

# Draft Guidelines

For registered schools in New Zealand to prevent, de-escalate and safely respond to behaviours arising from student distress: minimising the use of physical restraint.

OCTOBER 2021



# Part 1

Introduction,  
guiding principles,  
the law, board  
and private school  
responsibilities,  
summary of the  
guidelines

# Introduction

Safe physical and emotional environments are important for all students, and for the teachers and staff who support their learning.

Research tells us that physical restraint compromises the health and safety of students and those using it.<sup>1,2,3</sup> The use of restraint can have very serious consequences, including death.<sup>4</sup>

There is also no evidence that using restraint reduces behaviours that challenge adults.

These guidelines:

- outline school and board responsibilities under the Rules on the use of physical restraint (Education and Training Act 2020, section 100).
- aim to help school personnel (boards of trustees and managers of private schools, principals, teachers and authorised staff) to understand and prevent student distress and to respond safely when it escalates through best practice examples, a framework for decision making and problem solving, and advice on assessing behaviour escalation levels.
- describe the thresholds for use of physical restraint as an action of last resort.

The guidelines are issued under section 101(1) of the Education and Training Act 2020. The legislation requires all employers, principals, teachers and authorised staff members to follow the rules and have regard to these guidelines.

<sup>1</sup> Zaccaro, Daniel E., "Unregulated, untrained, and unaware: restraint and seclusion practices in educational settings" (2014). Dissertations and Theses @ UNI. 45. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/etd/45>.

<sup>2</sup> McVilly K. (2008) Physical Restraint in Disability Services: Current Practices; Contemporary Concerns and Future Directions. A report commissioned by the Office of the Senior Practitioner, Department of Human Services, Victoria, Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Paterson, B., 2003. Deaths associated with restraint use in health and social care in the UK. The results of a preliminary survey. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 10 (1), 3-15. doi: 10.1046/j1365-2850.2003.00523.x

<sup>4</sup> Weiss, E., Altimari, D., Blint, D., & Megan, K. (1998). Deadly restraints: A nationwide pattern of death. Hartford, CT: The Hartford Courant

# Guiding principles

These principles have been agreed by key education sector representatives to inform the guidelines as we work together to eliminate the use of physical restraint.

**Principle 1:** We want to work towards eliminating the use of physical restraint, except as a last resort to prevent imminent harm. This is a legal requirement. Physical restraint is a serious intervention that can cause significant harm to everyone involved.

**Principle 2:** We want the school environment to be safe and to support learning and wellbeing for everyone. Schools are legally required to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for all students and staff.

**Principle 3:** We want the experiences of Māori, Pacific, and disabled students to reflect the rights of all children and the rights and principles embodied in both Ka Hikitia and the Treaty of Waitangi. Students' rights are defined under the Bill of Rights Act 1990, Human Rights Act 1993, Education and Training Act 2020, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights.

**Principle 4:** We want to better understand the underlying reasons for students' behaviour to inform prevention strategies and de-escalation of crisis situations. Behaviour is a form of communication.

**Principle 5:** We want to build and maintain positive relationships that support prevention and de-escalation of crisis situations and enable reflection and change. Parents, caregivers and whānau know their children and are essential partners in preventing the use of physical restraint.

# The law: how it defines physical restraint and how it can be used

Section 99 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act) sets out limits on the use of physical restraint by teachers and authorised staff members in registered schools (State, State integrated, and private schools).

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## What is physical restraint?

Physical restraint is defined as the use of physical force to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of a student's body against the student's will.

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## When can physical restraint be used?

Physical restraint must not be used unless all the following conditions are met:

- the physical restraint is necessary to prevent imminent harm to the student or another person
- the teacher or authorised staff member reasonably believes that there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent the harm
- the physical restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

Harm is defined as harm to the health, safety, or wellbeing of the student or another person, including any significant emotional distress suffered by the student or the other person. Imminent means that the harm is about to happen.

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## Who can use physical restraint?

Teachers (including relief teachers and people with a Limited Authority to Teach) are automatically authorised to use physical restraint in accordance with Section 99 of the Act. Other staff members must be specifically authorised by their employer (board of trustees or manager in the case of a private school). **The Act will not cover the intervention of an unauthorised staff member who physically restrains a student.**

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## Other relevant sections

Corporal punishment (the use of force, by way of correction or punishment) and seclusion (placing a student involuntarily alone in a room from which they cannot, or believe they cannot, freely exit) are banned under section 98 of the Act.

# Responsibilities of state and state integrated school boards and managers of private schools

The Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2021 set out the practices and procedures that must be followed relating to the use of physical restraint at registered schools. This section explains the responsibilities of school boards and managers of private schools under these rules.

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## School policies on student distress and physical restraint (Rule 4)

Every school must have a policy on student distress that details whole school supports including classroom supports, how to request help, and information on how the school will develop plans to respond to distress and behaviours that challenge others.

Policies should also contain information on how any physical restraint will be used, including authorisation and sign off processes that the board or manager of a private school will use, and include a clear complaints process. The board or manager must take reasonable steps to ensure the school community knows about this policy.

The policy should be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle.

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## Authorising non-teaching staff to use physical restraint (Rule 5)

Teachers are automatically authorised to use physical restraint under the Education and Training Act 2020.

School boards and managers of private schools may also authorise non-teaching staff to use physical restraint in accordance with Section 99 of the Act. These staff members must be trained in positive behaviour management, de-escalation, and the appropriate physical holds prior to being authorised (Rule 12). The authorisation must be in writing, with a copy given to the authorised staff member, and may be revoked at any time.

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## Making information available to the school community (Rule 6)

Schools must ensure that these guidelines are available to the school community (including staff, students, parents and caregivers), as well as the school's policy on student distress and the use of physical restraint (Rule 4), and the names and positions of any authorised staff members (Rule 5).

The names and positions of authorised staff members are personal information and must be managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

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## Notifying parents and reporting to the Ministry (Rules 9 and 11)

Boards and managers of private schools must ensure that processes are in place to notify a student's parents or caregivers as soon as possible on the day of a restraint occurring (at minimum, before the student is released into their care) and report it to the Ministry of Education.

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## Record keeping and monitoring (Rules 7 and 10)

Boards and managers of private schools must keep records of incidents of physical restraint for a minimum period of seven years. They must ensure that these records are analysed so that trends can be identified and responses to minimise further use of restraint can be developed.

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## Ensuring support plans are developed for specific students (Rule 8)

Boards and managers of private schools must ensure that support plans are put in place for:

- any student they identify as having a high likelihood of being involved in a crisis situation where physical restraint may be used on them (for example, based on information provided by a previous school)
- any student who is subject to the use of physical restraint more than once in a term
- any student if requested by their parents or caregivers.

Support plans should be created in collaboration with the student's parents or caregivers to identify the student's stress triggers, develop strategies that support the child's learning and prevent distress, and identify the responses needed to de-escalate crisis situations. Students should be aware of and involved in their support plans.

Parents or caregivers must provide informed consent if a section on physical restraint is appended to their child's support plan. This requires them to understand the risks and impacts of physical restraint.

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## Training and support for teachers and authorised staff members (Rule 12)

Boards and managers of private schools must ensure that, by 1 March 2023, all teachers and authorised staff members have completed online modules on the content of these guidelines, and that from 1 July 2024, they are supported and trained in identifying stress triggers, understanding unmet needs and preventing, minimising and responding to student distress. These guidelines and the Ministry's training for schools will help meet this requirement.

Boards and managers of private schools must also ensure that all authorised staff members who are not teachers, and any teachers they identify as having a high likelihood of needing to use physical restraint (such as those who work with a child with physical restraint in their support plan), are trained in appropriate physical holds by accredited physical restraint practitioners. You can [contact your local Ministry of Education office](#) to request this training.



# Summary of the Guidelines

Section 99 of the Education and Training Act 2020 sets out the limits on the use of physical restraint in registered schools. These guidelines, issued under section 101 of the Act, supplement the legislation. They aim to give clarity and support to school staff about when and how they can use physical restraint, uphold the rights of children, whānau and school staff, and prevent the use of physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent imminent harm. All schools must have regard to these guidelines and follow the Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2021 issued under section 100 of the Act.

The guidelines are centred around 10 steps that will help you reduce student distress, prevent the use of physical restraint, and manage any incidents appropriately. More detailed guidance on each of these steps can be accessed by following the links provided.

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## 1. Know what acceptable physical contact is

Acceptable physical contact can be a positive tool to support the cognitive, social, and emotional development of learners. There are three principles that determine whether physical contact is acceptable:

Firstly, that it is undertaken only if the learner is willing to be touched. You should be constantly alert to signals that confirm a learner's willingness for physical contact to occur – if at any point you sense that the learner is no longer willing, stop immediately.

Secondly, that it **is for the benefit of the learner being touched**. This could be, for example, for teaching purposes, emotional support, aid or assistance, or to assist communication.

Thirdly, that **it is limited to appropriate areas of the body** – generally the elbows, upper arms, shoulders, hands, and upper back.

It is important to know your learners when judging whether physical contact is acceptable. Some learners will not want any form of physical contact.

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## 2. Build partnerships to raise understanding of students' needs and prevent physical restraint

High quality relationships between teachers, whānau, students and other school staff are essential for promoting students' learning and wellbeing and minimising the use of physical restraint.

When you first meet a new student and their whānau, and for every interaction thereafter, it is important to consider these as proactive, intentional interactions that support your relationship with the student. These relationships prevent situations escalating and support recovery after a crisis.

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## 3. Develop whole school approaches to prevent, plan and respond to imminent harm incidents

A positive school culture reduces the likelihood of imminent harm incidents and school violence. Schools with positive cultures are associated with less aggression among students and incidents of behaviour that challenge others. Positive cultures support students to become valuable, active contributors in their school communities.

It is also important for schools to have safety management plans detailing school-wide responses to a variety of emergencies. These help school staff know their role and how they will respond during an emergency, including threats or acts of school violence.

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#### **4. Understand that behaviour that challenges others is often a sign of a student in distress**

When a student is behaving in a way that challenges others or creates a risk of imminent harm, it is important to understand that this is often a sign that they are in distress. Think about this kind of behaviour as a way of communicating a lagging skill or unmet need that, for whatever reason, the student cannot otherwise express. Acknowledge that the student is doing the best they can in the situation they are in and think about how you can change the environment or how you react instead of trying to change the student.

Identifying the unmet need and providing appropriate support prevents the student from experiencing distress, and therefore from behaving in ways that others find challenging. It benefits the student and everyone else around them.

For the purposes of promoting mana-enhancing language and understanding behaviour, we use the terminology “students in distress” throughout these guidelines.

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#### **5. Develop support plans for students in distress**

Rule 8 requires schools to develop support plans for students who have a high likelihood of being physically restrained, who are physically restrained more than once in a term, or at the request of the student’s parents or caregivers. The purpose of support plans is to identify a student’s stress triggers – the things in the home, school or community environment that lead to distress – and put in place strategies to remove or reduce these so that they feel safe, happy, and able to engage positively in school life.

The support plan should be developed collaboratively with the student’s parents or caregivers. Whānau are the experts on their children and can help you

understand what is causing a student’s distress and what can be done differently to help. Think about where and when the distress occurs, talk and listen to the student, and consider factors such as their identity, language/communication, culture, learning support needs, strengths, interests and important relationships. It can be helpful to engage Ministry of Education specialists, medical experts or other agencies to gain a better understanding of the child’s medical condition, trauma, or other learning support needs that may be related to their stress triggers.

A support plan template you can use is provided on [page 24](#) of these guidelines. This template has been developed by whānau and is simple and easy to read, understand and implement. Ministry of Education specialist staff and RTLB can also help with the development of support plans.

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#### **6. Plan for how to respond to crisis situations**

A student’s support plan should identify their signs of distress and list the strategies that will help calm the situation. To reduce a student’s distress, it is good to demonstrate a verbally calm and physically supportive presence. Know what body language is culturally appropriate for the student (eye contact, facial expressions, stance and movement). Acknowledge how the student is feeling, be patient and redirect their focus to the desired outcome. Remove the audience and get help if you need it.

Know that if a student completely loses control, there is very little that you can say to help. The best thing you can do is create time and space for them to regain control. Plan for where other students will go in a crisis, how you will get help and who will provide it.

