive debrief with the pupil.
- Hold a team debrief among staff.
- Complete CPI Incident Report Form and submit to leadership.

5. Staff Training

- All staff are trained in CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® by a certified CPI instructor.
- Refresher training is provided annually or as directed by the Department of Education.
- Staff must use only the techniques for which they are trained.

6. Documentation and Review

All incidents involving restraint or significant intervention must be documented. The Principal or Deputy Principal will review each report. This policy will be reviewed annually or after any major incident or update.

7. Communication and Parental Involvement

- Parents/guardians are informed of this policy.
- Parents are notified of any incident involving physical intervention.
- Collaboration with parents is key to developing proactive behaviour plans.

8. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Department of Education Guidelines on Managing Challenging Behaviour
- CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Model
- The Education Act (1998)
- Health and Safety Authority Code of Practice on Violence and Aggression at Work
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)

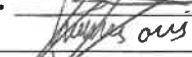
9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management or sooner if required by updates to Department or CPI guidelines.

Policy Ratification and Review

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 05/11/2025

Signed (Chairperson): 

Signed (Principal):  ouis

Review Date: November 2027