**DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES:**

**Adapted from** <https://education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Guidance-for-New-Zealand-Schools-on-Behaviour-Mgmt-to-Minimise-Physical-....pdf>

**Use preventive de-escalation techniques first**

Your first aim is to avoid needing to use physical restraint.

Use the following strategies for unexpected “one-off” incidents, as well as for young people who regularly present with high-risk behaviours. These are general suggestions. For young people with high-risk behaviours, have an Individual Behaviour Plan developed, tailored to the young person’s needs.

**Preventive techniques**

**Understand the young person**

* Get to know the young person and identify potentially difficult times or situations that may be stressful or difficult for them.
* Identify the young person’s personal signs of stress or unhappiness and intervene early.
* Monitor wider behaviour carefully for potential areas of conflict.

**Respect the young person**

* Demonstrate a supportive approach: “I’m here to help.”
* Be flexible in your responses: adapt what you’re doing to the demands of the situation.
* Be reasonable: a reasonable action, request or expectation deserves a reasonable response.
* Promote and accept compromise or negotiated solutions, while maintaining your authority.
* Take the young person seriously and address issues quickly.

**Preserve the young person’s dignity**

* Address private or sensitive issues in private.
* Avoid the use of inappropriate humour such as sarcasm or mocking.

**De-escalation techniques**

**Safety first – create space and time**

* Remove the audience – ask other participants to take their work and move away.
* Give the young person physical space.
* Name the emotion in a calm even voice: “You look really angry”, “I can see that you are very frustrated”.
* Wait.

**Communicate calmly**

* Talk quietly, even when the young person is loud.
* Try to remain calm and respectful.
* Monitor your own body language and allow the young person the opportunity to move out of the situation with dignity.
* Focus on communicating respect and your desire to help.
* Keep verbal interactions respectful.
* When appropriate, give the young person clear choices and/or directions to help them feel more secure and regain control.

**Think ahead in case the situation escalates**

* If escalation occurs, move further away.
* Make sure you have an exit plan.
* Constantly reassess the situation.
* Send for help if necessary.

**What may escalate the behaviour**

* Threatening the young person.
* Arguing or interrupting.
* Contradicting what the young person says – even if they are wrong.
* Challenging the young person.
* Trying to shame the young person or showing your disrespect for the young person.