

Hauraki Primary School

Policy Document

Physical Restraint

Rationale

As part of its overall safe school policy, it is a primary objective of the Hauraki School Board (the Board) to provide a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff. The Board is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of all students, staff, and other visitors to the school. This includes understanding, recognising and safely responding to student distress and minimising the use of physical restraint.

Purpose

The safety, wellbeing and security of students is a primary consideration of Hauraki School. To ensure that we protect and safeguard the welfare of all students in our care, we will:

- comply with all our legal requirements set out in the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act) and Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2024.
- align our practices with *Aramai He Tētēkura: A guide to understanding distress and minimising the use of physical restraint* [Aramai He Tētēkura – A guide to prevent distress and minimise the use of physical restraint](#), which provides a practical approach for recognising and understanding student distress, providing acceptable physical contact, and minimising the use of physical restraint, including eliminating unjustified physical restraint.
- provide guidelines and ideas for de-escalating situations.
- record any incidents of physical restraint and provide reflection and debriefing of these incidents.

Definitions

Imminent harm

Imminent harm is an immediate threat that a person will cause and/or suffer harm which jeopardises the health and safety or wellbeing of themselves or others if protective action is not taken immediately.

Significant emotional distress

Significant emotional distress means harm that is caused by the intentional acts of one person that significantly affects the emotional wellbeing of another person, to such an extent that they need intensive support to cope and recover.

Seclusion

Seclusion is putting students alone in a room they can't leave (or think they can't leave) against their will. 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.

Seclusion is prohibited under section 98 of the Act and is not used at Hauraki School.

Authorised staff members

Under the Act, teachers, including relief teachers and people with a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT), are automatically authorised to use physical restraint. Other staff members, such as teacher aides, must be authorised by the Hauraki School Board (the Board) to use physical restraint.

Acceptable physical contact

Acceptable physical contact is important for the wellbeing, cognitive development and learning of students. Three principles help determine what acceptable physical contact is:

- It is undertaken only if the student is willing to be touched;
- It is for the benefit of student; and
- It is limited to appropriate areas of the body (unless it is a prescribed technique for a specific purpose), generally shoulders, arms, hands and upper back

Guidelines:

1. Student and staff wellbeing is at the heart of these guidelines. Hauraki school **recognises** signs of distress in our students. We use preventative and de-escalation techniques in the first instance, as these strategies may prevent or de-escalate potentially serious behaviour:
 - Identify the student's personal signs of stress or unhappiness and intervene early.
 - Monitor wider classroom/playground behaviour carefully for potentials 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.
2. Hauraki school **responds** to signs of distress by using de-escalation techniques in the first instance. De-escalation techniques may include:
 - Creating space and time by removing the audience, giving the student some physical space, and using silence and non-action as an opportunity to gather thoughts.
 - Communicating calmly and simply. Talking quietly, even if a student is loud, remaining calm and respectful and giving the student clear choices and/or direction to help them feel more secure and regain control.
 - Being mindful of body language
 - Thinking ahead in case the situation escalates - make sure you have an exit plan, send for help if necessary.

Individual Behaviour Plans

3. 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.

4. We do not include physical restraint in a Behaviour Plan unless all other possible strategies have been explored. We require written informed consent from parents/caregivers and whanau if physical restraint is to be included in a support plan, and our intention is to minimise and where possible eliminate its use. Hauraki school will notify the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) if physical restraint is part of a Behaviour Plan.

