

Aotearoa Infinite Academy

Student Learning, Wellbeing and Behaviour
(Discipline and Safety) Policy



Purpose

Aotearoa Infinite Academy is committed to providing a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff in every environment where teaching and learning happen — including our virtual classrooms and digital platforms. Our goal is to create an inclusive online school culture where students feel connected, respected, and supported to achieve their best while being protected from harm.

This policy sets out the school's expectations for learning behaviours, the supports used to build them, and the fair, lawful processes used to respond when behaviour interferes with learning or safety. The policy reflects the school's commitment to equity, inclusion, natural justice, student wellbeing, and online safety, and applies in all school contexts, including virtual classrooms and any in-person or off-site activities.

This policy sits alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, and Complaints Procedure. Together, these ensure Aotearoa Infinite Academy meets its obligations under the Education and Training Act 2020 and other applicable laws and regulations

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all students enrolled at the school;
- all school staff, contractors, and volunteers;
- all learning spaces and activities run by Infinite, including:
 - online classes, platforms, communications, and assessments; and
 - any physical, in-person, or off-site activity (e.g., meet-ups, EOTC events, workshops, examinations, or exam-centre attendance arranged by the school).

Guiding Approach: Learning First

Infinite approaches behaviour as part of learning. We explicitly teach and model the behaviours that support online learning success (including self-management, respectful communication, digital citizenship, and engagement). We focus first on support and restoration, and use disciplinary measures only when necessary to protect safety, maintain learning, or uphold the rights of others.

The school uses a school-wide positive learning behaviour framework that includes explicit teaching of expectations, recognition of positive learning behaviours, and data-informed supports. Student voice is actively sought in shaping and reviewing learning-behaviour expectations and supports.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Students** are expected to uphold learning-behaviour expectations, seek support early, and participate in restorative and support processes in good faith.
- **Parents/caregivers/whānau** support attendance, engagement, supervision (where required), and partnership with the school to address concerns early.
- **Staff** teach and model expected behaviours, use graduated supports, respond fairly and promptly to concerns, and maintain safe online spaces.
- **The Principal and leadership team** oversee lawful disciplinary processes, ensure supports are in place, and report serious matters to the Governance Board.
- **The Governance Board** ensures the policy is lawful, resourced, reviewed, and applied consistently, and hears disciplinary matters where required by law.

Expectations for Students

Students are expected to:

- engage respectfully with staff and peers;
- follow reasonable instructions from staff and supervisors;
- use digital tools and platforms safely and appropriately;
- complete learning activities to the best of their ability;
- protect the privacy and wellbeing of others; and
- contribute to a safe, inclusive, and focused learning community.

These expectations are set out in the Student Code of Conduct and reinforced through induction, regular reminders, and teaching within the curriculum.

Preventing and Responding to Behavioural Concerns

Infinite uses a graduated, supportive response to behaviour concerns:

1. Universal supports (for all students)

- clear routines and norms for online lessons and communication;
- explicit teaching of digital citizenship and self-management skills;

- positive recognition for behaviours that support learning and kaupapa of the school;
- culturally responsive teaching and relationship-based practice.

2. Targeted supports (when concerns emerge)

- early teacher/mentor check-ins and coaching;
- collaborative problem-solving with student and whānau;
- short-term support plans focused on skill-building;
- restorative conversations or facilitated online hui.

3. Intensive supports (for persistent or serious concerns)

- Individual Behaviour / Learning Support Plan linked to learning needs and wellbeing;
- involvement of learning support staff, counsellors, or external agencies where appropriate;
- structured reintegration or mentoring plans after a serious incident.

Online Environment Considerations

Because Infinite is primarily online, the school may use privacy-respecting safety and moderation tools within its platforms to prevent harm and maintain a safe learning environment. Where behaviour creates immediate risk or disruption, staff may take prompt online measures such as temporarily muting, removing a student from a session, restricting chat functions, or suspending access to a platform while the matter is assessed. Any restriction will be followed by appropriate support and due process.

Restorative Practice and Conflict Resolution

Infinite prioritises restorative practice. Where harm occurs, the school seeks to:

- understand what happened and why;
- repair relationships and rebuild trust;
- support accountability through learning-focused consequences; and
- address underlying needs or barriers.

Restorative processes may include online or in-person facilitated hui/circles, mediated conversations, written reflections, and agreed restitution or community contribution, tailored to age and context.

Disciplinary Procedures

Infinite will follow fair process, at all times in accordance with the principles of natural justice, in all disciplinary matters:

1. **notice:** the student (and parents/whānau where appropriate) will be told the concern and the possible consequences;
2. **opportunity to be heard:** the student can respond, provide context, and bring a support person;
3. **unbiased decision-making:** decisions are made by staff without conflicts of interest;
4. **proportionality:** outcomes match the seriousness, pattern, and context;
5. **documentation:** records kept of steps taken and decisions made;
6. **support:** disciplinary responses are paired with learning/wellbeing supports to prevent recurrence.

Disciplinary responses are a last resort and must always be proportionate, educationally justified, and consistent with natural justice. Disciplinary measures may include:

- formal warnings or behaviour agreements;
- supervised learning plans or restrictions on specific learning activities;
- removal from particular online spaces or events for defined periods;
- stand-down, suspension, exclusion, or expulsion in serious cases.

Prohibition on Corporal Punishment and Seclusion

Infinite does not permit corporal punishment or seclusion in any form.

- **Corporal punishment** (any physical force intended to cause pain or discomfort as punishment) is not permitted by any staff member, volunteer, contractor, parent, or supervisor during any school activity, online or in person.
- **Seclusion** (placing a student alone in a space they cannot freely leave to manage behaviour) is not permitted.

Because Infinite is an online school, these bans apply especially to any in-person activity where adults are acting on behalf of the school.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is almost never relevant to Infinite's day-to-day online delivery. However, for any physical/off-site school activity:

When it may be used

Physical restraint may be used only when a student's behaviour poses an immediate and serious risk of harm to the student or another person, and restraint is necessary and proportionate to prevent that harm.

When it must not be used

Physical restraint must never be used:

- as punishment;
- to enforce compliance or “teach a lesson”;
- for property protection alone;
- where the risk is not immediate and serious; or
- where a safer alternative is reasonably available.

How it must be carried out (if unavoidable)

- the least-restrictive technique for the shortest duration;
- only by staff who have been trained, authorised, and briefed for that event;
- with constant attention to the student's breathing, distress, and safety;
- stopped immediately once the serious risk has passed;
- followed by wellbeing support for the student and others affected.

Reporting and review

Any physical restraint incident must be:

- recorded promptly in the school's incident system;
- notified to parents/whānau as soon as practicable;
- reviewed by the Principal/EOTC lead to identify lessons, supports, or changes needed; and
- and reported to the Ministry.

Version Control

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