After a crisis, it can take time for a student to calm down. To help facilitate calming, use few words and provide the student with space and access to food and drink. Validate their emotions and don’t problem solve or discuss consequences. It can be helpful to encourage distraction and activities that use up energy.

It is important to keep whānau informed about their child’s level of distress and how well their support plan is working. If there is a crisis, you should review the incident together and amend the student’s support plan as needed.

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## **7. Only use physical restraint as an action of last resort to prevent imminent harm**

Physical restraint is the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body, or part of their body, against their will. It is a serious intervention that **must not be used unless it is necessary to prevent imminent harm to the student or another person and there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent the harm.**

Harm includes harm to the health, safety or wellbeing of the student or another person, including any significant emotional distress suffered by the student or the other person. Significant emotional distress is when a person is overwhelmed by a situation to such an extent that it is utterly intolerable, and they cannot cope or recover.

Remember that physical restraint can cause emotional distress and/or physical harm to the student being restrained, the person doing the restraining and anybody witnessing the restraint. Only use physical restraint if you are certain that the harm being prevented by this action is greater than that which would be caused by it.

**Any restraint used must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.** This means only applying as much force as necessary, and only for the minimum time necessary. Use a side-on body position to keep safe, use deflection and consider the safest physical holds only. Do not use holds that inhibit a student's breathing or main method of communication. Watch and listen for breathing difficulties and let go immediately if the student tells you they can't breathe. When the student is calm, release the hold slowly.

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## **8. Notify the parents or caregivers as soon as possible and monitor wellbeing**

After physical restraint is used, help the student to calm and notify the principal and whānau as soon as possible. **Rule 9 requires that schools notify parents or caregivers as soon as possible if their child has been physically restrained.** At minimum, this needs to be before the child is released into their care so that they can monitor their wellbeing at home.

**Rule 10 requires that schools take reasonable steps to ensure that any student who has been physically restrained, and any staff member who has used restraint, has their physical and psychological wellbeing monitored** after the incident in case of adverse impacts. Watch for shock, possible unnoticed injury and delayed effects. Ask the staff member if they need a break and someone to talk with about the incident.

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## **9. Restore relationships and prevent future incidents**

**Rule 9 requires schools to provide parents or caregivers with a reasonable opportunity to attend a debrief about any incident of physical restraint.** The purpose of this debrief is to reflect on the incident, restore relationships between students, teachers, authorised staff members and whānau, and plan how to prevent or de-escalate any risk of further incidents.

Use a team approach to allow a range of perspectives and reflecting prompts that avoid blame. Make sure that the people involved are ready to review the incident, orientate the team by focusing on the lead-up facts and patterns, and ask what can be done to strengthen the things that worked well or improve things that didn't go well.

It is understandable that whānau may feel upset if their child has been physically restrained. All schools should have a policy on responding to complaints that is available to whānau. Your local Ministry office can help if the complaint cannot be easily resolved.

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## **10. Monitoring and reporting for continuous improvement**

**Rule 7 requires schools to keep records of every incident of physical restraint. Rule 10 requires that these records be analysed** so that trends, including increased use of physical restraint, can be identified and appropriate responses to minimise restraint developed.

**Rule 11 requires schools to report every incident of physical restraint to the Ministry of Education.** This enables the Ministry to identify local and national trends to monitor whether policy and support is minimising the use of physical restraint, and report this back to the sector, community and wider public.

# Part 2

I Good practice

# Acceptable physical contact

In New Zealand, teaching practice is becoming more relationship based. Increasingly, teachers must navigate how to develop authentic, powerful relationships with their learners while respecting professional boundaries. As part of this, we know that many teachers already use acceptable physical contact to support their learners.

We know from research that acceptable physical contact is an important part of developing social relationships. Research indicates physical touch is important for wellbeing, cognitive development, and learning, particularly for young children. Acceptable physical contact, used with integrity and appropriate care, helps model healthy social relationships to learners. It can be used as a positive tool to support the emotional and social development of learners.

It is important to know your learners when judging whether physical contact is acceptable – some learners will not want any form of physical contact. Teachers are encouraged to expand their repertoire of verbal and non-verbal feedback and support tools for working with learners. Such tools include:

## Non-verbal

- authentic smiles
- affirmative hand gestures
- getting down to learner's level if they are young
- eye contact, if culturally acceptable and appropriate

## Verbal

- warm use of a learner's name
- gentle tones and affirming words
- use of comforting language

These provide teachers with the opportunity for positive and supportive expression towards learners without the need for physical contact to occur.

The following guidance is intended to help teachers and other adults in schools/kura correctly navigate what is and is not acceptable physical contact. It is intended as a baseline for good, legally compliant practice, not a comprehensive policy. Teachers and other adults should always be aware of their own school's/kura policy, rules, and expectations around acceptable physical contact.

**If in doubt about whether physical contact is acceptable, don't use it.** You can always seek guidance later from peers, colleagues, the learner's whānau or your professional leader.

Physical restraint is not the same as acceptable physical contact. For information on physical restraint, see [page 29](#).

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## How do you know what is acceptable physical contact?

Acceptable physical contact should always be:

- undertaken only if the learner is willing to be touched; and
- for the benefit of the learner being touched; and
- limited to appropriate areas of the body.

## 1. Undertaken only if the learner is willing to be touched

The willingness of the learner to be touched is essential because non-consensual touch damages learners' wellbeing and their understandings about their personal autonomy. Furthermore, it is not always possible to know whether a learner has experienced or is experiencing a traumatic or abusive situation, and non-consensual physical contact may severely exacerbate existing trauma.

In recent law changes, the phrase "against the student's will" was added to the legal definition of physical restraint. This makes it clear that physical contact for guiding, comforting, or communicating with a learner is allowed if the learner is willing for the physical contact to occur.

Learners will generally convey their willingness for physical contact through their body language and/or verbal responses.

### Smiling, coming forward to accept physical contact, and extended hands are generally a sign of willingness.

The willingness to be touched will vary from learner to learner. It is important to recognise that some learners may find it difficult to indicate they are unwilling to accept physical contact from a teacher or adult. Each teacher and adult needs to be alert to signs that a learner is reluctant to accept physical contact – hesitancy in coming forward, not engaging, withdrawing, stiffness or nervousness.

In some cases, especially with older learners, it may be appropriate to confirm the willingness of the learner before any physical contact is attempted. This may include explaining why you are offering physical contact.

- If the teacher is initiating contact, checking verbally first may be good practice:
  - "I can see you feel sad, would you like a hug?"
  - "Tino pai! Want a high-five?"

- If the learner is initiating contact, think through whether it is appropriate before agreeing. Some children are sensory seekers and may need more help learning the boundaries of acceptable physical contact and assistance to follow them. Re-direct the learner where appropriate:
  - "I don't like it when people grab my legs like that – what about if you hold my hand instead?"
  - "I don't need a hug – how about a high-five?"

If at any point during the physical contact you sense that the learner is no longer willing – for instance if the demeanour of the learner changes from willingness to nervousness, discomfort or resistance – stop **immediately**.

If a learner is non-verbal or has limited language, it is important to have another way for them to communicate their willingness. The learner's whānau, the school, and the learner should agree this together. Examples could be:

- nodding or shaking the head
- using a physical invitation, eg holding a handout to 'invite' handholding
- use of a visual cue (eg a picture card)
- use of AAC (assistive technology)

If a learner cannot demonstrate willingness for acceptable physical contact (for instance because of a disability) then do not use physical contact with that learner. If physical contact is essential – eg for toileting or mobility support – seek the consent and guidance of the learner's parents / whānau / guardians. These agreements should be reflected in the individual support plan of the learner.

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## 2. For the benefit of the learner being touched

You should always be able to explain how any physical contact you have made with a learner was in the best interests of that learner.

The benefit to the learner is context-specific; factors such as the learner's particular circumstances, maturity and culture should always be considered.

Examples of benefits could include:

- Contact for teaching purposes
  - helping develop skills, eg putting a learner's hand in the right position to hold a pencil, pen, brush, saw or javelin
  - demonstrating a correct and safe way to perform a task, eg during aquatic or gymnastic instruction, or for direction of movement in drama, dance, sport, or music classes
- Contact to provide emotional support
  - a quick gentle pat on the top of the arm, back or shoulder to acknowledge an achievement or provide reassurance
  - an arm around the shoulders to support a distressed or hurt student
  - holding the hand of a learner to reassure them or accompany them somewhere
  - a 'high five', fist bump or handshake to acknowledge an achievement
- Contact to give aid or assistance
  - administering first aid or assessing an injury
  - helping a learner who has fallen, is injured or needs help getting down from playground equipment
  - an open hand on the arm, back or shoulders to help remove a learner from a risky situation to a safer place
  - a lift on the elbows to support a learner to attempt a new challenge such as climbing on a piece of apparatus
- Contact to assist communication
  - guiding a learner's hand to turn on their communication device or to help them hold picture cards

Physical contact must always *only be for the benefit of the learner*, never for the benefit or needs of the teacher or other adults. Teachers and other adults must never seek out physical contact with learners to fulfil their own emotional or physical needs.

Physical contact must never be used to compel or punish or correct a learner. Force used to correct or punish a learner is considered corporal punishment and is prohibited.

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## 3. Limited to appropriate areas of the body

In general, appropriate physical contact should be restricted to the elbows, upper arms, shoulders, hands, and upper back.

It is important to know your learners when judging whether physical contact is appropriate.

Consider:

- cultural identity (eg the head is considered tapu in tikanga Māori)
- biological sex
- gender identity
- age (eg some interactions like handholding are more appropriate for younger learners)
- disability
- religion
- personality (eg some learners may simply not like to be touched)
- the need for personal care and/or support to help a learner move or change position
- your relationship with the learner.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for a teacher or other adult to assist a learner in toileting or changing clothing. As much as possible in these circumstances, it is important for the learner to understand the reasons for the physical contact.

To help clarify willingness and the use of physical contact vs physical restraint in relation to potential and or imminent harm [see Appendix 3](#).

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## Teachers have a trusted position

Teachers have a trusted position in New Zealand's communities to guide children and young people on their learning journey and to keep them safe. Any physical contact needs to be open to scrutiny.

- Any acceptable physical contact needs to be with a learner who is willing for the contact to occur, take place where others are present, and be for the minimal time needed.
- Regularly re-evaluate your use of acceptable physical contact. Evaluate if what is acceptable has changed over time, eg as learners age or develop.
- Check that you're being fair and not showing favouritism.
- Closed-door 1 on 1 meetings with learners are not appropriate and must only happen if there is a clear reason why the learner needs the meeting to be private.
- If a closed-door 1-1 meeting is planned, it should occur in a space with visibility such as windows or close to an office. You may also want to check in with a colleague beforehand and/or keep a record of the meeting.

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## What do I do if I am unsure about a colleague's use of physical contact?

If you believe you may have witnessed inappropriate physical contact by a teacher consider talking to the teacher about it and/or contact your professional leader or principal.

The *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession | Ngā Tikanga Matatika mō te Haepapa Ngaio tangā me ngā Paerewa mō te Umanga Whakaakoranga* expects teachers to be alert to behaviours and practices that are unethical or may be harmful or unlawful.

The Code's "Examples in Practice" provide examples of behaviour that acknowledge teachers' roles in supporting professional behaviours. These include:

- leading and engaging in professional conversations about ethical conduct

- learning about and applying tools for dealing with ethical dilemmas
- taking action to stop harmful, unethical or unlawful actions of a colleague where their behaviour may be in breach of the Code | Ngā Tikanga Matatika
- being transparent about actions that could be interpreted as blurring professional boundaries, by informing and seeking authorisation from, a professional leader.

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## Professional expectations of teachers – relationship to the Code | Ngā Tikanga Matatika and the Standards | Ngā Paerewa

Upon becoming a registered teacher and to gain a new or renew a practising certificate, every teacher makes a declaration they are committed to the values and expectations in the Code | Ngā Tikanga Matatika. The professional expectation that teachers will provide safe environments for their learners is woven throughout the *Code | Ngā Tikanga Matatika* and the *Standards | Ngā Paerewa*.

