



Physical Restraint Policy

Trinity Comprehensive School is committed to providing a **safe, inclusive, and trauma-informed learning environment** for all students and staff. We recognise that **behaviours of concern are forms of communication**, often arising from unmet needs, distress, trauma, disability, or adverse experiences.

Physical restraint is an emergency intervention of last resort and will only be used when **all other preventative and de-escalation strategies have failed**, and **there is an immediate risk of serious harm**.

This policy is grounded in:

- **Children's rights**
- **Trauma-informed practice**
- **Positive behaviour support**
- **Restorative and relational approaches**

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff
- SNAs, substitute teachers, and support staff
- School management and Board of Management
- All students, including those with SEN and additional needs

It operates alongside:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- SEN Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Bi Cinealta Policy
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- **Department of Education**
 - *Understanding Behaviours of Concern (2023)*

- o *Guidelines for Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs*
- o *Wellbeing Policy Framework for Practice (2018–2023)*
- o *NCSE Relate Document*

Trauma-Informed Principles and understanding Behaviours of concern.

In line with **Understanding Behaviours of Concern**, our school recognises that:

- Behaviour is a **form of communication**
- Students may respond to stress with **fight, flight, freeze, or shutdown**
- Trauma can affect **emotional regulation, impulse control, and trust**
- Punitive or restrictive responses can **re-traumatise students**

Our approach prioritises:

- Relationship-based practice
- Predictability and emotional safety
- De-escalation and regulation supports

All responses to behaviour are underpinned by:

- **Safety first** (physical, emotional, relational)
- **Predictability and consistency**
- **Choice and voice**
- **Connection before correction**
- **Understanding the function of behaviour**
- **Avoidance of re-traumatisation**

Definition of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is defined as:

Any intervention where a staff member uses physical contact to restrict or immobilise a student's movement.

This **does not include**:

- Guiding or escorting with consent
- Protective positioning without force
- Blocking access to danger
- Reasonable physical contact during sports or emergencies

Prevention and De-Escalation (Primary Focus)

The school prioritises **prevention over intervention** through:

Whole-School Strategies

- Trauma-informed classroom practice
- Predictable routines and clear expectations
- Universal wellbeing supports
- Restorative practices

Targeted Supports

- Student Support Plans
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Sensory regulation strategies

De-Escalation Strategies

- Calm tone and body language
 - Time, space, and reduced demands
 - Offering choices
 - Active listening
 - Safe exit strategies
 - Access to a trusted adult
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When Physical Restraint May Be Used

Physical restraint may **only** be used when **all** of the following apply:

- ✓ There is an **immediate and serious risk** of harm
- ✓ Other strategies have **failed or are not possible**
- ✓ The response is **reasonable, proportionate, and necessary**
- ✓ The **least restrictive option** is used
- ✓ The restraint lasts **only as long as necessary**

Restraint must never be used:

- As punishment
- For non-compliance
- To maintain order or discipline
- To coerce or threaten
- For staff convenience

- Only **trained staff** may carry out physical restraint
- Training must be:
 - Evidence-based
 - Trauma-informed
 - Regularly refreshed
- The Principal maintains a **record of trained personnel**

If physical restraint is unavoidable:

- Use the **least restrictive** method possible
- Maintain the student's **dignity and privacy**
- Monitor breathing, distress, and physical safety continuously
- End restraint **as soon as the risk subsides**
- Seek medical assistance if required

Post-Incident Procedures

Following any incident involving restraint:

- The student will be supported to **regulate and recover**
- A **restorative conversation** will take place when appropriate
- Parents/guardians will be informed **as soon as practicable**
- An **incident report** will be completed the same day
- The incident will be reviewed by school management

Student & Parent Voice

- Students will be supported to reflect when calm
- Parents/guardians will be:
 - Informed
 - Consulted
 - Involved in planning supports
- The school values **collaborative problem-solving**

Recording and Monitoring

All incidents of physical restraint must be recorded on the Template. Records will be:

- Stored securely
- Reviewed regularly to identify patterns
- Used to inform additional supports or interventions

Monitoring and Review

- Restraint data reviewed annually by the Board of Management
- Policy reviewed every **2 years** or sooner if guidance changes

BOM Ratification

<i>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</i>	<i>27/4/2026</i>
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Appendices

- Incident Report Template
- Behaviour Support Plan Template



Physical Restraint Incident Report Template

1. Basic Information

Student Name: _____ **Class / Year Group:** _____

Date of Incident: _____ **Time:** _____ **Location:** _____

Staff Involved: _____

Other Students Present: _____

2. What Happened Before?

Description: _____

3. Description of Behaviour of Concern

Description: _____

4. De-escalation Strategies Attempted

- ☐ Calm verbal reassurance
- ☐ Reduced demands
- ☐ Offered choice
- ☐ Provided space
- ☐ Sensory regulation strategy
- ☐ Called trusted adult
- ☐ Change of environment

Other (specify): _____

5. Decision to Use Physical Restraint

Reason restraint was necessary: _____

- ☐ Immediate risk of serious harm
- ☐ Proportionate response
- ☐ Least restrictive option
- ☐ Used only as long as necessary

6. Description of Physical Intervention

Type of approved technique used: _____

Duration of restraint: _____

Number of staff involved: _____

Student response during restraint: _____

7. After the Incident

Medical attention required (details): _____

Injuries (if any): _____

Student emotional state post-incident: _____

Support provided: _____

8. Parent/Guardian Notification

Date & time contacted: _____

Method of contact: _____

Person who contacted: _____

Summary of discussion: _____

9. Follow-Up Actions

- ☐ Behaviour Support Plan reviewed
- ☐ Student debrief completed
- ☐ Staff debrief completed
- ☐ Referral to Student Support Team
- ☐ NEPS consultation

Other actions: _____

10. Signatures

Staff Member(s): _____

Principal/Deputy Principal: _____



Behaviour Support Plan Template

1. Student Information

Student Name: _____

Year Group: _____

Class Tutor: _____

SEN Status (if applicable): _____

Date Plan Initiated: _____

Review Date: _____

2. Strengths & Protective Factors

Strengths / Interests / Talents: _____

3. Description of Behaviour of Concern

Description: _____

4. Function of Behaviour (Hypothesis)

☐ Escape/avoidance

☐ Sensory regulation

☐ Peer attention

☐ Adult attention

☐ Anxiety response

☐ Trauma trigger

☐ Communication difficulty

Other: _____

5. Known Triggers

Triggers: _____

6. Early Warning Signs

Early signs of escalation: _____

7. Preventative Strategies

Environmental supports: _____

Relational supports: _____

Regulation supports: _____

8. Teaching Replacement Skills

Skill to be taught: _____

Who will teach it / When / How reinforced:

9. Response Plan (If Behaviour Escalates)

Stage 1 – Early signs response: _____

Stage 2 – Escalation response: _____

Stage 3 – Crisis response: _____

10. Reinforcement Plan

Positive reinforcement strategies: _____

11. Student Voice

Student input: _____

12. Parent/Guardian Input

Parent/Guardian input: _____

13. Review & Monitoring

Data collected: _____

Adjustments required: _____

Signatures (Staff / Parent / Student / Principal):
