



Fairhaven School  
Whānau ako – learning together

## Behaviour Support Policy 2.11

### **Purpose: Safety of Ākonga and Staff**

In order to thrive and learn, ākonga at Fairhaven School have an absolute right to an emotionally and physically safe environment and to safeguard this right, staff are trained in Team Teach, an accredited framework designed to focus on positive behaviour support approaches with an emphasis on de-escalation, risk and restraint reduction.

At Fairhaven School, the reality of our ākonga population means that there will be times when ākonga behaviour escalates to a level where staff intervention (both non-physical and physical) may be required to safeguard all concerned. The emphasis of the Team Teach training is based on the importance of recognising and responding to low-level behaviours so that we are working with ākonga to minimise the need for physical intervention.

### **Team Teach Rationale**

Team-Teach aims to employ a staff holistic approach, with a follow up repair, reflect, and de-brief response for all concerned. Emphasis being on "calm" communication and defusing skills that work best for the specific individual concerned, acknowledged within their care, behaviour or education plans. Team Teach supports the values of Fairhaven School as it reinforces our Total Communication philosophy, and the classroom practices that support individual ākonga.

Physical responses are underpinned by values and principles that fit within a culture and ethos of positive educative care. There is an emphasis on individual human rights, responsibilities, choices, and consequences. The emphasis is on protecting and promoting positive relationships between ākonga, kaiako and other school staff.

***The key message being that 95% OR MORE of all incidents can be managed without recourse to physical interventions.***

### **Team Teach Aims**

- To promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal and non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised.
- To enable staff to develop acceptable and authorised responses in a manner that maintains positive relationships and provides safety for all, by training in Team Teach.
- To reduce the number of serious incidents involving physical intervention in all settings and to emphasise the importance of exhausting behaviour support strategies in the first instance.
- To increase the awareness of staff concerning the importance of recording and reporting, monitoring, and evaluating, all incidents involving positive handling.
- To provide a process of repair and reflection for both staff and ākonga.

## **Team Teach Principles**

*Best interest:* The overriding principle relating to positive handling is that the best interests of the ākonga take precedence over every other consideration.

*Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary:* What determines the “reasonableness” of a particular intervention is whether or not it was “proportionate” to the circumstances it was intended to prevent. What would have happened if you had done something else or not done anything at all? “Necessary” can be aligned to the Education Act. Was there clear and imminent danger?

*Human Rights:* There are occasions when adults, kaiako, and other staff have a duty to take action on behalf of the people to whom they owe a duty of care. Sometimes staff are obliged to take actions, which in other circumstances would be unreasonable. People do not normally touch others unless invited, or interfere with their property, or move them from place to place to restrict their movement. Yet for staff there may be times when such actions are reasonable and even necessary. To fail to take action could at times be negligent.

The purpose of physical restraint is to ensure the safety of the individual ākonga and/or others. It is an emergency safety procedure used when an incident of serious and challenging behaviour is occurring and the ākonga and/or others are in immediate physical danger and/or there is significant property damage that risks harm to the ākonga or others.

Fairhaven School Policy reflects that up to 3 senior staff are trained as Team Teach tutors and are able to train specific staff to undertake physical intervention for a specific ākonga if it is needed.

## **Positive Approaches**

Staff will use positive approaches to guidance and support of ākonga. Team Teach concentrates on de-escalation strategies that include:

- Recognising and minimising triggers
- Recognising and responding to dysregulation
- Following agreed strategies in school wide ākonga management and ākonga specific Behaviour Support Plans
- Giving processing or break time for the ākonga to calm and become settled
- Using visual cues and to ensure the ākonga understands what is required
- Distracting the ākonga by redirecting to some other activity
- Using planned ignoring strategies

## **Incident Reporting**

All incidents are recorded on Hero, on the same day and are reviewed by the Behaviour Team. Staff members who do not have access to HERO complete a paper copy which is transferred to HERO. More serious incidences are reported to whānau and the School Board. Any use of physical intervention is reported to whānau, the Board and the Ministry of Education following our Ākonga Distress and Physical Restraint Process.

## Ākongā Distress and Physical Restraint Process

***The use of physical restraint is a final resort and to be avoided whenever possible.***

Physical restraint is lawful only in specific situations.

Physical restraint is covered under sections 99 to 101 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

- [Section 99](#) outlines the limits on the use of physical restraint in registered schools.
- [Section 100](#) requires rules that describe the practices and procedures that employers, tumuaki, kaiako and authorised staff members follow relating to the use of physical restraint in registered schools.
- [Section 101](#) requires guidelines to be issued on the use of physical restraint and behaviour management at registered schools.

We adhere to [Ministry of Education Physical Restraint Guidelines 2023](#) and have trained our staff to understand distress and minimise the use of physical restraint. Our staff use a practical approach to recognise and respond to distress.

