Aidanfield Christian School

Aidanfield Christian School Board

Policy: Physical Restraint

Introduction

1. As a State Integrated School, the Board requires that all aspects of this policy be guided by the schools Special Character and compliant with relevant legislation.
2. We pay attention to our Foundational Principles particularly; *Man is made in the image of God*, and we therefore enact this policy in a way that respects and values each individual as an image bearer of the creator.
3. The school seeks to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students and staff.
4. Safety at school is a basic expectation for students and staff, as well as being a prerequisite for student success and academic achievement.
5. State Integrated School Guidelines followed.

What is physical restraint, who can use it, and when?

Physical restraint is using force to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of the whole or part of a student's body against the student's will.

Physical Restraint is a severe intervention and should only be used as a last resort. Its use is limited to teachers and authorised staff members - both groups having completed the relevant training modules - and only when:

- physical restraint is necessary to prevent imminent harm to the student or another person,
- The authorised staff member reasonably believes there is no other option, and
- The physical restraint is reasonable and proportionate.

Upholding high standards for ethical behaviour is expected of all staff members. In the ACS context routine and gentle restraint, in the normal course of school life and towards an agreed end by parent and teacher is not considered 'severe intervention'.

Some examples of 'routine and gentle' restraint include but are not limited to:

- New entrant/ junior primary transition of child from parent to teacher (with the approval of the parent/caregiver).
- Taking a child by the hand to shepherd them to a new/different area (in situations where there is no physical harm to other students).
- Implementing an agreed response as part of a documented IEP (Individual Education Plan) or IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan).

Information to be made available

Information regarding the use of physical restraint will be available to the school community, including the MoE guidelines, names of authorised staff members and this policy.

Records of incidents involving use of physical restraint will be kept for a minimum of 10 years.

Any guidelines issued under section 139AE of the Act and names/positions of authorised staff will be available for inspection at the school.

Authorisation of staff members who are not teachers

The school Board may authorise an employee who is not a teacher to use physical restraint. Such an

authorisation will be in writing, and the employee will be given a copy. This authorisation can be revoked at any point by written notice.

PROCEDURE – Physical Restraint:

Staff are encouraged to see reporting of physical restraint not as a punitive action but rather a process to better inform the response to students' needs as a part of the school's commitment to providing a safe environment for all.

All staff are bound by the policy and procedures related to physical restraint and are required to operate professionally within the bounds of these.

Acceptable Physical Contact

In support of our Special Character and the National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP), we ensure that the school is a safe and inclusive place of learning for all students, and seek to recognise and respond to student needs.

At Aidanfield Christian School, we recognise that acceptable and appropriate physical contact contributes to student safety and well-being when done thoughtfully and in a considered, controlled and professional manner, and within a framework of intentionality.

We consider physical contact acceptable if:

- the student is willing to receive physical contact and/or a parent has approved the intended action through either direct personal acknowledgement (eg. new entrant handover/transition) or IEP/IBP discussion and agreement.
- it is for the benefit of the student.
- it is limited to appropriate areas of the body.

Appropriate areas of the body are generally considered: the shoulders, arms, hands, and upper back. Exceptions to this may include professionally or medically prescribed positioning techniques.

Assessing if physical contact is acceptable

In each instance where physical restraint may be used, staff will:

- consider the benefit to students of using physical contact compared with non-physical interactions, such as using affirmative gestures or words, and make informed decisions about whether contact is appropriate to the situation.
- consider the background and needs of individual students. This includes the physical capabilities of the student and their cultural preferences.
- Consider direct/explicit parental approval.
- Consider intervention strategies noted in an IEP or IBP.

In circumstances where physical contact may be appropriate, staff look for signs that the student is willing to receive physical contact, such as an affirmative facial expression or movement toward the staff member or where a parent/caregiver has approved such restraint which must reflect the limitations within this policy and procedure.

In the absence of a parent/caregiver, we do not use physical contact if the student does not seem willing to receive physical contact (e.g. shaking their head or hesitating/retreating) unless expressly agreed to through

direct personal assent of the parent/caregiver or a formal IEP/IBP or there is imminent danger or potential harm to the student or others.

