

Hauraki Primary School

Policy Document

Use of Physical Restraint

Rationale:

All staff members can safely manage potentially dangerous behaviour where the safety of students, staff or any other person is threatened.

Purpose:

- To protect the wellbeing of staff and students.
- To provide guidelines for the use of physical restraint and ensure the restraint used is reasonable and proportionate.
- To provide staff with guidelines and ideas for de-escalating serious situations where there is imminent risk, and address the uncertainty staff experience when faced with a student exhibiting difficult behaviour.
- To record any incidents of physical restraint and provide for reflection and debriefing of these incidents.
- To monitor the emotional impact of any such incidents.

Guidelines:

Student and staff wellbeing is at the heart of these guidelines. Physical restraint is a serious intervention, therefore these guidelines aim to minimise the use of physical restraint. If there is an alternative to physically restraining a student, use the alternative.

Use physical restraint only when:

The teacher or authorised staff member reasonably believes that the safety of the student or of any other person is at serious and imminent risk.

- Use minimum force necessary to respond to the serious and imminent risk to safety.
- Use physical restraint only for as long as is needed to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

Teachers and authorised staff members will need to use their professional judgement to decide what constitutes "a serious and imminent risk to safety". For example:

- A student is moving in with a weapon, or something that could be used as a weapon, and is clearly intent on using violence towards another person.
- A student is physically attacking another person, or is about to.
- A student is throwing furniture, computers, or breaking glass close to others who would be injured if hit.
- A student is putting himself in danger, for example running onto a road or trying to harm themselves.

If physical restraint is required, the level of restraint should be proportional to the immediate risk level to the student or staff. The physical restraint should be matched to the situation and should end as soon as the safety of everyone is assured.

It is important to monitor wellbeing throughout when applying physical restraint:

- Monitor the physical and psychological well being of both the student and the staff member who applied the restraint for the rest of the school day. Watch for shock, possible unnoticed injury and delayed effects.

Use preventative and de-escalation techniques first as these strategies may prevent or de-escalate potentially dangerous behaviour.

- Identify the student's personal signs of stress or unhappiness and intervene early.
- Monitor wider classroom/playground behaviour carefully for potential areas of conflict.
- Demonstrate a supportive approach: "I'm here to help"
- Be flexible in your responses: adapt what you're doing to the demands of the situation.
- Be reasonable: a reasonable action, request or expectation deserves a reasonable response.
- Promote and accept compromise or negotiated solutions, while maintaining your authority.
- Take the student seriously and address issues quickly.
- Address private or sensitive issues in private.
- Avoid the use of inappropriate humour such as sarcasm or mocking.

De-escalation techniques may include:

- Create space and time by removing the audience, giving the student some physical space and waiting
- Communicate calmly - Talk quietly, even when they are loud, remain calm and respectful and give the student clear choices and/or direction to help them feel more secure and regain control
- Think ahead in case the situation escalates - make sure you have an exit plan, send for help if necessary.

After an incident involving physical restraint, take the following steps to ensure everyone involved stays safe, future incidents can be prevented if possible, the parents or caregivers know, and the incident is reported.

- Check the staff member and the student regularly to ensure they are not in shock. Support them as necessary.
- Tell the parents or caregivers the same day the incident occurred so they can monitor the student's well being at home.
- Reflect formally on why the incident occurred that resulted in the student being restrained. Consider what might have prevented it, and what might need to change to minimise the likelihood of it happening again. (see *Appendix 3: Staff reflection form*)
- Consider whether all preventative and de-escalation strategies were used according to the individual Behaviour Plan, if there is one, and whether the restraint used was safe.
- Hold a debriefing session with involved staff, Principal and another member of staff not involved in the physical restraint incident. Hold it within two days of the incident. (see *Appendix 4: Debriefing form for staff involved in physical restraint incident*)
- If the Ministry of Education (MoE) or Police were involved in the incident, invite them to participate in the debriefing session.
- Offer the parents or caregivers a separate debriefing as soon as practically possible, preferably within two days of the incident. (see *Appendix 5: Physical restraint debriefing form – parents or caregivers, student*)
- At this meeting, give them the opportunity to discuss the incident, invite them to become active partners in exploring alternatives to restraint. If appropriate, involve the student in this debriefing session.

- Write notes from the reflection and debriefing meetings, including next steps and actions.

Any complaints from parents should be dealt with through the school's Concerns and Complaints policy, and the MoE contacted for advice, if necessary.

Reporting and documenting the incident:

- Staff must complete an incident report (*Appendix 1: Staff physical restraint incident report form*), and the staff members involved in the physical restraint should sign the incident report.
- Place the completed forms on the student's file, and make them available to the student's teacher and parents or caregivers.
- All incidents of physical restraint must be reported to the MOE and the Hauraki School Board (the Board). This reporting contributes to the self-review and monitoring process. (*Appendix 2: Information for the Ministry of Education and the employer – in accordance with Rule 8(1) of the education physical Restrain rules 2017*)

Individual Behaviour Plan:

A student who regularly presents with high-risk behaviour should have an individual Behaviour Plan. This plan should outline the preventative and de-escalation strategies, which, if successfully implemented, may prevent the need for physical restraint. Key staff, parents and caregivers should be involved in the development of the plan and all staff should be made aware that there is a Behaviour Plan in place.

Note on Seclusion:

Seclusion is when a student is involuntarily placed alone in a room for any length of time from which they cannot freely exit. Even if the door is not locked, there may be a person of authority outside which leads the student to believe they cannot leave the room. Seclusion is not time out. Time out can be when a student is asked to leave an activity or area because of their behaviour and go to another specified area. Time out allows for the student to leave (even though they know they shouldn't) if they so choose. Seclusion is not used at Hauraki School.

