

HOKOWHITU SCHOOL POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY (2026)

PURPOSE

The Hokowhitu School Board will encourage a culture of positive student behaviour to provide a productive learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and staff.

GUIDELINES

General Principles

1. A culture of positive behaviour is encouraged through the schoolwide application of the STRIVE guidelines as expressed in the Strategic Plan.
 - a. The school curriculum will support the STRIVE values through the development of attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge that contribute to positive behaviour, including through making use of available external programmes when appropriate.
 - b. Each class and/or kete will co-construct its own treaty around expectations for positive behaviour in alignment with the STRIVE values.
 - c. Positive behaviour will also be fostered through class, kete, and schoolwide activities and events that affirm and encourage the STRIVE values.
2. A culture of positive behaviour is supported through taking a restorative approach wherever possible in response to student actions that fall short of expectation.
 - a. Students will be encouraged to be responsible for, and reflect upon, their own behaviour, and wherever appropriate will be supported in restoring any relationship breakdown that their behaviour may have caused.
 - b. Staff who are affected by a situation of challenging behaviour will also be supported.
 - c. A stepped system will be used to guide staff in the management of serious or repeated inappropriate behaviour.
3. A culture of positive behaviour is supported through following the principles of natural justice in situations where a disciplinary process is deemed necessary.
 - a. All those involved will be treated with respect, including acknowledgment of their knowledge, abilities, and culture.
 - b. All those involved will be informed about what is happening and what is at stake, the process that will be followed, and the purpose and principles behind that process.
 - c. All those involved have the right to be heard.
 - d. The school will not prejudge the outcome of any disciplinary process.
 - e. The school will act in good faith in resolving a disciplinary process, including acting without bias, personal malice, or improper motives.
 - f. The school will take a holistic view of the situation in resolving a disciplinary process, to ensure that any outcome will not have a disproportionate impact on a student's education.

Individual Behaviour Plans

4. In the case of ongoing complex, severe, and/or challenging behaviour an individual behaviour plan will be developed for preventing student distress and de-escalating crisis situations:

- a. Safe exit plans are made for students in the vicinity.
- b. Physical restraint may be identified as a last resort, but must be given informed written consent by parents, whānau, and caregivers.
- c. Referrals to external support services may be made.
- d. A timeframe for the review of the plan will be established.
- e. The Principal will provide regular, anonymised reports of the student's behaviour to the Board, to help the Board ensure that its obligations to the student, other students, and staff are being met.

Reducing Student Distress and Use of Physical Restraint

5. In the event where behaviour by a student poses an immediate threat of potential danger to students and/or staff, the use of preventative or de-escalation techniques will be used in the first instance.
6. Physical restraint should be used only as a last resort, when all the following criteria are met:
 - a. It is necessary for the prevention of immediate harm, including significant emotional distress to the student or another person.
 - b. It is reasonable to believe that there is no other option available in the circumstances for preventing the harm.
 - c. It is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances, with the minimum necessary force applied for the minimum time necessary.
7. Only the forms of physical restraint approved by the Ministry of Education and issued in the *Gazette* may be used.
 - a. No student can be placed in seclusion for any reason.
8. Only authorised people can use physical restraint:
 - a. Teachers, relief teachers, and people with a Limited Authority to Teach are automatically authorised under the Education and Training Act 2020.
 - b. Other staff may be authorised by the Board on the recommendation of the Principal.
 - c. All teachers and authorised staff must complete training on the content of the Guidelines as required by the Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023.
 - d. All teachers identified as having a high likelihood of needing to use physical restraint, and all non-teacher authorised staff, must be trained in preventing, minimising, and responding to student distress.
 - e. All teachers identified as having a high likelihood of needing to use physical restraint, and all non-teacher authorised staff, must be trained in appropriate physical holds.
9. Any use of physical restraint requires the following actions:
 - a. The staff member involved must immediately notify the Principal, and complete a written report on the incident as soon as possible that will be kept on the student's file and a copy provided to the student's parents/caregivers.
 - b. The Principal (or delegate) will inform the student's parents/caregivers as soon as possible, and at a minimum before the student returns to their care
 - c. The Principal will provide parents/caregivers with a reasonable opportunity to actively participate in a debriefing session with the parents, within three working days (or at another time by mutual consent).as well as carry out a debriefing session with the staff member.

