

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

Background

Student access to an effective educational program is a basic right of each student in School District No. 57's K-12 education system. Positive and least restrictive approaches in the provision of student supports are considered best practice. Respect for student rights, maintaining student dignity and the safety of all involved is paramount. The overarching goal of learning environment design is the creative use of space to facilitate and support positive student learning experiences – rather than punitive, disciplinary ones.

The purpose of these provisions is to promote a response that protects both the individual and others' safety and well-being.

Definitions

“Behaviour” the actions by which an individual adjusts to their environment. It is commonly understood that behaviour is communication. It is the impact of the behaviour that dictates whether the behaviour is negative or positive.

“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. Neither is the provision of physical guidance or prompting of a student when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, or providing comfort.

“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'. Neither is it considered seclusion where a student has personally requested to be in a different/secluded location or space.

“Specialist Staff Member” is an employee who is highly skilled and/or qualified in a specific and restricted field, such as behaviour specialist.

“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.

Regulations

1. Staff who work directly with a student in situations where there is a potential for imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others must be familiar with the *Provincial Guidelines – Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings, B.C. Ministry of Education June 3, 2015*.

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2. Physical restraint or seclusion is used *only* in exceptional circumstances where the behaviour of a student poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending imminent danger of serious physical harm.
3. Schools will have access to individuals, preferably staff members, who are trained in positive behaviour intervention supports, conflict and crisis de-escalation, and non-violent crisis intervention techniques.
4. All staff working directly with a student where there is a potential for imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others will be provided the opportunity to participate in Crisis Prevention Intervention training regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion.
5. District staff shall provide opportunities for district and school staff to acquire the training necessary to conduct Functional Behavior Assessments, Analyses and Interviews; and write Individual Education Plans, Positive Behavior Support Plans and Safety Plans.
6. The District Principal of Student Support Services will review the physical restraint and seclusion policy annually to ensure alignment with current research/practice.

Procedures

1. Restraint and seclusion procedures are emergency, not treatment, procedures. Neither restraint nor seclusion are used as a punishment, discipline, or to force compliance.
 - 1.1. Physical restraint or seclusion can never be 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.
 - 1.2. Any student placed in seclusion must be continuously visually observed by an adult who is physically present throughout the period of seclusion.
2. School personnel will make every effort to structure learning environments and provide learning supports that make physical restraint and seclusion unnecessary.
3. Restraint or seclusion is discontinued once imminent danger or serious physical harm to others has dissipated.
4. To inform the development of safety plans, educational assessments, including functional behaviour assessments, are provided for all students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others.
5. Positive educational/behavior interventions and mental health supports will routinely be provided for all students who require them, and they will be provided in a safe and least-restrictive environment.

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6. The safety plan:
 - 6.1. Addresses the underlying cause or purpose of potentially harmful behavior.
 - 6.2. Incorporates a description of specific behaviours, triggers and indicators, positive behaviour interventions, and includes strategies that will help students learn to de-escalate their behaviour.
 - 6.3. Is developed in cooperation with the parent/guardian(s) and, where appropriate, the student.
 - 6.4. Is attached to the student's IEP, reviewed regularly, and, at least, annually.
7. Every instance where physical restraint or seclusion of a student occurs the case manager and classroom teacher(s) together with other members of the team (e.g., Ministry of Children and Family Development, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Pediatricians, District Behavior Specialists), parent/guardian(s) and student (as appropriate) will investigate the underlying causes of the behavioral incidents (e.g., Functional Behavior Assessment, analysis, interview); develop an appropriate plan of intervention (e.g., Individual Educational Plan, Positive Behavior Support Plan, Safety Plan); and monitor the plan of the intervention on an ongoing basis and revise as necessary.
8. Every instance where physical restraint or seclusion of a student occurs must be documented and a **Safety Physical Restraint / or Seclusion Incident Report** provided to the parent/guardian(s), and submitted to the Principal or designate and the District Principal of Student Support Services as soon as possible after an incident/always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred and to the Associate Superintendent as soon as possible.
9. Safety plans must be reviewed and revised in the following situations:
 - 9.1. Repeated use of physical restraint and/or seclusion for a particular student.
 - 9.2. Multiple uses of physical restraint and/or seclusion within the same classroom.
 - 9.3. Repeated use of physical restraint and/or seclusion by an individual.

Reference: Ministry of Education
Provincial Guidelines – Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings, B.C. Ministry of Education June 3, 2015