



KOTARA SCHOOL (SSP)  
Cnr. Seaview & Park Avenue,  
Kotara. NSW. 2289.  
Phone: 02 4957 3274  
Fax: 02 4956 1734  
Email: [kotara-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:kotara-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au)  
Web: [www.kotara-s.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.kotara-s.schools.nsw.edu.au)

## **Crisis Communication**

- Can be described as the magic of the mouth.
- It is the most effective way to deal with a crisis.
- The more simple everyday language you use the more likely it is to work.

It is important to keep a number of things in mind

1. **A self-control plan** where you focus on being calm and patient is really needed in a crisis. Remember to breathe, use a quiet voice, short sharp statements and keep them simple. E.g. sit down, what do you need, let's talk about it, I need help.
  - Rule of 5
  - 2 eyes, 2 ears 1 mouth
2. **Know your student - have a plan.** If possible know what is likely to set them off, what triggers their behaviour and how they are likely to act. E.g. pacing, glassy eyes, rosy cheeks, increase swearing or loudness of voice, a verbal sound that is an indicator that things are not right. If you know then you may be able to redirect therefore avoiding a crisis.
3. **Avoid public denigration** regardless of age or disability. Use only positive terms to address students. Some sayings have long term effects on students and even a simple saying like "Earth to Jacob". Other students may laugh and then forget about it. Jacob

may find it embarrassing and feel a failure for a much longer time. Words like "settle down" or "calm down" may escalate behaviour.

4. **Catch them being good.** If you are using an ignoring strategy then it is extremely important to make sure you do catch them being good and reward them for their appropriate behaviour. As a rule 4 or more positive reinforcements should be given to a negative comment. It is very easy to get into a cycle of seeing the negative behaviour rather than focusing on the positives.

5. **Don't back a student into a corner** because they will probably come out fighting especially a student who is frightened or frustrated. Try not to physically overawe the student, give them space. Most students will not like you invading their personal space that seems to grow wider when they are in a crisis.

It is not a good idea to argue with a student in classroom or the playground in fact it best to avoid an argument at all cost. - AVOID POWER STRUGGLES

6. **Allow students choices or options**

E.g. If you choose to disrupt the class you will need to leave the room. - allowing them to choose what happens next.

E.g. first you need to finish your diary then you can use the computer - not quite a choice but an option for them as it allows them some control over what happens.

7. **Acknowledge feelings** although it may be impossible or unnecessary to agree with student's demands it is possible to acknowledge feelings. If a student is angry or frustrated it is more supportive to acknowledge the anger rather than brush it aside.

e.g. "I can see that you are angry why don't you go for a drink then we will talk about" it rather than ignoring or even worse being critical of the behavior.

8. **Don't confront a student when you are angry, upset etc.** We feel and react to stress in various ways. Be aware of your own feelings and avoid confronting a student when you are

feeling stressed. Make arrangements to meet later. It is also OK to get someone else to take over or walk away if necessary.

## 9. KEEP YOURSELF SAFE/ PATIENCE THE CRISIS WILL PASS/ DEBRIEF/RECORD.

### Responding to a Crisis

#### a. CRISIS COMMUNICATION

- Can we talk the attacker into stopping the dangerous behaviour?

#### b. EVASION

- If the attacker won't stop, can we avoid harm by evading?

#### c. RESTRAINT

- If we fail to restrain this person will someone be injured?
- If we try to restrain this person, do we have enough people to do it safely?

### Principles of evasion

- Keep talking
- Stay out of the way
- Roll with the punch
- Get out of the way
- Cover up
- Deflect blows and kicks
- Call for help
- Be patient

### Principles of manual restraint

- Evade if possible
- Get a grip
- Use weight not strength

- ☑ Avoid pain
- ☑ Use only reasonable force
- ☑ Maintain a proper ratio
- ☑ Be a team player
- ☑ Monitor breathing and circulation very closely

COURAGE TO LEARN  
COURAGE TO CHANGE

## Information from Legal Issues Bulletin No 9 10 March 2000

### PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF SCHOOL STUDENTS

#### It is important to remember

1. Physical restraint of students should only be exercised as a **last resort**.
2. Physical restraint should only occur where there is an immediate risk of injury to persons, including the student or an **immediate risk** of serious damage to property.
3. Physical restraint should only be what is **reasonably necessary** having regard to the specific circumstances
4. Physical restraint must not be used if there is a **risk of injury to staff**.

# Kotara School