

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

Background

The District is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure environment for students and staff. The District recognizes its responsibility to deal with students in a manner which is similar to that of a kind, firm and supportive parent. In order to meet these responsibilities, the District accepts that in emergency situations where the physical actions of a student threatens to cause harm to self, others, it may be necessary to physically restrain or seclude the student.

The District requires all school staff members to be provided opportunity to participate in training in positive behaviour interventions and supports and de-escalation techniques. All specialized staff will be provided the opportunity to participate in training regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion that will only be used only in emergency situation and not as a form of treatment or regular action.

The District requires that parents and, where appropriate, students are offered opportunities to be consulted in the development of positive behaviour supports and interventions, behaviour plans, emergency or safety plans.

The District requires that in any instance where physical restraint and seclusion of a student occurs, it is to be documented and provided to the Superintendent. Principals will record incidents of physical restraint and seclusion, or the use of 'time out' outside of a classroom and submit that data to the Superintendent upon request.

The District requires prevention/intervention strategies to be reviewed and revised in situations where: repeated use of physical restraint and seclusion for an individual student occurs; multiple uses of physical restraint and seclusion occur within the same classroom; or, physical restraint and seclusion is repeatedly used by an individual.

The District requires regular review of the physical restraint and seclusion procedures to ensure alignment with current research and practice.

Definitions

Behaviour - the actions by which an individual adjusts to his or her environment. It is commonly understood that behaviour is communication. It is the impact of the behaviour that dictates whether a behaviour is negative or positive.

Understanding that behaviour is communication, the purpose of these procedures is to promote a response that protects both the individual and others' safety and well-being.

Immediate Danger – is a present danger that is next in order and not separated by space or time.

Imminent Danger – is an anticipated danger that is likely to happen, is impending, and is separated by space or time. This impending danger could be one hour, one day, or an unknown time away but is still imminent.

Physical Restraint - is a method of restricting another person's freedom of movement or mobility, in order to secure and maintain the safety of the person or the safety of others.

The provision of a physical escort, i.e., temporary touching or holding of a student's hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of accompanying and inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location, does not constitute physical restraint.

The provision of physical guidance, or prompting of a student when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, or providing comfort also does not constitute physical restraint.

Seclusion - is the involuntary confinement of a person, alone in a room, enclosure, or space which the person is physically prevented from leaving.

Behaviour strategies, such as 'time out', used for social reinforcement as part of a behaviour plan, are not considered 'seclusion'.

The term seclusion does not apply where a student has personally requested to be in a different/secluded location/space.

The term seclusion does not apply when a student has been assigned to a different/secluded location/space in the case of an in-school suspension. It is recognized that while a student is in an in-school suspension, the student will be placed in a setting that is supervised by a school staff member.

Time-out - is the removal of a child from an apparently reinforcing setting to a presumably non-reinforcing setting for a specified and limited period of time. Time-out involves removing a student from sources of positive reinforcement as a consequence of a specific undesired behaviour.

Time-out is only one option along a continuum of behaviour interventions supporting behaviour change. Time-out can be implemented on several different levels, ranging from quiet time in the regular classroom to a time-out room in the school.

Typically, time-out is used in tandem with positive interventions that can maximize student learning and assist in the acquisition of replacement behaviours.

Procedures

1. District staff will employ the following procedures regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion:
 - 1.1. Physical restraint and seclusion are used only in exceptional circumstances where a student is in immediate danger of causing harm to self or others.
 - 1.2. Where a student's behaviour could cause harm to self or others, restraint or seclusion may be required until such time as the immediate danger of serious harm to self or others has dissipated.