The *Professional Relationships Standard* includes an elaboration of the Standard that says:

- establish and maintain professional relationships and behaviours focused on the learning and wellbeing of each learner.

The *Learning-focused Culture Standard* includes elaborations that say:

- develop a culture that is focused on learning and is characterised by respect, inclusion, empathy, collaboration, and safety
- manage the learning setting to ensure access to learning for all and to maximise learners' physical, social, cultural, and emotional safety.



The Code's "Examples in Practice" provide examples of behaviour that acknowledge teachers' roles in promoting safety and wellbeing.

Commitment			Examples of positive behaviours
1	I will maintain public trust and confidence in the teaching profession by:	1.2	engaging in professional, respectful and collaborative relationships with colleagues
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contributing to an inclusive, supportive and respectful workplace culture that promotes teacher and learner wellbeing</li> <li>leading or supporting strategies to promote a safe working and learning environment, such as initiatives to prevent and manage violence, harassment and bullying</li> </ul>
2	I will work in the best interests of learners by:	1.2	promoting the wellbeing of learners and protecting them from harm
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating learning environments (including online spaces) that are safe and inclusive, and that promotes the dignity and emotional wellbeing of all learners</li> <li>demonstrating empathy and responsive care when learners are unwell, hurt or upset</li> </ul>
		2.2	engaging in ethical and professional relationships with learners that respect professional boundaries
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>we recognise that teachers have a duty of care to ensure that the physical and emotional wellbeing of learners is safeguarded</li> <li>taking steps to establish and maintain positive and professional relationships focused on their learning and their wellbeing</li> </ul>
		2.5	promoting inclusive practices to support the needs and abilities of all learners
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fostering a welcoming, caring, safe and respectful whole-school or whole-centre environment where the diversity and uniqueness of every learner are accepted and valued</li> </ul>
3	I will respect the vital role my learners' families and whānau play in supporting their children's learning by:	3.2	engaging families and whānau in their children's learning
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contributing to an inclusive, supportive and respectful workplace culture that promotes teacher and learner wellbeing</li> </ul>
		3.3	respecting the diversity of the heritage, language, identity and culture of families and whānau
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>using culturally appropriate ways to communicate with my learners' families and whānau</li> </ul>

Seek advice from your principal / professional leader if you are unsure about the relationship between the physical restraint framework and/or your school/kura policies and/or the Code | *Ngā Tikanga Matatika* and the Standards | *Ngā Paerewa*.

# Building partnerships to raise understanding of students' needs and prevent physical restraint

## Why

**High-quality relationships between teachers, other staff, whānau and students are essential for students' learning and for teachers in their roles as educators.**

When there is genuine partnership between whānau and the school or kura, students achieve more, regardless of their socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background or whānau education level.

School achievement and culture improve dramatically when whānau are invited and valued as partners with teachers. When whānau are active partners in their child's education they stay involved.

## What

Partnerships that **build mutual trust** minimise the use of physical restraint.

A partnership thrives when there is mutual planning, sharing of responsibilities and understanding and prevention of any partnership barriers, such as time and space for involvement.

The concept of Vā in Samoan or Wā in Māori is defined as the space between, the 'between-ness' of people and places. 'La teu le vā' is an expression that depicts cherishing or care for the Vā, the relationships. Understanding one another in accordance with roles, responsibilities, obligations and context nurtures relationships and builds partnerships.

There are four key elements to build parent-teacher partnerships:

1. ongoing, two-way positive communication
2. mutual purpose

3. shared understanding and joint decision-making
4. reviewing, reflecting and learning

As partnerships develop, trust builds. Through words and actions, parents and teachers show their sense of obligation toward each other. Trust grows through exchanges where actions support each other's expectations. Simple interactions increase trust and deepen change and support for each other.

## How

When teachers or other staff first meet a new student and their whānau, and for every interaction thereafter, it is important to consider these as **proactive, intentional interactions that support students' relationships with them**. These relationships prevent situations escalating and support recovery after a crisis.

Day to day social exchanges and relational trust are the connective tissue that bind everyone together to support the learning and wellbeing of students.

Principals' actions play a key role in developing and sustaining supportive interactions. Principals establish respect and trust when they acknowledge the challenges of others, actively listen to their concerns and consider their own actions. When principals show these behaviours, coupled with a compelling school vision, the consistency between their words and actions affirms their personal integrity and high levels of trust develop.

See the [guide to collaborative planning for learning](#) for suggestions, videos and tips for sustaining supportive interactions and collaborative planning together.

# Developing whole school approaches to prevent, plan and respond to imminent harm incidents

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## Prevention

A positive school culture reduces the likelihood of imminent harm incidence and school violence.

### **Schools with positive cultures are associated with less aggression among students**

and incidents of behaviour that challenge others. Positive cultures support students to become valuable and active contributors in their communities.

Supports to do this include:

- **Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L)** initiatives help everyone jointly create a school culture to support students' behaviour, wellbeing and achievement. PB4L is a long-term, systematic approach involving 10 initiatives. These include schoolwide change initiatives, targeted group programmes and individual student support services.
- **The Hikairo Schema for Primary: Culturally responsive teaching and learning** resource is an adaptable guide to support teachers to reflect on approaches to engaging students, reconfiguring learning environments, embracing cultural differences so that new and innovative ways of facilitating culturally sensitive and inclusive learning settings occur.
- The **Wellbeing@school** tool from the PB4L initiative gives schools access to practical evidence-based tools to review school culture and provides support to build safe and caring schools. These are free for schools.
- New curriculum initiatives eg *Relationship and Sexuality Education Guidelines*.
- School counsellors and mental health professionals to provide individual support to students.

- **Risk identification, assessment and management** helps schools assess and improve multiple aspects of their environments, such as the safety of buildings and grounds.

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## Planning

School safety management plans detail schoolwide responses to a variety of emergencies. **These plans help school staff know their role** and how they will respond during an emergency, including threats or acts of violence.

The Ministry of Education, working with Police, has updated its **[emergency planning advice to schools and early learning services](#)**. This advice covers potential harm from individuals or groups of individuals, including online harm.

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## Responding to threats, fights, or a person with a weapon

The **[planning and preparing for emergencies resource](#)** supports schools to work with police to respond to potential harm from others when planning for an emergency. How to respond to a fight or an attacker, such as a student with a weapon, should be included in your emergency management plan (**[see our Emergency Management Plan template and other resources for more information on trespassers and attackers](#)**). How you deter, detect, delay and then respond to a potential fight or an attacker will depend on your unique context and any other risk factors that apply in your setting, including whether you use physical restraint.

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## Practice scenarios

The scenarios in [Appendix 4](#) have been developed to aid discussions within schools/kura so policies and procedures can be created to support teachers and authorised staff members to prevent, de-escalate and manage situations where harm may be imminent.

Discussing the scenarios together with staff will raise awareness of issues and situations, prompt reflective behaviour and provide some guidance. The matrix in [Appendix 3](#) will support these discussions. Scenarios cannot, however, address all possible circumstances that teachers and staff might find themselves in. They are not intended to provide an exhaustive list of scenarios that may be encountered in day-to-day teaching activities.

These *scenarios* do not provide solutions or recommend particular courses of action. Every situation is different, and judgement will need to be exercised by those involved. They are prompts/tools to generate discussion about situations that may occur within each school/kura, and for staff within each school/kura to discuss what policies, procedures and guidance they need to respond appropriately to support students, their colleagues and other persons.

Teachers and staff are encouraged to seek advice from a trusted supervisor or their principal if they are in any doubt about appropriate responses to imminent harm or if they believe there are inconsistencies between their school's/kura policy and procedures, and the Rules and Guidelines.

# Planning and collaborating to prevent distress and understand behaviour

Distress is a normal human reaction to pain or situations that are experienced as threatening or uncomfortable and is the expression of an unmet need or want. Causes of distress can be found in the environment at home, school or in society and cause significant stress, anxiety, fear, confusion, exhaustion and trauma for many students.

Distress is often described as challenging behaviour, but this reflects negatively on the student. Often these behaviours are *seen as* wilful or controlling of others, needing to be curbed or stopped, rather than looking to our environments. It is our learning environments (physical and inter-relational) that support change and student development.

[Lives in the Balance](#) organisation has produced resources to help schools understand children's unmet needs/problems with supportive tools and approaches to prevent distress.

[Tilting the seesaw](#) also provides help for teams of family and professionals, working together to support tamariki with autism aged 5-12 years.

[Mona Delahooke](#) provides a range of resources (blogs, videos, podcasts) for teachers to support their understanding about unmet needs and students in distress.

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## Classroom environments

Changing the classroom environment has been shown to decrease distress for many students.

The [Inclusive Education website](#) has a number of guides that provide strategies to support planning and teaching for diverse learners including [Universal Design for Learning guides and resources to support diverse learning needs and student engagement](#).

Build calming activities into teaching routines, such as reading or audiobooks after energetic activities. Teach students to notice and practice what helps them to

keep calm. Mindfulness games and breathing exercises are a fun way to build these. The [Sparklers website](#) and [Pause Breathe Smile](#) have a range of exercises that can be used. Some students are more likely to escalate if their body is not calm.

Build trusting relationships

Students learn best when they experience positive relationships with their teachers. The [Best Evidence Synthesis programme](#) indicates that students are increasingly engaged and motivated when their teachers value them as individuals. Te Kotahitanga, an extensive long-term study of Māori student achievement, advocates relationship building with students through the implementation of the [Effective Teaching Profile](#).

The New Zealand Curriculum recognises the importance of strong teacher/student connections. The [effective pedagogy section](#) states that students learn best when they enjoy positive relationships with their peers and teachers. Effective teachers foster this when they create environments that are caring, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and cohesive.

There is no single approach to building positive relationships with students. It requires time, effort and perseverance. The following suggestions may help teachers:

- [Putting student relationships first](#)
- [Teaching for positive behaviour](#)
- [Incredible Years Teacher programme](#)
- [PB4L Restorative Practice](#)

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## Be culturally responsive

Every student is a culturally located individual whose identity is shaped by their life experiences, interests, religious beliefs, political beliefs, gender, disability and social background. As you build relationships with your students, it is important to understand and celebrate their culture. Manaakitanga, the first element of the Te Kotahitanga effective teaching profile, advocates that teachers care for their students as culturally located human beings above all else.

Helpful resources include:

- [The Development of Te Kotahitanga](#)
- [Cultural diversity principle](#) as a principle in The New Zealand Curriculum
- [Cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy](#)
- [Effective Support for Culturally Responsive Teaching](#)
- [Inclusive education in New Zealand schools](#)

**Understanding develops as the students and their whānau gain trust and teachers create space for communication.**

# Develop support plans for students in distress

Distress is a normal human reaction to situations that are experienced as threatening or uncomfortable and is the expression of an unmet need or want. Causes of distress can be found in the environment at home, school or in society and cause significant stress, anxiety, fear, confusion, exhaustion and trauma for many students.

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## Triggers and challenging situations

Triggers that cause distress are situations that are difficult or challenging for students (eg sensory). A trigger can start a process of escalation of distress. Triggers for distress are unique for each student and include slow triggers, such as a bad night's sleep, a headache, or a lack of accommodations and adjustments for learning differences, or last straw triggers, like feeling told off or disrespected. When a student is triggered, they show warning signs that a problem or a crisis is coming.

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## Warning signs

Observable **physical** signs of distress include:

- rocking
- echolalia (repeating others' words or sentences)
- self-harm
- flushing of the face or breathlessness
- talking fast, excitedly or loudly
- avoiding work tasks (by wandering around, doing other tasks etc.)
- arguing or making noises, clicking pens
- rigid posture, clenching of fists and jaws
- pacing up and down
- swearing, abusive and derogatory remarks.

Note: echolalia also may not be a signal of distress. It can help some students develop their language skills.

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## Responding to escalation and high levels of distress

A support plan describes a student's personal triggers, warning signs of distress, escalation levels unique to the student and what staff can do to prevent further escalation and crisis situations. These plans help staff respond sensitively and appropriately to decrease the student's distress. When a student is at crisis stage, they may have completely lost control and rationality. There is very little that you can say to help. The best thing you can do is create time and space for them to regain control and provide support to restore relationships and learning environments.

