

Use of Physical Restraint Policy

The Board of Rangi Ruru Girls' School endeavours to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for all students and staff. In New Zealand students' rights are protected under the Bill of Rights Act 1990.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to minimise the effect of challenging behaviour, and to ensure the safety of students and staff.

The Physical Restraint Policy adds to existing behaviour management policies and procedures. This policy deals specifically with the use of physical restraint, reducing student distress, recording and reporting, communication, and the process for managing complaints

DEFINITION

The Education and Training Act (2020) defines physical restraint as using physical force to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of the student's body against the student's will. Section 99 of the Act states that a teacher or authorised staff member can use physical restraint if they reasonably believe the safety of the student or of any other person is at serious or imminent risk, and the physical restraint must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

GUIDELINES

1. All staff are required to familiarise themselves with Ministry of Education guidelines for registered schools in New Zealand on the use of physical restraint, and to undertake appropriate professional development.
2. Physical restraint is defined as using force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of the student's body, against the student's will, and is a serious intervention.
3. Staff shall be well versed in prevention and de-escalation strategies used to limit the need to physically restrain a student.
4. Use of physical restraint is limited to teachers or authorised staff members and only where:
 - there are reasonable grounds to believe that there is a serious and imminent risk to the safety of a student or of any other person, including harm caused by significant emotional distress and;
 - the restraint used is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances
 - there is reasonable belief there is no other option in the circumstances to prevent harm.
5. Rangi Ruru will use the Incident of Physical Restraint Form (appendix 1) if there is an incident of physical restraint at the school and send the completed form to:
physicalrestraint.change@education.govt.nz
6. Any incident of physical restraint is to be recorded (and kept for a minimum of 10 years from the date of last action). Parents or caregivers are to be notified as soon as possible, and the incident is reported to the Ministry of Education. (Appendix 2)

7. The Principal is to report, in writing, to the Board of all incidences when physical restraint is used.
8. After any incident of physical restraint, the appropriate staff are to debrief the incident, focusing on the lead-up to it, the different interventions used that were unsuccessful in de-escalating the behaviour, and what could have been done differently. Parents/caregivers will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to participate in a debrief within three working days of the incident or later by mutual agreement. (Appendix 2)
9. The Board shall monitor the use of physical restraint, looking for trends and any action that could be taken at a governance level to support reducing such incidents.
10. Seclusion of students is prohibited. Seclusion of students is defined as placing a child or student in a room involuntarily, alone and from which they cannot (or believe they cannot) freely exit.

Who can restrain?

Restraint can only be used by authorised teachers and staff members who have received the appropriate training.

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. Intervening to prevent harm can include harm to the health, safety or wellbeing of the student or any other person, including harm caused by significant emotional distress.

The physical restraint response must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances:

- Use the 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.

What is a serious and imminent risk to safety?

The physical restraint provisions are intended to deal with the upper end of the spectrum of situations where authorised teachers and staff members have physical contact with a student. It is clear that, in these situations, the restraint is in response to a serious and imminent risk to safety.

Teachers and authorised staff members will need to use their professional judgement to decide what constitutes “a serious and imminent risk to safety”.

Examples.

- 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.

The following examples do not pose a serious and imminent risk to safety. Avoid using physical restraint to manage behaviour in these situations:

- to respond to behaviour that is disrupting the classroom but not putting anyone in danger of being hurt
- for refusal to comply with an adult's request
- to respond to verbal threats
- to stop a student who is trying to leave the classroom or school without permission, unless there is a risk to safety
- as coercion, discipline or punishment
- to stop a student who is damaging or removing property, unless there is a risk to safety.

Preventative techniques

A support plan for preventing student distress and de-escalating crisis situations is put in place for any student identified as having a high likelihood of being involved in such a situation where physical restraint may be used on them; who is subject to the use of restraint more than once in a term; at the request of student's parents or caregivers (written informed consent must be appended to the support plan).

Understand the student:

- Get to know the student and identify potentially difficult times or situations that may be stressful or difficult for them.
- Identify the student's personal signs of stress or unhappiness and intervene early.
- Monitor wider classroom/playground behaviour carefully for potential areas of conflict.

Respect the student:

- 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. Preserve the student's dignity
- Address private or sensitive issues in private. Avoid the use of inappropriate humour such as sarcasm or mocking.

PROCEDURES

Rangi Ruru will incorporate physical restraint discussions into staff meetings and consult with staff on any changes to legislation.

We will incorporate training into staff development days and update staff on any changes to the policy in regular staff briefings. Authorised staff and teachers will be trained in identifying stress triggers, and techniques to minimise and respond to student distress.

Authorised staff will be trained in appropriate physical holds by accredited physical restraint practitioners in order to apply restraint safely.

When a situation involving physical restraint has occurred, debrief and reporting of the situation to the Principal will be required. This will be placed in the provided to The Board will be advised of all situations involving physical restraint.

Steps must be taken to monitor and support the physical and psychological wellbeing of any student who has been physically restrained or any staff member who has used physical restraint.