When physical restraint can be used

5. Physical restraint is a serious intervention and can only be used by authorised staff members if all **three** of these conditions are met, **and** only as a last resort:
- 1) The physical restraint is necessary to prevent imminent harm, including significant emotional distress to the student or another person; and
 - 2) You reasonably believe there is no other option available in the circumstances for preventing the harm; and
 - 3) The physical restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. This means only applying as much force as is necessary, and for the minimum time necessary.
6. Authorised staff members will need to use their professional judgement to decide what constitutes imminent harm, but it could include:
- 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 themselves in danger, for example running onto a road or trying to harm themselves.
7. To use physical restraint, all three of the above conditions must be met. If you are in any doubt, if you are not authorised to use physical restraint, or feel you are in a physical danger, get help from colleagues or call the police.
8. Hauraki school does not use unsafe physical restraint techniques under any circumstances. Unsafe physical restraint techniques include:
- Restraint that restricts breathing or communicating, including speaking or sign language
 - Face-down restraint
 - Immobilising through pressure points and pain holds
 - Actions such as tackling, sitting, lying on, or kneeling on a person
 - Headlocks or putting pressure on the chest or neck
 - Bending joints backwards.

Notifications and Reporting

9. If physical restraint is used, the following notifications must be made:
- 1) Staff inform the principal (or their delegate) as soon as possible to support students, other staff, and anyone affected by the situation.
 - 2) Hauraki School will notify parents/caregivers as soon as possible after physical restraint has been used (at minimum before the student is returned to their care). Parents/caregivers will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to actively participate in a debrief about the

incident, including how it was managed with regard to the guidelines, within three working days of the incident (or later by mutual agreement). See *Appendix 5: Physical restraint debriefing form – parents or caregivers, student*

At this meeting, give parents/caregivers the opportunity to discuss the incident, invite them to become active partners in exploring alternatives to physical restraint. If appropriate, involve the student in this debriefing session.

- 3) The school will notify the Ministry through the online incident reporting system. We will keep a secure copy of the notification, in line with the Privacy Act 2020 and the Official Information Act 1982.
- 4) The principal will report the use of physical restraint and analysis of physical restraint to the Board. If the principal considers that the use of physical restraint was unjustified, they are responsible for following up with the Board and subsequent reporting to the Teaching Council.

After physical restraint is used

10. If physical restraint is used, Hauraki school will **restore** connections to ensure staff and students feel secure in their environment again:
 - Check the staff member and the student who has been physical restrained regularly to ensure they are not in shock. Monitor their physical and psychological wellbeing, so that appropriate support can be provided if there are adverse effects from the use of physical restraint.
 - 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 or Police were involved in the incident, invite them to participate in the debriefing session.
 - Write notes from the reflection and debriefing meetings, including next steps and actions.

Monitoring

11. Hauraki school will monitor our use of physical restraint by keeping records of every instance of physical restraint of a student. We keep the records for a minimum of 10 years from the date of last action.
12. The principal will check for trends by monitoring and analysing these records of physical restraint. If the trend shows increased use, the Board will consider how to minimise use of restraint.

Training

13. All authorised staff will complete the Ministry's compulsory online training module on physical restraint, *Physical Restraint – Understanding the Rules and Guidelines*.

14. All new, beginning, and overseas teachers will complete compulsory online training module within 10 weeks of starting at Hauraki School.
15. If Hauraki School identifies a teacher as having a high likelihood of needing to use physical restraint, they will be trained in appropriate physical holds by accredited physical restraint practitioners.

Process for Authorisation

16. The Board may authorise a staff member who is not a teacher to use physical restraint after they have completed physical restraint training as set out in the Education (Physical Restraint) Rule 2023. The Board must make the authorisation in writing and give a copy of the authorisation to the staff member.
17. The Board may revoke an authorisation at any time in writing.

Complaints

18. Any concerns or complaints about physical restraint or the implementation of this policy will be considered in line with the Board's Concerns and Complaints policy.

Signed: _____

Stehold

Date: _____

12-5-25

Presiding Member of the Board

Review Date: _____

12-5-28

Related policies

- Concerns and Complaints
- Health and Safety

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 hura, 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 hōra 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.

Appendix 4: Debriefing form for staff involved in physical restraint incident

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

Findings of debriefing

Next steps/actions

Principal or Principal’s delegate signature

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