- d. The Principal (or delegate) will immediately report the incident to the Ministry of Education and to the Presiding Member.
 - e. The Principal will report the incident “in committee” at the next meeting of the Board, and will provide analysis to identify and rectify any undesirable trends.
 - f. A written record of the incident must be kept for a minimum of ten years.
10. The Board will ensure that the following are made available to the school community:
- a. Aramai He Tētēkura | Arise our Future Generations: A Guide to Understanding Distress and Minimising the Use of Physical Restraint (Ministry of Education).
 - b. The names and positions of staff who are authorised to use physical restraint.
 - c. This policy.
11. Any complaints about the use of physical restraint can be submitted to the Principal or Presiding Member and will be considered and responded to in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.

Stand-Downs and Suspensions

12. In the event of a potential stand-down or suspension, the Principal will follow the statutory and procedural requirements of the Ministry of Education.
- a. A student may only be stood down or suspended if their gross misconduct or continual disobedience is a harmful or dangerous example to other students, or if their behaviour is likely to cause harm to themselves or other students if they were not stood down or suspended.
 - b. The Principal will provide information on stand-downs as part of regular reporting to the Presiding Member, and the Board will be informed of a stand-down in Part 2 of its meeting only if it is deemed sufficiently important to outweigh the student's right to privacy.
 - c. If the Principal decides to suspend a student, the Board or a delegated committee of at least two parent representatives must hold a meeting (to determine the outcome of the suspension) within seven school days of the suspension decision. If the decision to suspend is made in the last week of a term, the Board must hold its suspension meeting within ten calendar days.
 - i. If the Board agrees to form a committee it must pass a written resolution establishing the committee and delegating to it the power to act on the Board's behalf.
 - ii. In considering the suspension, the Board or delegated committee must keep a complete of the meeting with enough information to show the suspension meeting criteria were applied and all available options were considered, as well as a record of the decision and reasons for it.
 - iii. If the Board agrees to form a committee, it will report to the Board on the outcome of the suspension meeting as public excluded business at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/HANDBOOKS

Legislation

- Crimes Act 1961
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2017

Guidelines

- Aramai He Tētēkura | Arise our Future Generations: A Guide to Understanding Distress and Minimising the Use of Physical Restraint (Ministry of Education)
- Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Trustees on Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions, Parts 1 and 2 (Ministry of Education)
- Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023
- <https://www.nzsta.org.nz/the-boards-role-in-effective-student-behaviour-management/>
- <https://communitylaw.org.nz/community-law-manual/schools-kura-chapter-5-discipline-and-rules/discipline-and-rules/>

School Policies, Procedures, and Other Documents

- Strategic plan
- Behaviour Management Procedures
- Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Delivery Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

APPROVAL DETAILS

Review frequency: Three yearly
Ratification date: 5 May 2026
Review date: Term 2 (May) 2029

Presiding Member

Principal

APPENDIX: SUSPENSION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATEPurpose

To ensure that all processes relating to the suspension of a student in [insert month and year] adhere to the requirements of the Education and Training Act 2020, Education (Stand-down, Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion) Rules 1999 and Ministry of Education guidelines.

Membership

- Parent representatives: [insert names]
- Chair: [insert names]

Delegated authority

The board delegates to this ad hoc suspension committee the power to make decisions in the case of a student suspended in [insert month and year].

Expectations

The ad hoc suspension committee will:

1. Review the principal's decision to suspend
2. Uphold the principles of natural justice in suspension meeting procedures
3. Act in fairness, without bias or prejudice and with confidentiality
4. Act within legislation and the Ministry of Education guidelines and student (human) rights set out in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993
5. Act only on written and agreed information, not hearsay
6. If the principal's decision to suspend is upheld, decide the outcome according to the committee's delegated authority