Signed:



Date:

23/5/22

Presiding Member of the Board

Review Date:

Term 2, 2025

Appendix 1: Staff physical restraint incident report form

Report completed by:	Date of incident	Date of Report
Name or student		
Date of birth	Gender	M F
Ethnicity		
Time restraint started		
Time restraint ended		
Name/s of staff member/s administering restraint		
Trained in safe physical restraint?	Yes	No
Other staff / adults who witnessed		
Place where restraint occurred		
Classroom		
Corridor		
Assembly hall		
Outdoor area		
Toilet block		
Administration area		
Other (identify)		
Behaviour directed at		
Staff member – name		
Student – name		
Self		
Property – describe the serious and imminent risk to the safety of self or others		
Reason restraint was considered necessary		
Serious and imminent risk to safety – describe		
Actual injury – describe and attach injury form		
Signatures		
Principal or Principal's delegate	Staff member involved	Other staff (witnesses)

Place a copy of this form on the student's file

Note: The information in this form may be subject of requests made under the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix 2: Information for the Ministry of Education and employer – in accordance with Rule 8 (1) of the Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2017

If a teacher or staff member physically restrains a student the incident must be reported to the Ministry of Education and the employer (board of trustees, sponsor of the partnership school kura hōra, or manager of a private school). Complete the form below and email it to physical.restraint@education.govt.nz. Provide a copy of the form to the employer.

Why is the Ministry collecting this information?

The Ministry will use the information to provide appropriate support to schools and students when there are incidents of physical restraint on students.

The Ministry will also use this information to update the rules and guidelines to reflect evolving practice or address areas of concern.

What is physical restraint?

The Act defines physical restraint as using physical force to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of the student's body or part of the student's body. Physical restraint is a serious intervention. The legislation limits the use of physical restraint on students to teachers or authorised staff members.

- The following situations involving physical contact happen in schools every day. They are not examples of physical restraint and do not have to be reported to the Ministry.
- Temporary physical contact, such as a hand on the arm, back or shoulders to remove a student from a situation to a safer place.
- Holding a student with a disability to move them to another location, or help them to get in a vehicle or use the stairs.
- The practice of harness restraint, when keeping a student and others safe in a moving vehicle, or when recommended by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist for safety or body positioning.
- Younger students, especially in their first year of school, sometimes need additional help. For example, you may 'shepherd' a group of younger children from one place to another.
- Staff may hold the hand of a young student who is happy to have their hand held for a short time.
- Staff may pick a young student up to comfort them briefly.

Information for the Ministry of Education and the employer form

Information for Ministry of Education and the Employer: Completed by	Date of incident	dd/mm/yy	Date of report	dd/mm/yy
Name of School				
Student's National Student Number (no name)				
Date of birth	dd/mm/yy	Year Level	Gender	M F
Ethnicity				
First time the student has been physically restrained?	Yes	No		
The student was physically restrained more than once during the day?	Yes	No		
The student has an Individual Behaviour Plan?	Yes	No		
Physical restraint was a part of the plan?	Yes	No		
Were parents notified?	Yes	No	If yes describe	
Was anyone injured?	Yes	No	If yes describe	
Was the staff member who applied the restraint?	Yes	No	If no, provide details	
Role of staff member who applied the restraint?	Teacher		If other, describe role	
	Other			
Did the staff member who applied the restraint receive any training prior to the incident?	Yes	No	If yes, what training?	
Why was the use of physical restraint receive any training prior to the incident?	Yes	No	If yes, what training?	
Why was the use of physical restraint considered necessary?				
Serious and imminent risk to the safety of the student or any other person – describe				
Any other comments				

Complete the form above and email it to the Ministry of Education at physical.restraint@education.govt.nz
Provide a copy to the employer (board of trustees, sponsor of a partnership school kura houra or manager of a provide school)

Note: The information in this form may be subject of requests made under the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix 3: Staff reflection form

Events leading to the incident

Describe what was happening before the behavior started to escalate. What was the student doing? What do you think might have triggered the behavior? How were other students reacting to the student?

Behaviour of the student

What did you notice about the student's behavior that alerted you that they were struggling to cope? Think about the way they looked, for example facial expressions, physical signs, language.

What did you try before the restraints?

Describe the alternative techniques and interventions tried to prevent the emergency, including a description of the de-escalation strategies you used. What was the response from the students?

The restraint method used

Describe the nature of the physical restraint. Include the type of hold and number of people required

Monitoring

Describe how the student's physical and emotional distress was monitored while they were restrained.

After the restraint ended

Describe the mood of the student following the restraint. What help and support were they offered?

If there's a next time

What could be done differently in the future to prevent the need for restraint?

How about you?

How are you feeling and what support do you need? How about others?

Signature of the person who applied the restraint

Signature of any staff witnesses

Note: The information in this form may be the subject of requests made under the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982.

Date of incident	dd/mm/yy	
Date of debriefing	dd/mm/yy	Time of debriefing
Names of people at the debriefing		

Next steps/actions

Note: The information in this form may be the subject of requests made under the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982.

Appendix 5: Physical restraint debriefing form – parents or caregivers, student

Date of incident	dd/mm/yy	
Date of debriefing	dd/mm/yy	Time of debriefing
Names of people at the debriefing		
Findings of debriefing		
Parent or caregiver – comments and suggestions		
Student – comments and suggestions		
Next steps/actions agreed		
Signatures		
Principal or Principal's delegate	Parents or caregivers	Student

Note: The information in this form may be the subject of requests made under the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982.