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## Support plans

Understanding more about where and when the distress occurs (factors in their environment) and the student (their identity, language/communication, culture, learning/medical/physical needs, strengths, interests, important relationships) helps us to provide support (the support plan).

The support plan identifies the stress triggers in the environment and describes how it makes the child feel. This helps us to understand the behaviour and how we can provide appropriate support.

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## Teamwork enables the plan

A respectful, equal working relationship between whānau, school and specialist staff are key. Whānau need to be involved in the development of plans for their children. This partnership thrives through trust, mutual planning and sharing of tasks. This requires time on the part of teachers and syndicate leaders in schools, but it is important to figure things out together.

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## Creating a support plan

### 1. Build understanding of the student

Children do the best they can with what they have at a point in time and in that context. Children who are

distressed often experience daily stressors and can become overwhelmed and overloaded very easily. The distress factors that lead to this may be things that other people regard as normal, eg a loud classroom environment may cause distress for an autistic child, spoken instructions may frustrate or confuse a child with a hearing impairment or Auditory Processing Disorder, or a certain word or action may trigger a child with trauma.

Students can display behaviours that others may find socially unacceptable or uncomfortable but these behaviours indicate sensory, regulation and communication needs, eg hitting a peer when they do not like sitting next to someone. Talking to and listening to students and their whānau helps us to understand their reasons. Te Pikinga ki Runga: Te Huia, is one tool that helps build understanding of the student through their hononga, tinana, hinengaro and mauri. See [Appendix 1](#).

## 2. Understand the unmet need and their triggering environments:

Together, with whānau identify the student's unique warning signs of distress and their physical needs. These warning signs and physical needs are important and allow you to intervene early and appropriately to stop situations from getting worse. These prompts will help you plan.

- What are the triggers?
- What physical needs may affect the child?
- Do we need to consider hearing, sight, heart etc in our responses?

Note: some children may also have physical conditions eg heart or breathing difficulties that may be affected they are distressed. Seek medical advice for the plan.

Finding out about a student's unmet needs and their triggering environments provides clues to what needs to change. Together develop effective strategies and changes to the child's environment to prevent distress so a student is able to engage and experience success.

## 3. Build the plan

The plan details what everyone involved is going to try to do differently to prevent triggers leading to an escalation of distress. These might be changes to the home or school routine (eg sleep or classroom routines) and the environment. Plans support change through relational and social supports and enjoyed

and preferred learning activities. The holistic wellbeing of the student in the plan is expressed through their hononga, tinana, hinengaro, and mauri. If distress occurs, know what calming strategies and relationships will help.

- What supports, preferred learning tasks and modifications will be provided?
- Who will intervene and what will they do? The section [Know how to de-escalate unsafe situations](#) provides de-escalation strategies.
- How will you alert others?
- How will you acknowledge how the student is feeling? What will you say (short words and phrases)?
- Can you help problem solve or reflect-back what the student is communicating?
- Use [collaborative proactive solving](#) to foster a working relationship to engage the student in solving the triggers/problems that are leading to distress.
- How can you distract?
- How can you help the student to calm down?
- Can you offer a choice?
- Will changing something in the environment help calm the student?
- What symbols and supports do you need eg calming cards, quiet place, social story?
- Does the whānau or student have suggestions that help?

Crisis situations can occur when high levels of distress cause students to lose control. These usually occur after a trigger and follow a sequence of escalation, crisis and de-escalation/recovery. By describing what to do and how to respond, the plan can keep everyone safe and support the child's recovery. [See the section on responding to crisis situations.](#)

## 4. Recording strategies and supports

It's important to be clear about what is going to be done differently, how and by who and what support everyone needs. This includes when to start and when to review what everyone's agreed they will do. Use the plan to record the strategies and supports as needed.



## Resources and supports to develop support plans

Ministry of Education Specialist staff and RTLB can support the development of support plans. [Contact your regional office.](#)

[He Pikorua](#) is a practice framework that supports this process. [Section four of the PB4L School-wide Tier Two implementation manual](#) provides useful tools for support plans and regional schoolwide practitioners run workshops on the use of these.

### [Incredible Years Teaching Workshops](#)

support teachers to nurture children's social, emotional and academic competence. These workshops also help teachers develop support plans for students.

[Resources are available through the Incredible Years website](#) to help teachers, including resources to develop support plans. Workshops are also available for the Incredible Years Autism programme for teachers and parents with children on the autism spectrum or with significant language delay. Contact your nearest [Ministry of Education regional office](#) if you're interested in any of the Incredible Years Teacher programmes.

## Support plan template

This support plan template can be used by teams. It contains prompts and words to help teams reflect on what you see and what the student feels and needs in their support. It focuses on one stress trigger at a time.

This template has been shared by whānau as a simple, helpful, useful support plan tool.

Stress trigger	How the child feels (distress indicators)	What we see	Support, strategy, approaches, resources (minimising distress)	Calming techniques, physical contact (maximising wellbeing)
Transitioning from task to task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confused</li> <li>Anxious</li> <li>Panic</li> <li>Lost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shut down</li> <li>Standing still</li> <li>Crying</li> <li>Melt down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual timetable</li> <li>First and next</li> <li>Simple and slow language</li> <li>Prompting by other children</li> <li>Material, resources and table set up for task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce language or say nothing</li> <li>Give the child time to regulate</li> <li>Provide the child a calm space to regulate</li> <li>Provide calming toy or sensory resource eg apples</li> <li>When they child has calmed, show visual and ask if they are ready to go back to the task.</li> </ul>

# Responding to crisis situations

The key to de-escalation is understanding the reasons why students are engaging in behaviours that challenge us and developing a support plan to address this so distress is lowered.

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## Crisis involves fight, flight or freeze behaviours

- What needs to change so they are as safe as possible? Giving space is important (while providing appropriate supervision).
- What words/visuals will you use? Short clear phrases/single words about what you want a student/s to do (needs practice).
- Who will support the class if the crisis occurs in the classroom/outside of the classroom?
- Where will students go if there is a crisis in the classroom or when students need to evacuate?
- Who will provide support in the playground, and next steps?
- Who is available in a crisis?
- Who will get help and how will this occur?
- Who will inform whānau after a crisis?

In some cases, you may need to disengage or deflect physical advances that are aggressive. The Ministry offers training to school staff in disengagement and deflection actions in response to physical aggression. These are not physical holds.

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## Know how to de-escalate unsafe situations

These techniques should be part of the support plans when students show signs of distress. Every student and situation is different and the strategies below can help de-escalate distress.

De-escalation refers to a set of verbal and non-verbal responses that can reduce a student's anxiety or anger to prevent loss of control. Be aware of your body language and voice tone. Know what body language is culturally appropriate for the student (eye contact, facial expressions, stance and movement).

Demonstrate a physically supportive approach:

- Stand side-on to a student instead of facing front-on. This protects your body from harm and is less intimidating to others.
- Relax your shoulders and stay calm by breathing slowly. A calm body conveys reassurance to the student.
- Maintain an appropriate distance – not too close, but close enough to provide presence and reassurance to the student. Make sure the student doesn't feel trapped.
- Limit eye contact. Direct eye contact can be challenging and intimidating. Be flexible in your responses – adapt what you're doing to the demands of the situation.

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## Demonstrate a verbally calm, supportive presence:

- Maintain a calm voice tone (quality and pitch) and cadence (rhythm and rate).
- Use visuals as appropriate
- Deliver messages with an even rate of words/ visuals.
- Maintain an appropriate volume when speaking. Be aware of loudness and intensity, eg not shouting or whispering.
- Demonstrate active listening through appropriate use of head nodding and repeating phrases you hear to show you understand.
- Active listening helps at the first signs of escalation. Focus all your attention on the student – pay attention to their words and actions. Validate their feelings “I can see you are really frustrated”. Adopt a position of curiosity “I wonder if you think...”
- If the student settles, praise them.

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## Acknowledge how the student is feeling:

- It’s okay to validate emotions while still setting limits on behaviour.
- Allow venting.
- Name the emotion in a calm even voice, eg:
  - ‘This has made you pretty angry hasn’t it?’
  - ‘I can see that you are feeling very frustrated’.
- Do not contradict the child while they are in fight or flight mode.

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## Remove the audience and get support:

- Ask other students to take their work and move away.
- Use your agreed system for indicating you need help.

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## If escalations continue despite earlier strategies

- Clearly state what you want the student to do in a natural tone, using calm, simple, clear direction to a desired outcome, eg:
  - ‘I’m here to help. When you are ready, we can...’
  - ‘When you..., then we can ...’
  - ‘Talk slowly’ (active words instead of ‘don’t’, ‘stop that’ etc).
- Use the student’s name to gain their attention.

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## Wait

- Visuals and gestures can help.
- Give physical and emotional space for the student to process and respond.
- Along the way praise their effort.
- If the situation continues to escalate

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## Understand what may escalate distress:

- Tone of voice, arguing or interrupting.
- ‘Over talking’ and not being able to stay calm.
- Not providing enough space and processing time.
- Contradicting what the student says – even if they are wrong.
- Challenging or threatening the student with a consequence.
- Shaming (usually unintentionally) or showing disrespect towards the student.

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## Know how to manage further escalation or intimidation:

- Take all threats seriously but understand that the student may be saying things they do not mean.
- Avoid physical action unless there is no safer alternative.
- If escalation occurs, move further away.
- Seek assistance if you haven't already done this.
- Make sure you have an exit plan.
- Constantly reassess the situation.

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## Know about and manage your responses

Teachers and other staff manage their reactions through understanding themselves, their influence and their understanding of others. They can use their self-control to react in ways that build trust, strengthen or maintain positive relationships and maximise safety.

Develop strategies you need so you can remain calm. How you react (body language, voice tone) influences the situation.

Model calmness by using a few simple words in a calm and even tone. Actively listen and avoid trigger phrases that may escalate emotions.

Consider what situations generate strong emotions for you (anger, fear etc)? What strategies help you stay calm?

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## Use these techniques to prevent situations from becoming unsafe

Most cases of restraint can be prevented through knowing the student, building trusting relationships, enabling supportive learning environments, providing accommodations and reasonable adjustments, and developing support plans to address a student's needs.

There will still be times when students are less able to cope. All teachers and authorised staff members need to be aware of students with support plans and know how to de-escalate unsafe situations. All

relief staff need to have access to a student's support plan and know what to do to support a student they are teaching. The Ministry of Education also offers Understanding Behaviour Responding Safely (UBRS) workshops to support de-escalation.

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## Physical restraint as a last resort to prevent imminent harm

You may also need to physically restrain a student. If the student has a support plan, then informed consent to use restraint must be obtained from the parents/ caregivers. Physical restraint should only occur if it is *necessary* to prevent imminent harm ie you are unable to maintain the safety of other people (eg they will not stop punching a student) or the safety of the student in crisis (eg they are running onto a busy road) and there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent this. [The section on physical intervention has more information about this.](#)

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## De-escalation and calming

Students de-escalate and calm down after the crisis has passed. This can take time and each student's time to calm is different. It is useful to know what helps them become calm and how long it takes.

- Activities that use up energy can be helpful.
- Provide access to drink or food - students can be hungry and thirsty.
- Use few words/visuals.
- Encourage distraction.
- Provide space.
- Don't problem solve.
- Don't discuss consequences.
- Validate their emotions and suggest ideas that may help them calm down.

As calming occurs, rationality begins to return. It is normal for students to feel embarrassed and ashamed of their response and exhausted. Give the student time, provide support and care and support the student's eventual reengagement with learning.

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## After calming, and as a team

- With the staff involved and other key people identified in the student's support plan, discuss the triggers and actions that followed, who and what helped, who and what didn't help, and what needs to change.
- Sometimes it is useful to review the crisis with the student. This depends on the student and if you have their consent to review the situation, and if they can remain calm. This is often done with trusted adults and can be used to celebrate the coping skills the student tried and other helpful changes.
- Discuss better approaches as needed.
- Amend support plans and risk management plans as needed.

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## After the crisis

- Notify the parents as per the support plan, and as soon as possible if physical restraint has occurred – [see page 37](#).
- Fill in the incident report form if physical restraint has occurred and notify the Ministry of Education.
- [Restore relationships](#).
- [Review the situation and make changes as needed](#).
- Know how to de-escalate unsafe situations.