- 1.3. Physical restraint and seclusion procedures are used only as emergency, not treatment procedures. Neither physical restraint nor seclusion procedures are used as punishment, discipline or to force compliance.
- 1.4. It is expected that school personnel will implement positive behaviour supports and interventions, behaviour plans, emergency or safety plans, and other plans to prevent and de-escalate potentially unsafe situations.
- 1.5. Parents and, where appropriate, students will be offered opportunities to be consulted in the development of positive behaviour supports and interventions, behaviour plans, emergency or safety plans.
- 1.6. Training sessions in positive behaviour support planning, non-violent crisis intervention, conflict de-escalation techniques, and safety planning will continue to be offered to school personnel on a regular basis.
- 1.7. School personnel who work directly with a student in situations where there is a potential for immediate danger of serious physical harm to the student or others, and where they may be required to respond to an individual whose behaviour is presenting a danger to self or others, are expected to have been trained in crisis intervention and the safe use of physical restraint and seclusion.
- 1.8. Recurring practice of restraint or seclusion is not to be common practice in any student's educational program. Prevention/intervention strategies are to be reviewed and revised in situations where: repeated use of physical restraint and seclusion for an individual student occurs; multiple uses of physical restraint and seclusion occur within the same classroom; or, physical restraint and seclusion is repeatedly used by an individual.
- 1.9. Physical restraint or seclusion is never conducted in a manner that could, in any way, cause harm to a student, i.e., never restricts the breathing of a student; never places a student in a prone position (i.e., facing down on their stomach) or supine position (i.e., on their back, face up); never employs the use of mechanical devices.
- 1.10. Any space used for the purpose of seclusion will not jeopardize the secluded student's health and safety.
- 1.11. Any student placed in seclusion will be continuously visually observed by a school staff member who is physically present throughout the period of seclusion. This school staff member must be able to always communicate with the student in the student's primary language or mode of communication. All health and safety policies and/or procedures, including WorkSafeBC regulations, will be followed.
- 1.12. Each incident involving the use of physical restraint or seclusion will include the following actions subsequent to an incident:
 - 1.12.1. Notification to the Principal as soon as possible after an incident and always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred. Upon receipt of such notification, the Principal will complete the Report of Physical Restraint and/or Seclusion District form ([Form 354-1](#)).
 - 1.12.2. Notification, by the Principal, to the student's parent(s) as soon as possible/always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred.

- 1.12.3. Notification by the Principal to the Safe Schools Coordinator as soon as possible after an incident and always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred.
 - 1.12.4. The Safe Schools Coordinator will notify the Superintendent, and where appropriate, other District staff as soon as possible after an incident has occurred.
 - 1.12.5. A debriefing is to be scheduled involving school personnel, parents of the student, and wherever possible, with the student – to examine what happened/what caused the incident, and what could be changed, i.e. preventative and response actions that could be taken in the future, to make the use of physical restraint or seclusion unnecessary.
- 1.13. The District will review these procedures on a regular basis to ensure alignment with current research/practice and to ensure alignment with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education.

2. Planning and Management of Student Behaviour

- 2.1. There is a continuum on which student behaviour is planned for and managed. Many of these happen at the classroom and school office level. In cases where a student's behaviour has been negative over time, occurs in more than one setting and requires moderate or intensive behavioural support, the student's educational planning will involve the following:
 - 2.1.1. an Individual Education Plan (IEP) outlining the student's learning outcomes, required learning support services, and instructional and assessment methods, and
 - 2.1.2. a formal positive behaviour support plan describing positive behaviour intervention supports and conflict de-escalation procedures.
- 2.2. Additionally, where the student's behaviour could potentially cause harm to self or others, the student's educational planning will also include:
 - 2.2.1. a Staff Response Plan detailing safety (emergency) procedures regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion and confirming the opportunity for formal training of school personnel.

Reference: Sections 6, 7, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
Civil Rights Protection Act
Human Rights Code
Youth Criminal Justice Act
WorkSafe BC Regulation
ERASE Level 1, 2, 3 Pullouts
Provincial Guidelines – Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings
Safe, Caring, Orderly Schools
Special Education Services – A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Approved: February 14, 2017
Revised: August 15, 2021