Purposes of acceptable physical contact

Physical contact may be used at Aidanfield Christian School for the following purposes:

- developing skills (e.g. demonstrating a technique or safe way to perform a task during physical education).
- providing emotional support (e.g. to give reassurance, reduce distress, or acknowledge an achievement).
- supporting communication (e.g. physically guiding a student to turn on their communication device).
- providing help to students, particularly if it is part of their required medical or personal care. This may be for functional mobility and positioning, hygiene, nutrition, and/or safety. Assistance may also include using aids and equipment intended to safely move or transport students (e.g. hoists, transfer boards, and car seats).

Unacceptable physical contact

Aidanfield Christian School is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, and does not permit unacceptable physical contact. We respond to incidents involving unacceptable physical contact using our Concerns and Complaints policy, and report serious misconduct by teaching staff to the Teaching Council.

Contact may be considered unacceptable due to:

- the type of physical contact (e.g. inappropriate contact areas, force, or physical discipline).
- the motive for physical contact (e.g. contact for the physical or emotional benefit of a staff member).
- the context or environment of physical contact.

Staff do not engage in any physical contact while alone with students in a space that is not accessible to other people (e.g. in a room with the door closed) except in emergency situations where there is imminent danger and risk of serious harm to either student or staff member.

Guidelines., names and positions of authorised members and school policy must be available to parents.

Responding to inappropriate physical contact from students

Aidanfield Christian School staff enforce boundaries for physical contact where required, and use techniques such as redirection to promote appropriate interactions. We encourage staff to consider how non-physical interactions may be used, and how individual interactions affect other students in the learning environment.

We support staff to seek guidance from other colleagues and the principal if they are uncertain about the appropriateness of physical contact. We will consult parents/caregivers as necessary to support the safety and wellbeing of students.

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Notifying the use of physical restraint

Any use of physical restraint must be reported to the MoE, the parents/caregivers of the student, and the Board if it is not explicitly for:

- Developing skills (e.g. demonstrating a technique or safe way to perform a task during physical education).
- Providing emotional support (e.g. to give reassurance, reduce distress, or acknowledge an achievement, new entrant transition as parent leaves).
- Supporting communication (e.g. physically guiding a student to turn on their communication device).
- Providing help to students, particularly if it is part of their required medical or personal care. This may be for functional mobility and positioning, hygiene, nutrition, and/or safety. Assistance may also include using aids and equipment intended to safely move or transport students (e.g. hoists, transfer boards, and car seats).

Once restraint has been used the parents or caregivers must be notified and provided with a reasonable opportunity to actively participate in a debrief about the incident including how it was managed within 3 days or later by mutual agreement.

Where physical restraint has been used as an outworking of an IEP or IBP, reporting should happen so as to make a record to review agreed strategies relating to effectiveness in an on-going manner and to ensure the parent/caregiver remains well informed and an involved partner in the learning journey of the student.

Monitoring the use of physical restraint

Monitoring the well-being of staff and students involved in any incident requiring the use of physical restraint will be in place.

Records will be kept of the event [Appendix 1] must be analysed to identify trends. The school, via the SENCO, will check all documentation to ensure it is complete.

Reporting of use of physical restraint to the ministry is now to be completed using the online form below:
https://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/special-education/behaviour-services-to-help-schools-and-students/minimising-physical-restraint-in-new-zealand-schools-and-kura#reporting-incidents-2

Any staff member who uses physical restraint and activates the reporting threshold must fill out the online form before the end of the day of the incident. A copy of this form will be placed in the pupil's file and a copy provided to the parents/caregivers.

Reporting will be completed by either of Head of School, or Deputy Principal, or Principal. Analysis of records will be completed by SENCO.

Any record must be kept for a minimum of 10 years.

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Training

The school will ensure all teachers and other authorised staff are supported and trained.

Legislation

Education and Training Act 2020 (Sections 99-101)

Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

Definitions

Employer means a board and the managers of a school.

Teacher means a person who holds a teaching position.

Physical restraint is 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.

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 means an employee of a registered school who is trained and authorised by the employer to use physical restraint in accordance with Section 99 of the Act.

Board Chair Sign: _____

Adopted On: August 2026

Date of Review: May 2028