# Using physical restraint as an action of last resort to prevent imminent harm

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## When physical restraint can be used

**Physical restraint must not be used unless it is necessary to prevent imminent harm to the student or another person and there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent the harm.**

Harm means harm to the health, safety, or wellbeing of the student or another person, including any significant emotional distress suffered by the student or the other person. Imminent means that the harm is about to happen.

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## Imminent significant emotional distress

The legislation allows a teacher or authorised staff member to use physical restraint against a student if they reasonably believe that there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent that student from causing significant emotional distress, and if the restraint used is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

This does not justify the use of restraint against a student who is experiencing significant emotional distress, unless it is necessary to prevent that student from causing imminent harm to themselves or to others, and there is no other option available in the circumstances, and the restraint applied is reasonable and proportionate. Physical restraint of a student experiencing significant emotional distress is likely to cause an increase, not decrease, of this distress.

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## What is significant emotional distress?

Significant emotional distress occurs when a student causes another person to be overwhelmed by a situation to such an extent that it is utterly intolerable, causing extreme upset so they cannot cope and recover.

Stress responses are normal reactions to environmental changes or internal worries. This level of stress can help a person to change or adapt to new circumstances.

Distress occurs when the stress is severe and/or prolonged and the person is unable to use their usual coping strategies and/or adapt to the new or difficult circumstances. The feelings or thoughts experienced by a distressed person significantly impact on their level of day to day functioning.

No two people respond to a stressful experience in the exact same way. When individuals experience a stressful situation, they usually develop a range of helpful approaches (thoughts, feeling and actions) that enable change and/or unhelpful approaches that are less enabling.

A person's response depends on their:

- beliefs
- sense of control
- situational demands or constraints
- supports such as parents/whānau/teachers/social network/s
- perceptions of safety/harm
- coping styles.

Children develop skills to work through challenges and cope with stress and distress as they grow. This growing ability to cope with challenges - ie their resilience - varies, depending on a wide range of factors such as age, disability, temperament, and access to social and support networks.

## Factors to consider

Factors for teachers and authorised staff members to consider prior to use of restraint to prevent imminent significant emotional distress include:

1. Knowledge of the student or other person being harmed, their relationship to the student causing the distress, previous experience with this student and their actions, and how another reasonable student or person would feel given the same circumstances.
2. The duration and level of emotional distress experienced if the action could not be prevented. In making this assessment, the teacher or authorised staff member should decide whether:
  - i. it is a pattern of actions directed at another student and not just an isolated incident
  - ii. the student or staff member experiencing the action is vulnerable and the other person knows it
  - iii. the student conducting the action is in a position of power.

Know that physical restraint can cause emotional distress to the student being restrained, the staff member doing the restraining and those witnessing the restraint. Staff should only use physical restraint if they are certain that the harm being prevented by their action is greater than that which would be caused by it.

These are examples of physical restraint, that must only be used to prevent imminent harm.

- Pulling or pushing a student
- Holding a child so that they are unable to move freely
- Pushing a child down into a position
- Picking up a child in distress when they are kicking and screaming.

## Get consent if physical restraint is to be part of a student's support plan

A student's parents or caregivers must provide informed consent if a section on physical restraint is appended to a student's support plan. To provide informed consent, parents and caregivers need to be informed about the impacts and risks of physical restraint, ideally by an educational psychologist or health professional who knows the student. The form provided in Appendix 2 can be used to record consent and the details around how physical restraint may be used if it is necessary to prevent imminent harm.

What to do when there is imminent harm

- Call for help and follow the support plan (if there is one).
- Stay calm. Breathe slowly and try to relax your shoulders down.
- Keep your speech slow and tone low, use minimal words/visuals.
- Remove and keep other students safe, before considering restraint.
- Are you prepared to use physical restraint?
- If you are not permitted to use restraint, call for help if there is an imminent risk of harm and remove any students from harm's way.
- You may still need to use restraint to save a student's life if there is imminent risk such as a panicked student climbing a fence, who could run onto the road into traffic.
- Be aware of health and/or disability issues. These issues will be heightened with stress (and should be outlined in the support plan).
- Call the police if this is part of the support and agreed with police. Use of police in a support plan is rare. Students usually calm if given time and space to do so.

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## If you must use physical restraint:

If you have met conditions for use as defined by section 99 of the Education and Training Act 2020:

Use a side on body position to keep safe

- Be aware of your body position and the way you approach the student.
- Know that when front facing, your body is vulnerable to kicks and punches and your eyes could be poked or spat at. Approach from a side position to protect your body. A side approach is also less intimidating for the student.
- Lower and reduce eye contact, as this is less intimidating for the student.

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## Use deflection and consider the safest physical holds only

- Deflect any aggressive actions from the student by placing a hand in front of your body, palm up, at the face level of the student. Back away slowly, placing your body sideways to protect yourself.
- Support other students to move out of harm's way.
- If a student bites your arm, instead of moving away or trying to drag your arm away from the bite, place a firm, steady, downward pressure on the student's head. This will cause the student to release the bite.
- If a student grabs hold of clothing, hold the piece of clothing near where the student has hold of it and swipe the student's hand downwards off the clothing. This will cause the student to release their hold on the clothing.
- If a student grabs hold of your arm and this is done aggressively, place your hand on the student's wrist and pull downwards away from the student's hold. This will release your arm (be sideways, move away, deflect as needed).
- If a student is about to run onto the road into imminent harm, it is acceptable to grab hold of the student's arm to prevent them running on to the road. Know that grabbing a student's arm may cause damage, but this action is far better than the potential harm caused by a vehicle hitting a student.

## Any restraint used must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

If you have decided to use physical restraint to prevent imminent harm, the safest holds, following suitable training, are:

- With two people - go either side of the child, hold either side of the child's arms at the elbow and wrist against their body and move your bodies in against the student's body, side on, to restrain their movement.
- On your own, hold the student from the back, reach around the child, hold onto their wrists, cross their arms in front of their body firmly, then place your body as much as possible into a sideways position to further protect yourself from bites or kicks. If you need to, you can move your body slightly backwards, with one leg slightly back from the other to provide stability. This will unbalance the student if you need to prevent further kicking, biting etc.
- Apply physical restraint only for the minimum time necessary and stop as soon as the danger has passed.
- Watch and listen for breathing difficulties. Immediately let go if the student tells you they can't breathe.
- Disengage from any holds by slowly releasing the pressure on the hold to ensure the student has calmed.
- When the student is calm, release the hold slowly and continue to check their physical needs.

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## Do not use the following restraints

The following types of physical restraint are particularly unsafe, may cause serious harm or death, and **must never be used with a student**:

- Physical restraint that inhibits a student's breathing.
- Actions that inhibit a student's speaking or main method of communication, eg ability to use sign language.
- Prone (face-down) physical restraint.
- Pressure points and pain holds.



- Tackling, sitting, lying or kneeling on a student.
- Pressure on the chest or neck.
- Mechanical restraints or removal of tools that enable mobility, such as a battery pack from a wheelchair.
- Hyperextension (bending back) of joints.
- Headlocks.
- Using force to take/drag a student, against their will, to another location.
- Restraint when moving a student from one place to another, eg trying to get them into a van or taxi. When they are in an escalated state, this action may escalate them further.

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## After physical restraint

### Help the student to calm

After a restraint and when the student is calm, they will need a period of quiet and can have physical needs such as feeling hungry or thirsty. Meet these physical needs to support their calming.

- A quiet space is helpful, but the place needs to allow the student to reintegrate when they are ready.
- While calming occurs it can help to have an 'accepting' presence (not too close, not too far away), with little to no talking with the student.
- Reinforce calming strategies from the support plan (eg movement, drink, sensory items).

Don't apply any further consequences or judgements to the student. This can escalate a situation and will not restore your relationship with the student. Be aware that some students may not be able to recall what led up to the event or provide an explanation about their needs prior to the event.

When the student has calmed, trust that the student will reintegrate with learning activities. It's best for them to lead the decision to return. Lower any learning or other demands. Be nearby and focus on restoring your relationship with the student.

### Notify the principal and whānau

Let your principal or the delegated manager know if restraint has been used. This enables support to the student(s) and teaching staff involved, including immediate action to help someone who is harmed.

Notify the whānau as soon as possible. At a minimum, this should be before the child is released into their care so they can monitor the student's wellbeing at home. If parents want to come to the school, have somewhere and someone appropriate to meet with them. This open communication builds trust with the whānau. Parents know their child best and this will help teachers and authorised staff members to understand why the situation occurred and to develop effective support plans for the student at school.

Complete the physical restraint notification form and send to the Ministry of Education.

Plan for a time to review the incident as a team and decide on any other actions.

### Look after student and staff wellbeing

Team or syndicate leaders should monitor the physical and psychological wellbeing of both the student and the staff member who applied the restraint in the hours and days following the incident, in case of adverse impacts. Watch for shock, possible unnoticed injury and delayed effects.

Ask the staff member if they need a break and someone to talk with about the incident.

Staff may be distressed by what has occurred, their actions or if someone was hurt. Check with the staff member that they have support before they go home and can access services as needed. Ensure they have someone to talk with if they want to. This could be a partner, a friend or a colleague. Connecting with other supports people through a crisis. [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP services\)](#) can provide additional support as needed.

### Monitor the student's wellbeing, longer term

For most children, stress symptoms experienced in their everyday activities are temporary and resolve on their own. However, for some children stress continues

when the adults around them are unable to meet their needs, and/or recognise their stress. This time can be emotionally confusing and frightening for the child. It is also this distress that leads to crisis situations and loss of emotional control. Know that the student who has been restrained will experience emotional stress as will peers who experience the escalation of distress and/or witness the adult's use of physical restraint on a peer or friend. Close partnerships and teamwork with children, their whānau and teacher help prevent stress and loss of control.

Here are some signs that may occur in relation to restraint:

- Withdrawing from playgroups and friends.
- Competing more for the attention of parents and teachers.
- Loss of sleep.
- Not eating.
- Being unwilling to leave home or leave a parent.
- Being less interested in schoolwork, running away or hiding.
- Becoming non-compliant or aggressive.
- Arguing with peers, parents or teachers.
- Having difficulty concentrating.

Assessing a child's emotional distress needs should consider changes prior to and after the use of restraint:

- Know the warning signs of emotional distress.
- Know that recovery occurs when relationships are restored and when children feel secure in their learning environment again and this can take time.
- If distress continues, then further help is needed.

# Restoring relationships and preventing future incidents

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## Review the incident

The aim of a review is to restore relationships between students, teachers and authorised staff members and whānau, and plan to prevent or de-escalate any risk of further incidents. The following review structure will help achieve these aims.

## Use a team approach to allow a range of perspectives

- Hold the review within a few days of the incident.
- Involve staff, whānau and a staff member not involved in the physical restraint. If Ministry of Education or RTLB practitioners are part of the student's team, involve them in the review process. If the police were involved in the incident, invite them to participate. Choose someone to lead the review. This should be someone independent of the situation who can respond with active, empathetic listening.
- Reflect formally on why the incident occurred. Consider what might have prevented it and what might need to change to decrease the likelihood of it happening again.
- Consider how preventative and de-escalation strategies were used and whether the restraint used was safe. Review the support plan (or create plans if they do not exist) and jointly decide on any appropriate and reasonable adjustments. For example, support plans may need changes to respond to previously unidentified unmet needs of the student, to minimise future restraint.
- Ask if actions for improvement need to be agreed.
- Ask if help and support is needed to make improvements.
- Write notes on the review along with agreed next steps or actions. **You can use the sample review forms at the end this section to document this session.**

## Use reflecting prompts

The way we reflect is important and prevents blame:

- Check with the people involved to see if they are ready to review the incident.
  - ‘Are you ready to talk about the incident?’
- Orientate the team by focusing on the lead-up facts and patterns.
  - ‘Tell me what happened?’
  - ‘What led up to the incident? Has it happened before?’
  - ‘What physical or verbal changes did you notice just before the escalation?’
  - ‘What interventions did you try to de-escalate the situation?’
  - ‘How could you tell things were escalating?’
  - ‘What worked well? What didn’t work well?’
- Ask what can be done to strengthen the things that worked well or improve the things that didn’t go well.
- Ask what can be done that might prevent this happening again in the future.

