

PUNI SCHOOL
BAS3 Health, Safety & Welfare - PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

BACKGROUND:

The Ministry of Education has issued **Aramai He Tetekura | Arise our Future Generations: A guide to understanding distress and minimising the use of physical restraint** [Physical Restraint Guidelines Aramai He Tētēkura](#). These guidelines outline relevant legislation about physical restraint and physical contact in schools, and provide practical approaches to embed positive environments and experiences in all school settings.

Puni School has procedures in place for managing student behaviour. The key point is to safeguard the wellbeing of students, staff, and others whenever behaviour issues arise.

Staff Authorisation

All teacher staff are authorised to apply restraint. Non-teaching staff can apply restraint if they have been authorised, in writing by the board. Physical restraint applied by an unauthorised staff member is not covered by the Education and Training Act. In this case, other legislation or common law may apply.

Staff use de-escalation techniques (see the guidelines above) if a student's behaviour is becoming out of control and/or poses a danger to themselves or others. However, in an emergency situation it may be necessary to use physical restraint. This is a serious intervention that may cause physical or emotional harm to the student and the person using physical restraint. Physical restraint is a last resort and is only used when directly necessary to protect the health, safety, or wellbeing of the student or another person. It may be necessary to move people out of the area to de-escalate the situation and keep them safe. In some cases, it may be necessary to involve the police.

Mandatory Training

Puni School teachers and authorised staff will complete all mandatory training modules on the updated physical restraint rules and guidelines within specified timeframes. All school staff will complete the first online training module covering legislation, rules, and guidelines by February 2024.

Guidelines on the Use of Physical Restraint

If physical restraint is warranted, the level of restraint should be proportional to the level of risk the student or their behaviour poses, and should end as soon as the safety of everyone involved is assured. The student's physical and psychological state should be monitored during the restraint. The student, and the person who applied the physical restraint, should be monitored for signs of distress or shock in the aftermath of the incident.

The school holds a debrief after the incident, examining the events leading up to it, the interventions used, and what could have been done differently. The Ministry of Education, and the board, is notified of any incident involving physical restraint.

Parents/caregivers whose child was involved in the incident should be notified as soon as practically possible. They should be invited to offer suggestions to avoid the use of restraint in the management of their child's behaviour. Any complaints from parents are dealt with

through the school's **complaints process**, and the Ministry of Education is contacted for advice if necessary.

Students with high-risk behaviours should have an individual plan in place. Key staff members and parents/caregivers are involved in the development of the plan. All staff working with the particular student are fully briefed on the agreed protocols in the plan, and all staff are made aware that there is an individual behaviour plan in place for the student.

Monitoring the Use of Physical Restraint

The Ministry of Education requires all incidents of restraint to be reported using an online form (accessed from the Community Portal).

The principal, or delegate, monitors the use of physical restraint and collates information about any incidents. The principal shares this information with the board through the principal's report at board meetings (in a public-excluded session).

The principal assures the board that all procedures relating to physical restraint have been followed, and that all requirements to notify, monitor, and report have been met. The principal confirms that any non-teaching staff have been authorised in writing, and that staff authorised to apply restraint have received appropriate training and support.

Legislation

- Education and Training Act 2020
- Children's Act 2014
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Crimes Act 1961

Reviewed by the Puni School BOT: July 2026

Next Review Date: May 2029