

## Policy: Physical Restraint

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### Policy Statement

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.
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

#### Preventative Techniques:

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

#### De-escalation Techniques:

- 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.
- Communicate calmly and quietly (even when the student is loud).
- Monitor your own body language and provide opportunity for the student to move out of the situation with dignity.
- When appropriate, give the student clear choices and/or directions, to help them feel more secure and regain control.
- If escalation occurs move further away, have an exit plan and send for help if necessary.

#### Use physical restraint only when:

- There is imminent danger of physical injury. This can be to the student themselves or others.
- Preventative and de-escalation techniques have not reduced the risk of injury.

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

- Use only where justifiable.
- Use the minimum force necessary.
- Use only for as long as is necessary.

#### Examples of imminent danger:

- A student moving in with a weapon or something being used as a weapon with a clear intent to harm another person.
- A student physically attacking another person, or is about to.
- A student throwing furniture (for example), throwing equipment, breaking glass close to others.
- A student putting themselves in danger e.g. running on the road, or trying to harm themselves.

Guidance if you have to use physical restraint:

- Ideally, physical restraint should only be used by staff trained in its safe use, and trained in emergency first aid.
- If there is no one with training nearby, and you feel you can use physical restraint safely – both for yourself and the student – use your judgement and intervene.
- If you do not have the skills or confidence, remove the other students and call for help.
- 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.

Do not use these restraints:

- Any restraint that inhibits breathing.
- Any restraint that inhibits speaking or the main method of communication e.g. sign language if this is the student's main method to communicate.
- Prone (face-down) physical restraint.
- Pressure points and pain holds.
- Tackling, sitting, lying or kneeling on a student.
- Pressure on the chest or neck.
- Hyperextension (bending back) of joints.
- Headlocks.
- Using force to take/drag a student, who is resisting, to another location.
- Restraint when moving a student from one place to another – trying to get them into a van or taxi, for example – when they are in an escalated state, as this may escalate them further.

Monitoring:

- Monitor continuously while applying the restraint, and stop as soon as the danger has passed.
- 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:

- Contact parents or caregivers on the same day, as soon as possible after the incident, so they can monitor their child's wellbeing at home. The Principal will do this.

On the same day:

- Fill out a Physical Restraint Incident Report, discuss this with the Principal, and file a copy with the Principal. (If the Principal is unavailable, see the Deputy Principal or another member of the Senior Management Team).
- The Principal is to contact the parents.

Within two school days of the incident:

