



## **Policy: Reducing Student Distress and Use of Physical Restraint**

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### **Policy Statement**

The Board is committed to a supportive and caring School environment where all students and staff are kept safe from harm and treated with dignity reflecting our love for Jesus Christ and His love for us. Except as authorised under this policy, no staff member may use any form of physical restraint on students.

Serious situations can arise in Schools where a student or students risk harm to themselves or others.

School staff require safe ways to potentially manage dangerous situations, for the following purposes:

1. To protect the well-being of staff and students.
2. To provide guidelines for the use of physical restraint when it is seen as a last resort and meets the requirements of the Education and Training Act 2020 and Education Physical Restraint Rules 2023 and its amendments (“the Rules”)
3. To provide staff with guidelines and ideas for de-escalating serious situations.
4. To record any incidents of physical restraint and provide for debriefing of these incidents.
5. To provide a clear pathway for complaints.
6. To monitor the emotional impact of such an event on staff and students.

### **Procedural Guidelines**

Physical restraint should only be used by teachers or authorised staff members when the conditions outlined in the Education and Training Act 2020 have been met, and only as a last resort. This procedure reflects the Rules.

#### Defining the terms

1. An “authorised staff member” means an employee of a registered school who is trained and authorised by the employer to use physical restraint in accordance with this procedure;
2. “Physically restrain” means to use physical force to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of the student’s body or part of the student’s body against the student’s will;
3. “harm” means harm to the health, safety, or well-being of the student or another person, including any significant emotional distress suffered by the student or the other person.

#### Authorised staff member

Jireh Christian School (“the School”) may authorise employees, who are not teachers to use physical restraint in accordance with this procedure. Every authorisation will be in writing and a copy will be given to the employee. The School may, by written notice to the employee, revoke such authorisation at any time.

#### Information to be made available

The School will have the following documents available to the School community **[on the website?]**:

1. The guidelines issues by the Secretary for Education under section 101 of the Education and Training Act 2020;
2. The names and positions of any authorised staff members; and
3. This policy.



#### Preventative Techniques:

1. This is about relationship building and is particularly important for students who regularly present with high risk behaviours.
2. Attempt to understand the student and try to learn the signs of stress or unhappiness.
3. Respect the student by: demonstrating that you are there to help; being reasonable; providing choices and compromise while maintaining authority.
4. Preserve the student's dignity. This may mean dealing with things in private. Do not mock or treat the matter lightly.

#### De-escalation Techniques:

1. Create space and time: remove the audience; provide physical space; name the emotion calmly (e.g. "I can see that you are very frustrated"); wait.
2. Communicate calmly and quietly (even when the student is loud).
3. Monitor your own body language and provide opportunity for the student to move out of the situation with dignity.
4. When appropriate, give the student clear choices and/or directions, to help them feel more secure and regain control.
5. If escalation occurs, move further away, have an exit plan and send for help, if necessary.

#### Conditions for use of physical restraint:

Physical restraint may only be used when:

1. The physical restraint is necessary to prevent imminent harm to the student or another person; and
2. The teacher or authorised staff member reasonably believes there are no other options to prevent the harm; and
3. The physical restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.
4. Examples of imminent harm are:
  - 4.1. A student moving in with a weapon or something being used as a weapon with a clear intent to harm another person.
  - 4.2. A student physically attacking another person, or about to.
  - 4.3. A student throwing furniture (for example), throwing equipment, or breaking glass close to others.
  - 4.4. A student putting themselves in danger e.g. running on the road, or trying to harm themselves.

#### Match the physical restraint to the situation:

1. Use only where justifiable.
2. Use the minimum force necessary.
3. Use only for as long as is necessary.

#### Guidance if you have to use physical restraint:

1. Physical restraint can only be used by teachers and authorised staff members;
2. If you do not have the skills or confidence to physically restrain the student safely, remove the other students and call for help.
3. Call the Police when a student cannot be managed safely and the imminent danger to students, staff or themselves remains after all alternatives have been explored.

#### Seclusion is prohibited:

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



#### Monitoring:

1. Monitor continuously while applying the restraint, and stop as soon as the danger has passed.
2. Monitor the staff member and student for the rest of the School day. Watch for shock, unnoticed injuries and delayed effects, physical or psychological.

#### Contact Parents:

1. The Principal or their delegate will contact parents or caregivers on the same day, as soon as possible after the incident of physical restraint, so they can monitor their child's wellbeing at home.
2. The student's parents or 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 further below under the heading "follow up".

#### Reporting:

1. Every staff member who uses physical restraint must complete a Staff Physical Restraint Incident Report (see Appendix 1 of the Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023) within 24 hours of the incident. The staff member must ensure a copy of the form is placed in the student's file and that a copy is provided to the student's parents and/or caregivers.
2. The staff member must discuss the incident with the Principal as soon as possible. (If the Principal is unavailable, see the Deputy Principal or another member of the Executive Leadership Team).
3. The form "Information for the Ministry of Education and for School Board Reporting" must be filled out and emailed to [physical.restraint@education.govt.nz](mailto:physical.restraint@education.govt.nz). A copy of this form will also be kept in the Physical Restraint online folder, (these records must be analysed so that trends can be identified).

#### Follow up:

1. Within two working days of the incident, the Principal or his/her delegate will facilitate a debriefing with the staff member(s) involved and another staff member who was not involved (e.g. the SENCO). If Police were involved they should be invited too.
2. Within three working days, parents of the student should be invited to a meeting with the Principal, or their delegate, to discuss the incident so they can monitor their child's physical and emotional wellbeing at home. (The staff member who applied the restraint should not be a part of this meeting.)
3. A Physical Restraint Debriefing form (see page Appendix 5 of the guide) will be completed by the Principal or their delegate. This information will be shared (in committee) with the Board in the Principal's Report.

#### Individual Behaviour Plan:

1. If the student is on an Individual Behaviour Plan, or it is felt that one is required, then arrange a meeting with all stakeholders to attend to this, as soon as possible.

#### Support plans for prevention of physical restraint

The School will ensure that a support plan for preventing student distress and de-escalating crisis situations is put in place for any student:

1. Who the School identifies as having a high likelihood of being involved in a crisis situation where physical restraint may be used on them; or
2. Who is subject to the use of physical restraint more than once in a term; or
3. At the request of the student's parents or caregivers.

The School will ensure that a student's parents or caregivers provide written informed consent if a section on physical restraint is appended to the student's support plan.



### Training and support for staff

The School will ensure that staff are provided adequate training.

Teachers that the School identifies as having a high likelihood of needing to use physical restraint will be trained in appropriate physical holds by accredited physical restraint practitioners.

Every authorised staff member (who is not a teacher) will be trained in appropriate physical holds by accredited physical practitioners prior to their authorisation.

### Complaint:

1. If any student, parent or caregiver is dissatisfied with the way an incident has been handled, they are encouraged to follow the school's complaints' procedure.

## **Legislative Compliance**

Education Training Act 2020

Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

## **Review schedule: Triennially**

**ADOPTED BY BOARD**

Date 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Chairperson **R Thornton (Acting)**

Reviewed Date 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

Chairperson **M Causley**

Reviewed Date 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Presiding Member **A Coombridge**