The sample review form supports recording of the incident as needed. You can use this to inform review meetings, develop support plans and safety plans, and to understand if the support plans are working.

## Manage complaints from whānau

It is understandable that whānau may feel upset if their child has been physically restrained. All schools will have a policy on responding to whānau complaints and this needs to be available.

The school or whānau can contact the local Ministry office if the complaint cannot be easily resolved. The Ministry can help resolve the complaint through the Disputes Resolution Process.

Whānau can also seek support from [Student Rights Service](#), Citizens Advice Bureau. This is a free nationwide phone service, providing legal information and assistance on a wide range of issues involving children, young people and the school system. Phone 0800-499488.

# Sample review form for staff involved in physical restraint incident

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

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

## Sample physical restraint review form for teachers and authorised staff members, parents or caregivers and or students

Date of incident	dd/mm/yy	
Date of debriefing	dd/mm/yy	Time of debriefing
Names of the people at the debriefing		
Findings of debriefing		
Teacher, authorised staff member, parent or caregiver – comments and suggestions		
Student – comments and suggestions		
Next steps/actions agreed		
<b>Signatures</b>		
Principal or principal's delegate	Parents or caregivers	Student

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

# Notifying, monitoring and reporting

The Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2021 require notifying, monitoring and reporting on the use of physical restraint.

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## **Within the same week restraint occurs**

Notify the Ministry via the Student Management System or using the incident report form. This enables the Ministry to identify local and national trends to monitor whether policy and support is minimising restraint, and report this back to the sector, community and wider public. The school must also keep a copy of the notification and be aware of its responsibilities under the Privacy Act 2020 and the Official Information Act 1982.

**Contact the Ministry of Education if further support for a student is needed.**

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## **Longer term**

Schools must report incidents of restraint and any analyses of these to their board of trustees to ensure oversight of the school's learning, teaching and school-wide approaches to build safe and positive environments for learning. Work together as a community to plan potential changes and supports as needed.

# Physical restraint notification form

## Information for the Ministry of Education and for the Board of Trustees form

Completed by					
Information for Ministry of Education and the Employer:	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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or caregiver <input type="checkbox"/> 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 restraint?	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent or caregiver <input type="checkbox"/> Other				
Does the student have a learning support need e.g. disability, neurodiversity, 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		If other, describe role		
What is the role of the staff member who applied the restraint?	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 2021 require reporting of physical restraint incidents. Complete the form above and email it to the Ministry of Education at [physical.restraint@education.govt.nz](mailto:physical.restraint@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.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - Te Pikinga ki Runga: Te Huia, a tool to build understanding of the student

Adapted from MacFarlane (2009) *Te Pikinga ki Runga: Te Huia*; Macfarlane Andreotti (2018) *Kia Mau*

Hononga	Tinana	Hinengaro	Mauri
Relational and social strengths and supports	Physical health and enjoyed activities	Thoughts, emotions and feelings	Unique essence and untapped potential
Relationships with whānau whānui, hapū and iwi	Physical needs (sleep, diet, teeth, physical activity, hearing, sight)	Expressions of thoughts, emotions and feelings	Dreams, hopes and aspirations
Place in family, interdependence	Problem solving, independence, staying power	Characteristics (ie humour, acceptance, enjoyment, optimism, honesty, ideas, forgiveness, kindness)	Self-concept: language, culture and identity
Connections/relations to places/kainga, marae/school	Medical needs	Others are respectful of thoughts and feelings	Relaxation (reading, writing, singing, song writing, talking gathering kai, listening, art/crafts)
Key relationships	Key ways to support physical wellbeing and healthy choices	Others can understand what the student is communicating	Key contexts that support a positive sense of self
Favourite social activities	Favourite physical activities	Things that help to sustain positive thoughts, feelings and emotions	What the student is most proud of being and achieving
Team hopes and aspirations for strengthening	Team hopes and aspirations for strengthening	Team hopes and aspirations for strengthening	Team hopes and aspirations for strengthening

## Appendix 2 – Use of physical restraint consent form

### Use of physical restraint consent form

Physical restraint is a serious and extreme intervention. All schools should be working towards eliminating the use of physical restraint.

Teachers and authorised staff members must not physically restrain a student unless all three of the following conditions have been met\*:

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 that there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent the harm **and**
3. The physical restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

The rules state that students who are at risk of being physically restrained must have a support plan for preventing student distress and de-escalating crisis situations. Schools must adhere to these rules and the student's parents or caregivers must provide informed consent if a section on physical restraint is appended to the student's support plan.

Name of student

Teachers and authorised staff members working with the student who are trained to use physical restraint

Physical holds that may be used be used if necessary, to prevent imminent harm

Any physical, health or psychological conditions that may be impacted by physical restraint and how these will be managed

What steps are being taken to eliminate the use of restraint for this student?

Actions to be taken following an incident of physical restraint (*must include notification of parents/caregivers and monitoring of student wellbeing*)

What steps are being taken to eliminate the use of restraint for this student?

***This form will be reviewed (circle one): weekly/monthly/every term/every six months/annually***

### Signatures

Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Principal or principal's delegate

Parents or caregivers

The possible use of physical restraint should be explained to the student in a way they can understand.

\*Section 99 of the Education and Training Act 2020

## Appendix 3 – Use of acceptable physical contact and use of physical restraint based on degree of harm vs willingness of student


HARM - harm to health, safety or wellbeing of student or another person, including any significant emotional distress suffered by the student or by another person				
		No harm	Potential harm	Actual or imminent harm
WILLINGNESS of student for physical contact to be used	Not willing	<b>Avoid Physical Contact</b>	<b>Apply Prevention Strategies</b>	<b>Physical Restraint</b>
		Physical contact should be avoided when it is unclear or not evident that the student is willing for any acceptable physical contact to be used. If physical contact occurs, it becomes physical restraint as the student is not willing. If any physical restraint is applied, it is not justified as there is no actual or imminent harm.	Apply prevention and de-escalation strategies to remove the potential for harm. Use agreed strategies described in a student's support plan. Physical restraint is <b>not</b> justified if the harm is not imminent and/or other options exist to prevent the potential harm. If physical contact occurs, it becomes physical restraint if the student is not willing. If the teacher reasonably believes the harm has changed from potential to imminent and there are no other options to prevent the imminent harm, then go to the 'physical restraint box'.	Physical restraint must be a last resort. Prevention and de-escalation options need to have been exhausted. Physical restraint may be used when <b>ALL</b> the following conditions are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is necessary to prevent imminent harm <b>AND</b></li> <li>It is reasonably believed there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent the harm <b>AND</b></li> <li>The restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.</li> </ul> Physical restraint that meets these conditions would be considered justified. It must never be used to correct or punish.
	Unclear willingness	<b>Avoid Physical Contact</b>	<b>Apply Prevention Strategies</b>	<b>Physical Restraint</b>
		Physical contact should be avoided when it is unclear or not evident that the student is willing for any acceptable physical contact to be used. If any physical contact is applied, it becomes physical restraint if it is not clear that the student is willing. If physical restraint is used, it is <b>not</b> justified as there is no actual or imminent harm.	Use prevention and de-escalation strategies to remove the potential for harm. Use agreed strategies described in a student's support plan. Physical restraint is <b>not</b> justified if the harm is not imminent and/or other options exist to prevent the potential harm. If physical contact occurs, it becomes physical restraint when it is clear the student is not willing. If the teacher reasonably believes the harm has changed from potential to imminent and there are no other options to prevent the imminent harm, then go to the 'physical restraint box'.	Physical restraint must be a last resort. Prevention and de-escalation options need to have been exhausted. Physical restraint may only be used when ALL the following conditions are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is necessary to prevent imminent harm <b>AND</b></li> <li>It is reasonably believed there is no other option available to prevent the harm in the circumstances <b>AND</b></li> <li>The restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.</li> </ul> Physical restraint that meets these conditions would be considered justified. It must never be used to correct or punish.
	Willing	<b>Acceptable Physical Contact</b>	<b>Acceptable Physical Contact</b>	<b>Acceptable Physical Contact</b>
		Acceptable physical contact may occur if the student is willing <b>AND</b> it is purely for the benefit of the student <b>AND</b> it is limited to appropriate areas of student's body: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for teaching purposes</li> <li>to provide emotional support</li> <li>to give aid or assistance</li> <li>to assist communication.</li> </ul> A student's willingness for acceptable physical contact may be withdrawn at any time.	If a student is willing, then any acceptable physical contact to remove the student from potential harm, or to prevent the student from instigating potential harm, is not considered to be physical restraint. A student's willingness for acceptable physical contact may be withdrawn at any time. Acceptable physical contact occurs when a student is willing <b>AND</b> it is purely for the benefit of the student <b>AND</b> it is limited to appropriate areas of student's body. If it becomes evident the student is unwilling for any acceptable physical contact to continue, then cease the physical contact immediately.	If a student is willing, then any physical contact to remove the student from actual or imminent harm, or to prevent the student from applying actual or imminent harm, is not considered to be physical restraint. A student's willingness for acceptable physical contact may be withdrawn at any time. Acceptable physical contact may occur if a student is willing <b>AND</b> it is purely for the benefit of the student <b>AND</b> it is limited to appropriate areas of student's body. If it becomes evident the student is unwilling for any acceptable physical contact to continue, then cease the physical contact immediately - unless the teacher reasonably believes there are no other options to prevent the imminent harm, then go to the 'physical restraint box'.
Physical restraint = to use physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body, against the student's will				

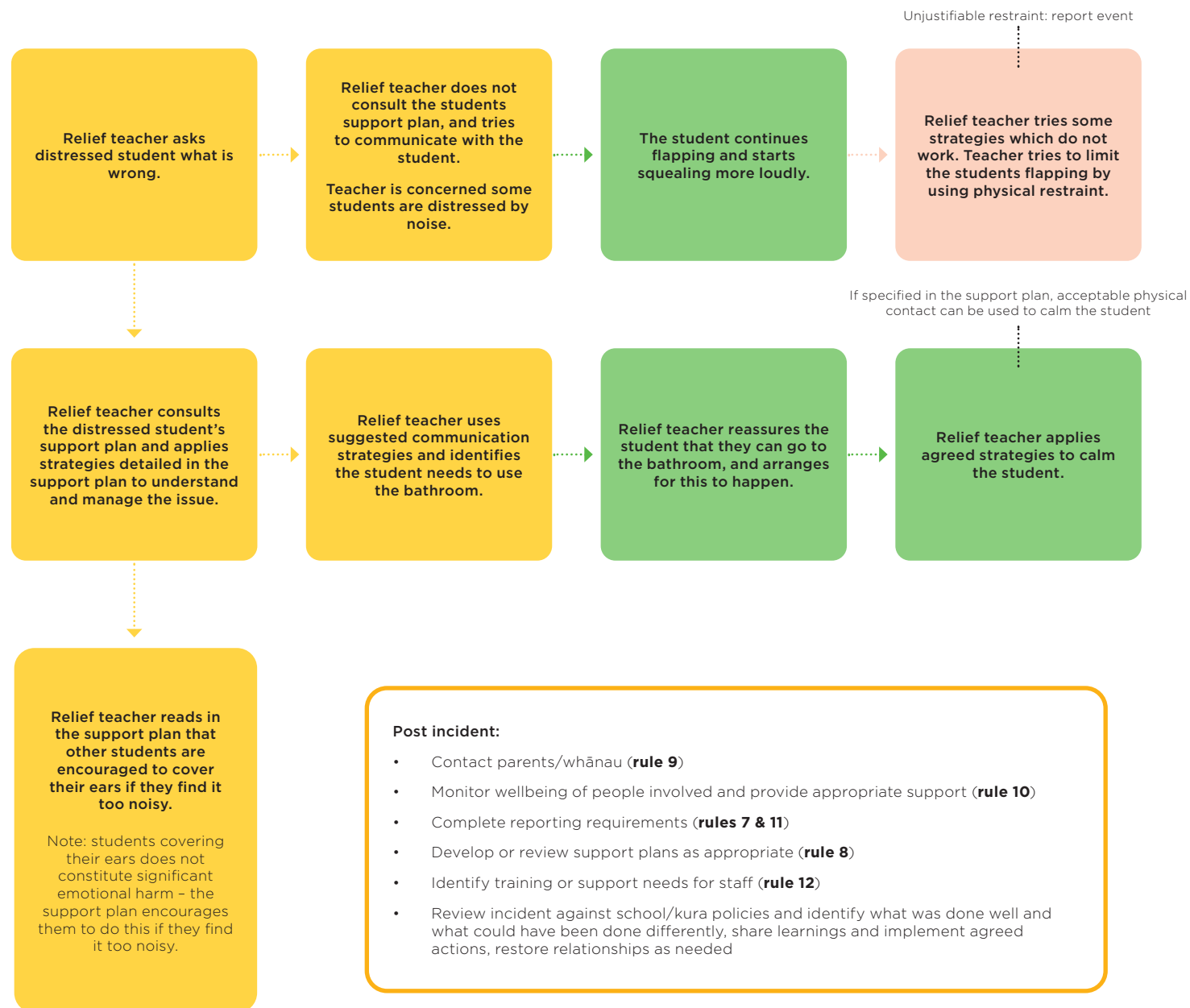
## Practical Example:

*Designed to be a discussion tool to guide school policy and procedure to support staff to prevent, de-escalate and manage scenarios*

### Child with autism and relief teacher

A relief teacher has been provided with the support and medical plans for students in their class. Mid morning a student with autism signals they need to go to the bathroom but the relief teacher misses the signal. The student starts flapping and squealing, and some students place their hands over their ears.