We will incorporate physical restraint into an individual Behaviour Plan (when required for a student) to include parents and caregivers. This plan will detail the student’s needs and the plan for managing the student’s behaviour as agreed with the parents/caregivers and the School.

Appendix 1

Information for the Ministry of Education and for School Board Reporting: Online Form

Information for Ministry of Education	Date of incident	dd/mm/yy	Date of report	dd/mm/yy
Name of School				
Student’s National Student Number (no name) NSN				
Date of Birth	dd/mm/yy			
If the student was physically restrained more than once during the day, indicate how many times?				
Did the student have a support plan?	yes	no		
Was physical restraint a part of the support plan?	yes	no		
Who made the principal aware of the incident of physical restraint?	Staff member	Parent or Caregiver	Student	Other
Has the school notified the parents or caregivers?	yes	no		
Please briefly describe the events that led to the use of restraint				
Was anyone injured due to the use of physical restraint?	Staff member	Student	Other	No
Does the student have a learning support need eg. disability, neurodivergency, specific learning difference (diagnosed or self identified)?	yes	no	If yes, provide details	
What is the role of the staff member who applied the restraint?	Teacher	Other	If other, what is their role?	
Was the staff member who applied the restraint authorised?	yes	no		
Did the staff member who applied the restraint receive training in physical holds prior to the incident?	yes	no		
Has a debrief meeting been organised?	yes	no		

The Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023 require reporting of physical restraint incidents.

Complete the form via the Community Portal or email it to the Ministry of Education at physicalrestraint.change@education.govt.nz Provide a copy to the employer (school board or manager of a private school) and the parent or caregiver.

Note: The information in this form may be the subject of requests made under the Privacy Act 2020 and the Official Information Act 1982.

Appendix 2

Reporting templates samples for physical restraint incident and debrief reports

Instructions

1. Attach the debriefing forms and any other relevant form (eg, Injury Form) to the Physical Restraint Incident Form.
2. Place copies of these forms in the student's file. Make the copied forms available to the student's teacher/s and the student's parents or caregivers.
3. Share data on physical restraint incidents with the Board of Trustees via the Principal's report. Only share this data in a session that excludes the public.

1. Physical restraint incident report (staff)

- The staff involved in restraining the student should complete this as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- The incident report should be signed off by the staff involved, any staff who witnessed the incident, and the Principal or Principal's delegate.

Note: If the Principal applied the restraint, a delegated senior management team member should sign off the report.

2. Physical restraint debriefing form (staff)

- Within two days of the incident, a debriefing with the staff involved should be held by the Principal or Principal's delegate. Another member of staff who was not involved in the restraint should attend.
- If a Behaviour Specialist from the Ministry or RTLB service is supporting the student's team, they should be part of the debriefing process.

Notes: The Principal is responsible for facilitating the debriefing unless they are the person who applied the physical restraint. If this is the case, a suitable senior leader in the school should take this role. If police have been involved they should be invited to the staff debriefing too.

3. Physical restraint debriefing (parents or caregivers and, if appropriate, the student)

- The parents or caregivers should be notified and involved in discussion about the incident with the Principal or Principal's delegate as soon as possible so they can monitor their child's physical and emotional wellbeing at home.
- The parents or caregivers should be given the opportunity to discuss the incident and invited to become active partners in exploring alternatives to restraint.

Note: The staff member who applied the physical restraint should not be part of this meeting.

Report completed by	Date of incident		Date of report	
Name of student				
Date of birth		Gender M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>		
Ethnicity				
Time restraint started				
Time restraint ended				
Name/s of staff member/s administering restraint				
Trained in safe physical restraint?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
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 – describe how they intended self-harm	
Property – describe potential injury to self or others	

Reason restraint was considered necessary	
Imminent danger, serious risk of injury – describe	
Actual injury – describe and attach injury form	

Please also complete the reflection section below.

Reflection

Events leading to the incident

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

Behaviour of the student

What did you notice about the student's behaviour 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 restraint?

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 student?

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?

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How about you?

How are you feeling and what support do you need?

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Signature of person who applied the restraint Signatures of any staff witnesses

Debriefing form for staff involved in physical restraint incident

Date of incident	
Date of debriefing	Time of debriefing
Names of the people at the debriefing	
Findings of debriefing	
Next steps/actions	
Principal or delegate's signature	

Physical restraint debriefing form – parents or caregivers, student

Date of incident		
Date of debriefing		Time of debriefing
Names of the 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:		

Complaints

All complaints regarding physical restraint will be dealt with in a confidential and professional manner. Complaints should be directed to the Principal who will document the version of events with the relevant staff members and present the report to the Board.

References: Child Protection Policy, Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Procedures, Complaints Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Privacy Policy, Disciplinary Policy.
<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Managing-supporting-students/Guidance-for-New-Zealand-Schools-on-Behaviour-Mgmt-to-Minimise-Physical-....pdf>

Education and Training Act 2020: Updating the physical restraint framework.

Review: This policy will be reviewed every three years or when legislative changes require a review.
Date: April 2023