- **Mātaitia - Recognise:** Distress is an expression of an unmet need or want. It occurs when the level of stress exceeds ākongā ability to cope and recover without support. Distress can present as visible behaviours to others. The better we know ākongā and their whānau, the easier it is to learn about them. We recognise the signs that they are becoming overwhelmed or struggling. We work with them, their whānau and their peers on things that can help.
- **Atawhaitia - Respond:** We respond with the kind of support ākongā need to feel settled again. If they're too overwhelmed, we respond with calm, clear communication that keeps everyone safe. A safe space is made available either inside or outside each classroom which ākongā can choose to take a break in, to support de-escalation and regulation.
- **Whakawhenuatia - Restore:** We give everyone time and space. We are there for ākongā, to restore connections, and support integration back into classroom and peer activities.

Physical restraint means to use physical force to prevent, restrict, or subdue the movement of ākongā (or any part of their body) against their will. Physical restraint can only be used by authorised staff members, if all three of the following conditions are met (and only as a last resort).

(1) The physical restraint is necessary to prevent ***imminent harm***, including significant ***emotional distress*** to the ākongā or another person.

- (i) In the context of legislation, ***imminent harm*** is an immediate threat that a person will cause and/or suffer harm which jeopardises the health and safety or wellbeing of themselves or others if protective action is not taken immediately.
- (ii) In the context of legislation, significant ***emotional distress*** means harm that is caused by the intentional acts of one person that significantly affects the emotional wellbeing of another person, to such an extent that they need intensive support to cope and recover.

(2) You reasonably believe there is no other option available in the circumstances for preventing the harm.

(3) The physical restraint is **reasonable** and **proportionate** in the circumstances. This means only applying as much force as is necessary, and for the minimum time necessary.

The Fairhaven School Board delegates responsibility to the tumuaki to give authorisation in writing to staff members. The tumuaki will ensure that the staff has been trained annually in Team Teach behaviour support system. All staff will complete the mandatory online learning module to guide them through the guidelines. Newly employed staff will also complete this module and training as part of their induction process.

***Fairhaven School Behaviour Support Procedures are followed at all times.***

Each ākonga has a **Learner Profile (Form D)** identifying and noting specific needs and environmental adaptations which with consistent implementation supports elimination or de-escalation of low-level behaviours.

For some ākonga a FAST referral may be necessary, where data is collected and then a **Behaviour Support Plan (Form C)** is developed identifying stress triggers, severe behaviours that may be observable and support strategies to minimise distress. Calming techniques / strategies that maximise wellbeing will be noted.

If a Behaviour Support plan is not sufficient to address extreme distress and those behaviours present clear and imminent danger to others or self, a **Reactive Management and Safety Plan (Form (f))** will be designed. This plan contains detailed responses that staff trained in the ākonga specific Team Teach protocol may use to keep the ākonga, themselves and others safe. The plan must be signed by whānau.

If Physical restraint is used, a **Physical Restraint Report (Form 2.11g(ii))** will be completed on the day of the incident and whānau will be informed. Ministry of Education will be notified.

Physical restraint is used as a last resort in situations where there is imminent danger. Staff will seek to minimise the likelihood of having to manage crises situations by:

- Learning to identify the early signs that tension is building for ākonga
- Using positive strategies to 'defuse and distract' in order to resolve those situations before they escalate as outlined in ākonga Management, Behaviour Support Plans, and Team Teach Guidelines

Physical restraint i.e., the employment of an approved Team Teach hold is lawful only in specific situations. These are instances when ākonga is:

- physically threatening the safety of others
- causing injury to self
- causing serious damage to property that could result in harm to self or others

Possible use of physical restraint (as a last resort) **must be** included in the Behaviour Support Plan and **must be detailed** in the Reactive Management and Safety Plan which is signed by Parents, whānau and caregivers indicating informed consent.

Only staff that have completed and passed specific Team Teach training (authorised staff) can use methods of physical intervention that have been approved for ākonga in their Reactive Management and Safety Plan. However common sense must prevail and in situations where we are concerned for the immediate safety of ākonga, or others (including situations where running away has extreme safety implications), staff who have not yet been trained in Team Teach or who are not authorised are able to intervene.

**Seclusion** is prohibited under Section 98 of the Education & Training Act 2020. “Seclusion is putting ākonga alone in a room they can’t leave (or think they can’t leave) against their will.”

The use of physical intervention is **a final resort** and is to be avoided whenever possible. If the principal considers that the use of restraint was unjustified, they are responsible for following up with the employer (school board) and subsequent reporting to the Teaching Council.

**At Fairhaven School the Care welfare, safety, and security of ākonga is paramount.**

**This policy was formally adopted by the Fairhaven School Board of Trustees on 15 May 2023**



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Presiding Member