 Key - points where de-escalation options can be applied — discuss what other options may be applied

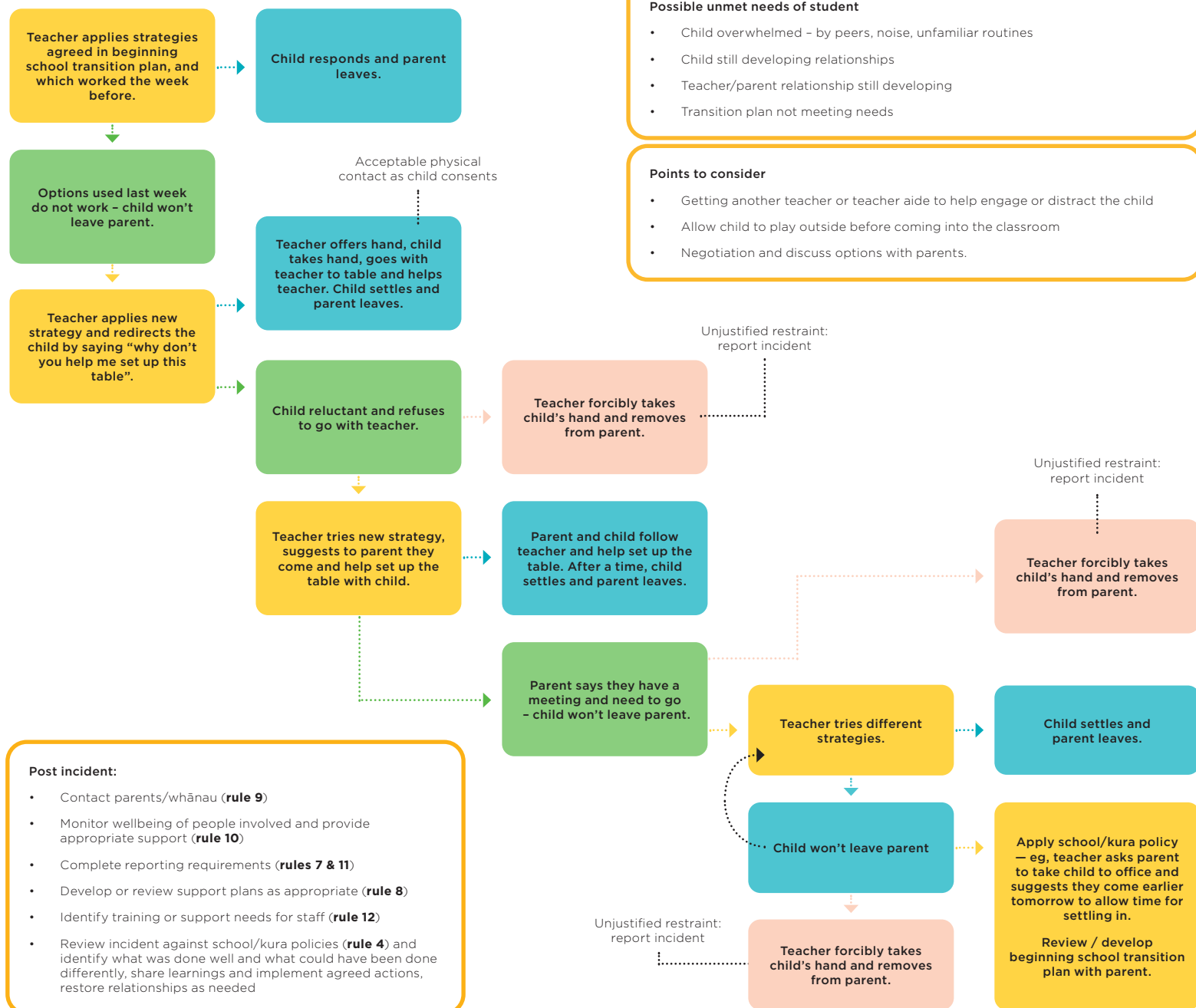


## Practical Example:

*Designed to be a discussion tool to guide school policy and procedure to support staff to prevent, de-escalate and manage scenarios*

### Separation anxiety

A new entrant child at the start of the second week of school is reluctant to leave their parent at the start of the day. A relief teacher has been provided with the support and medical plans for students in their class. Mid morning a student with autism signals they need to go to the bathroom but the relief teacher misses the signal. The student starts flapping and squealing, and some students place their hands over their ears.



#### Possible unmet needs of student

- Child overwhelmed - by peers, noise, unfamiliar routines
- Child still developing relationships
- Teacher/parent relationship still developing
- Transition plan not meeting needs

#### Points to consider

- Getting another teacher or teacher aide to help engage or distract the child
- Allow child to play outside before coming into the classroom
- Negotiation and discuss options with parents.

#### Post incident:

- Contact parents/whānau (**rule 9**)
- Monitor wellbeing of people involved and provide appropriate support (**rule 10**)
- Complete reporting requirements (**rules 7 & 11**)
- Develop or review support plans as appropriate (**rule 8**)
- Identify training or support needs for staff (**rule 12**)
- Review incident against school/kura policies (**rule 4**) and identify what was done well and what could have been done differently, share learnings and implement agreed actions, restore relationships as needed

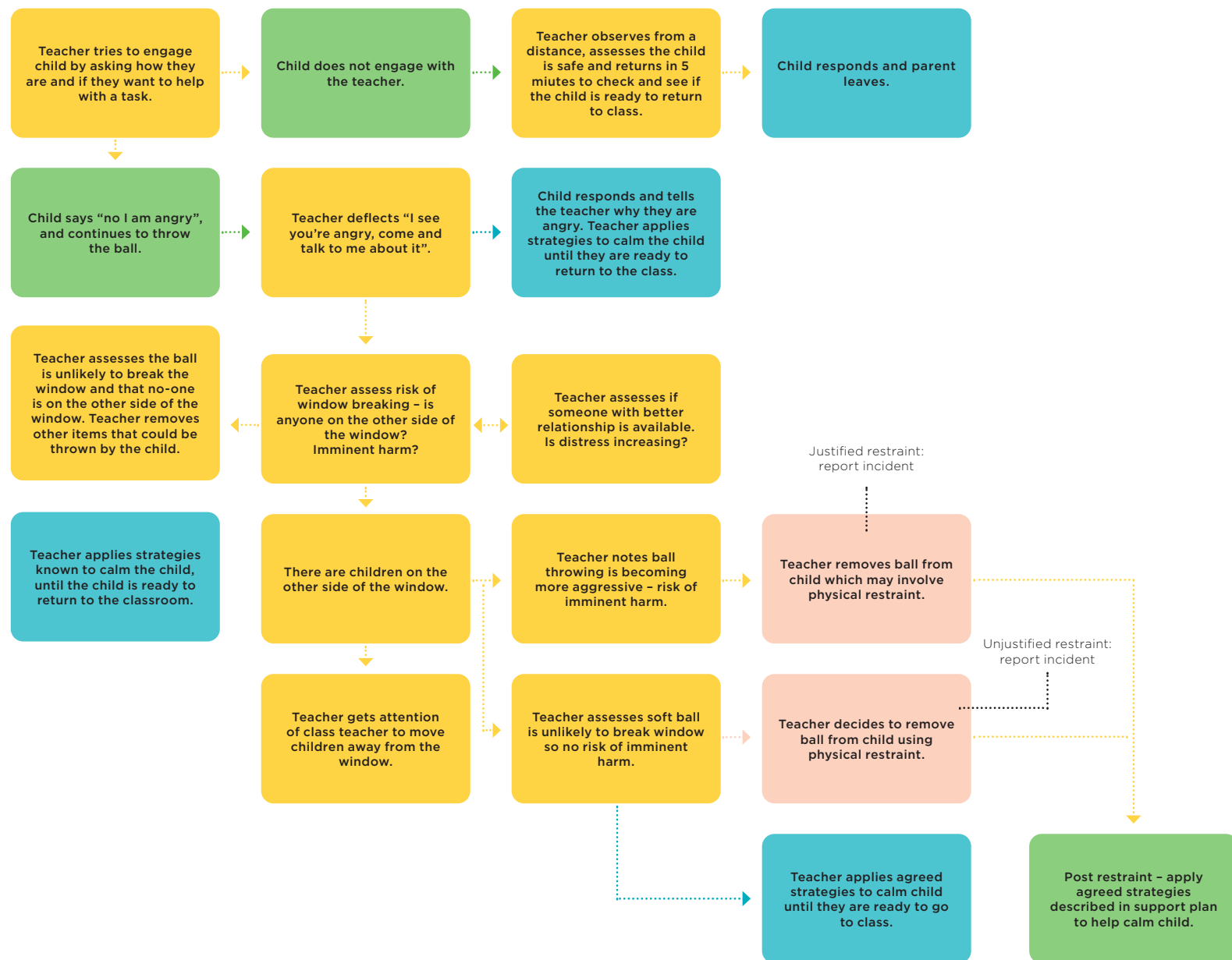
**Key - points where de-escalation options can be applied — discuss what other options may be applied**

## Practical Example:

*Designed to be a discussion tool to guide school policy and procedure to support staff to prevent, de-escalate and manage scenarios*

### Angry year four child alone in play area

A teacher walks past a year four child on their own outside of the classroom during class time. The child is being very physical. The teacher is aware the child has a support plan that allows for self calming breaks. The child starts to throw a ball against a classroom window. The teacher is worried the window will break.

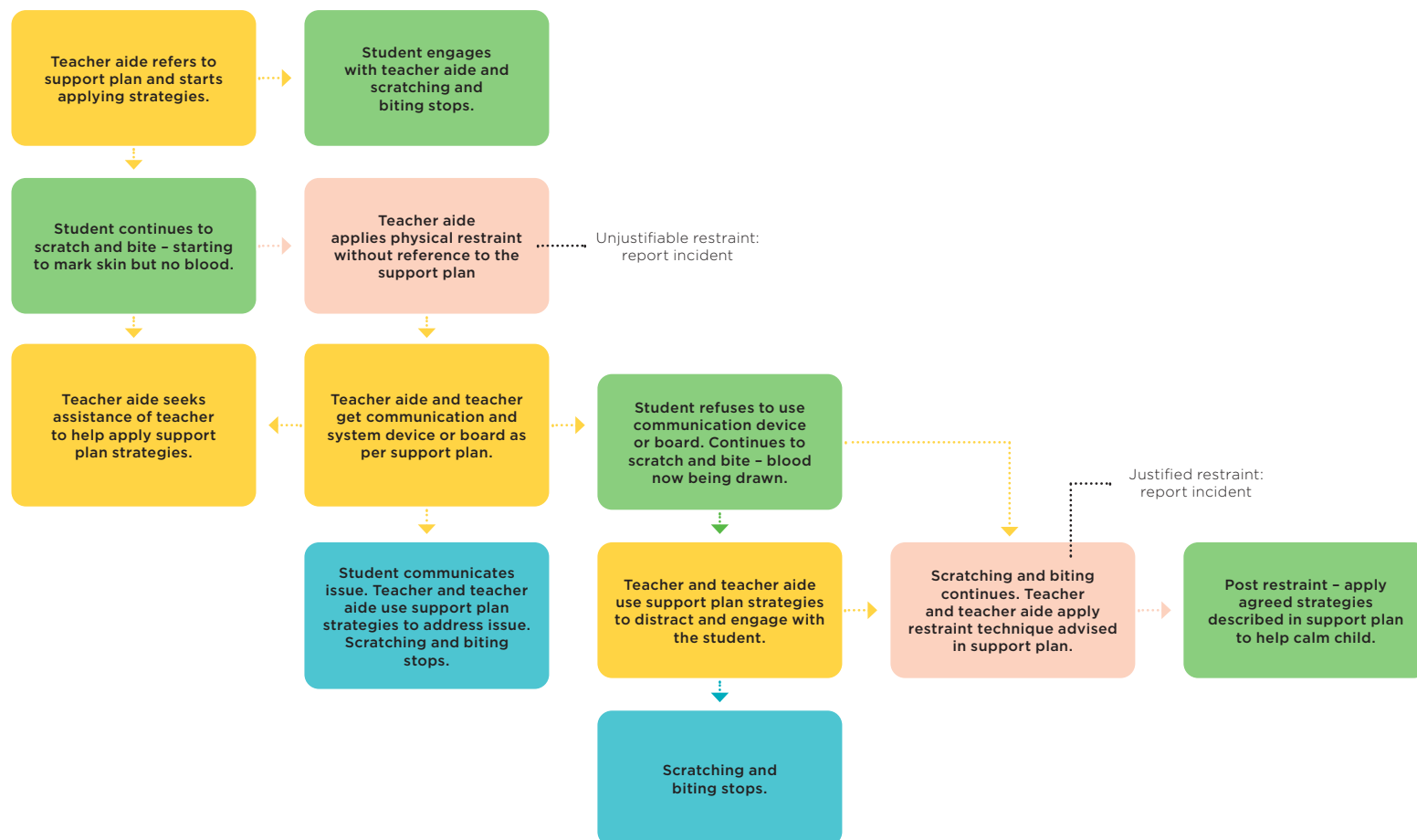


## Practical Example:

*Designed to be a discussion tool to guide school policy and procedure to support staff to prevent, de-escalate and manage scenarios*


### Non verbal student

A student begins scratching and biting themselves.  
A support plan is in place.



#### Post incident:

- Contact parents/whānau (**rule 9**)
- Monitor wellbeing of people involved and provide appropriate support (**rule 10**)
- Complete reporting requirements (**rules 7 & 11**)
- Develop or review support plans as appropriate (**rule 8**)
- Identify training or support needs for staff (**rule 12**)
- Review incident against school/kura policies (**rule 4**) and identify what was done well and what could have been done differently, share learnings and implement agreed actions, restore relationships as needed

 Key - points where de-escalation options can be applied — discuss what other options may be applied



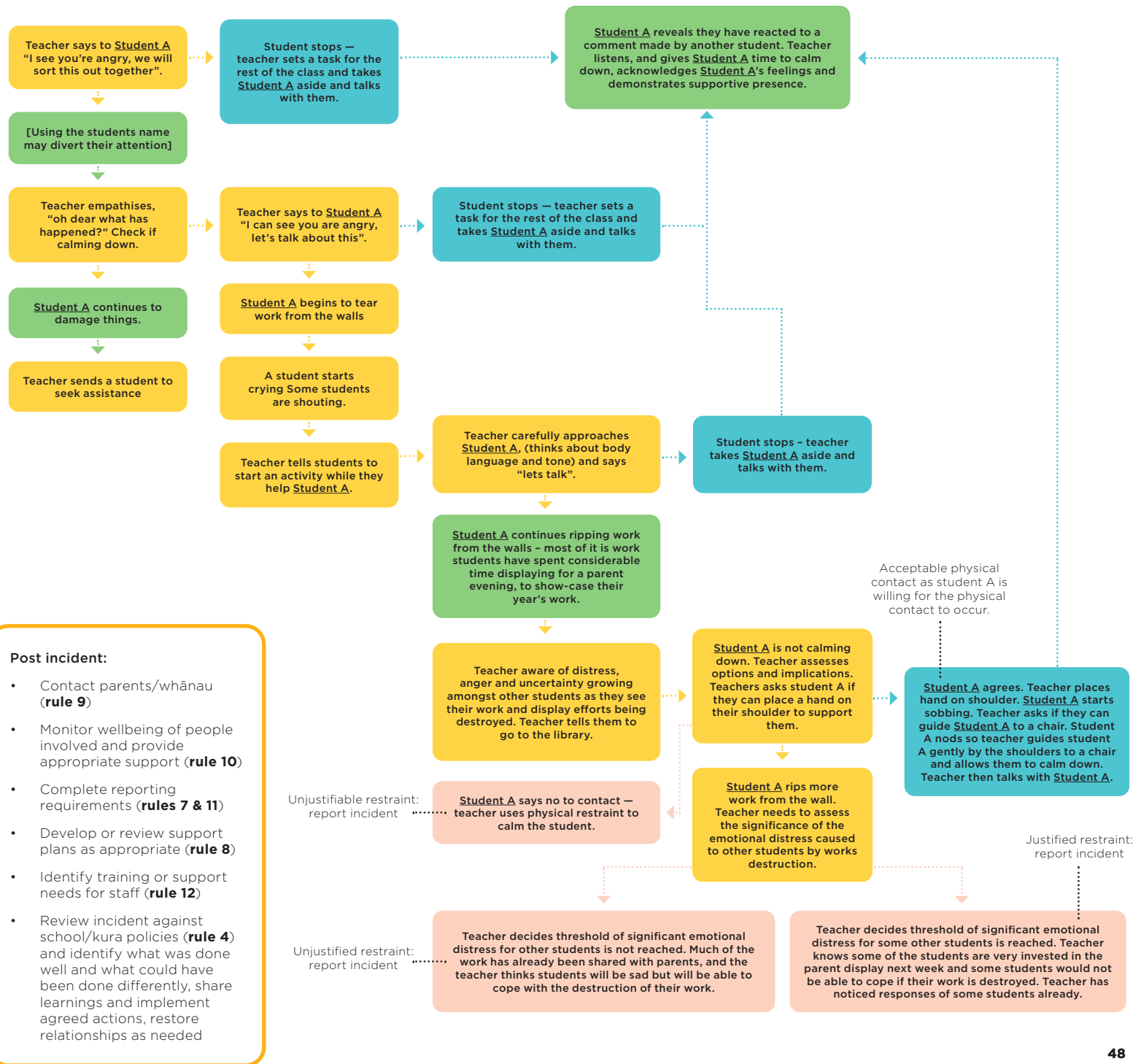
## Practical Example:

Designed to be a discussion tool to guide school policy and procedure to support staff to prevent, de-escalate and manage scenarios

### Student damaging other students property and work – imminent significant emotional harm?

A year 6 student suddenly starts shouting in class, destroying the belongings of nearby students such as snapping pencils, stomping on lunch boxes, and throwing a water bottle. Student A is normally quiet and well behaved. The teacher is unaware of what has triggered the students actions. Other students begin to start shouting as their belongings are damaged, others look fearful or uncertain.

**Key - points where de-escalation options can be applied – discuss what other options may be applied**




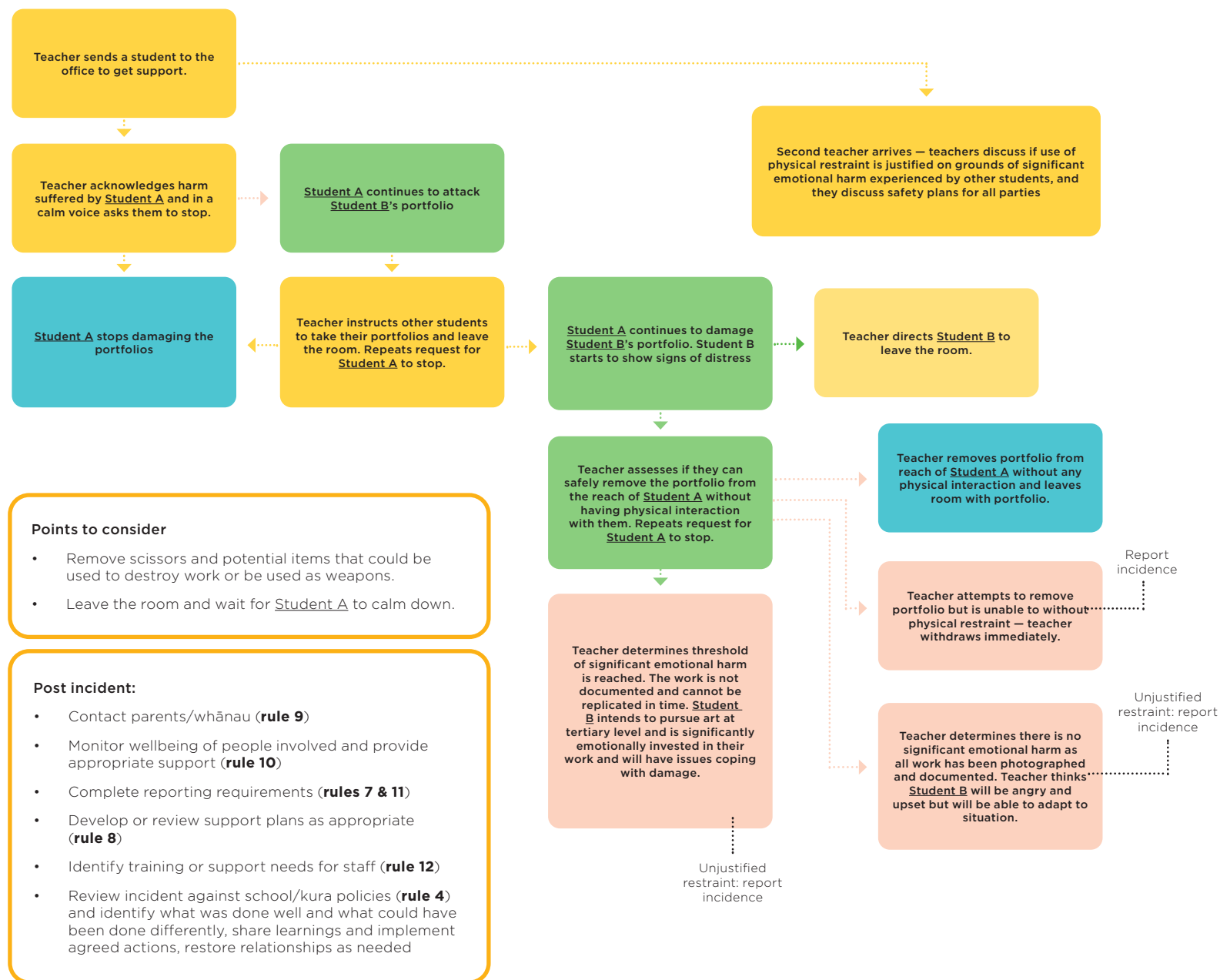
## Practical Example:

*Designed to be a discussion tool to guide school policy and procedure to support staff to prevent, de-escalate and manage scenarios*

### Damaging students' art portfolios — significant emotional distress?

Student A is working quietly on compiling their final year 12 art portfolio when another student accidentally spills black ink onto their work. Student A jumps up shouting "you've f...g ruined it", and proceeds to rip up their own portfolio. They then attack other Year 12 art portfolios. The teacher recognises Student A is in an extremely emotional state and not listening to reason. Although there is no physical risk to anyone, the art portfolios represent hundreds of hours of work by students and are an essential part of their NCEA assessment, which can't be redone within the next 2 weeks if they are destroyed.

 **Key - points where de-escalation options can be applied — discuss what other options may be applied**





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