

Physical Restraint and Seclusion

- RATIONALE –

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

- POLICY -

The Board authorizes staff members to physically restrain or seclude students in limited situations and in accordance with procedures. Physical restraint and seclusion should be used as a last measure after alternate methods of defusing a situation have failed.

DEFINITIONS

1. Physical restraint — is a method of restricting another person's freedom of movement or mobility when the person is exhibiting "out of control" behavior, in order to secure and maintain the safety of the person or the safety of others.

The provision of physical escort i.e.: temporary touching or holding 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 does not constitute physical restraint.

2. Seclusion — is the involuntary confinement of a person, alone in a room, enclosure or space which the person is physically prevented from leaving, to prevent self-injury of that person, or injury to others.

Examples that do not constitute seclusion include students choosing to self regulate by working independently or a behavioral strategy, such as "time out" used for social reinforcement as part of a behavior plan.

The term "seclusion" does not apply where a student has personally requested to be in a different/secluded location/space or where school staff, preferably formally trained in

de-escalation techniques or restraint, are physically present with a student in an unlocked room.

WHEN TO RESTRAIN OR SECLUDE

Physical restraint or seclusion is used *only* in exceptional situations where the behavior of a student poses imminent danger of physical harm to self or others, including school personnel and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending imminent danger of physical harm. Restraint or seclusion is discontinued once imminent danger of physical self-harm or harm to others has dissipated. Restraint and seclusion procedures are for emergency situations and are not to be used as treatment procedures.

It is recognized that there may be occasions when physical restraint may be appropriate even though more moderate control measures have not been used (e.g. a student is in the process of causing harm to another person).

WHO SHOULD RESTRAIN OR SECLUDE?

School personnel who work *directly* with a student in situations where there is potential for imminent danger of physical harm to the student or others and where they may be required to respond to behavior incidents. The District will provide the opportunity for training in positive behavior support interventions and de-escalation as well as training in the correct use of physical restraint and seclusion.

RESTRAINING AND/OR SECLUSION PROCEDURES

The procedures involve the four basic steps of restraining, documenting/communicating, debriefing and planning.

1. Restraining

Physical contact should be conducted:

- With controlled, unemotional and reassuring statements that give reasons for the restraint and describe the necessary behavior for ending the restraint;
 - With the least amount of force to protect student and restrainer, and to achieve the required change in behavior;
 - With the least amount of disturbance to the rest of the class;
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- In the presence of another adult when possible.

Physical restraint or seclusion is never conducted in a manner that could, in any way, cause harm to a student.

- Never by restricting the breathing of the student;
- Never by placing the student in a prone position (i.e. facing down on his/her stomach);
- Never by placing the student in a supine position (i.e. on his/her back, face up); or
- By employing the use of mechanical devices.

Where the restrainer has less strength than the student, it may be necessary to obtain additional assistance in order to affect physical restraint.

For the purposes of seclusion, it is critical that:

- Any space used for the purpose of seclusion will not jeopardize the secluded student's safety;
- Any student placed in seclusion is continuously visually observed by an adult who is physically present throughout the period of seclusion; and
- School personnel able to communicate with the student in the student's primary language or mode of communication are available at all times.

2. Documenting / Communication

Documentation of every instance will include:

- Time and location of incident;
- Names of all people involved or witnessing the incident;
- Written statements that lead to and describe the incident and the resolution (direct quotes are advisable);
- Notification of restraining to the principal (as soon as possible);
- Notification to the Superintendent or designate (as soon as possible/always prior to the end of the day on which the incident has occurred)

Communication includes:

- The principal shall arrange for the parent/guardian to be notified of the incident prior to the student returning home or as soon as practical;

3. Debriefing

- If restraint or seclusion is required more than once, prevention/intervention strategies will be reviewed and revised in a meeting with personnel and parent/guardian;
- A debriefing with involved school personnel, parents/guardians of the student; and where 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);
- Regular review of the physical restraint and seclusion policy to ensure alignment with current research and practices.

4. Planning

- Students requiring physical restraint or seclusion will have planning in place to prevent behavior incidences and to help the student learn to de-escalate their behavior. This may include an Individual Education Plan (IEP), behavior plan and emergency/safety plan based on a current functional behavior assessment;
- Parents/Guardians and, where appropriate, students will be offered opportunities to be consulted in the development of the IEP, positive behavior supports and interventions, behavior plans, and emergency plans;
- Prevent/intervention strategies will be reviewed and revised in situations where seclusion or physical restraint is repeatedly needed;
- Additional community supports and resources will be engaged whenever appropriate or available.

Reference:

Stop Hurting Kids: Restraint and Seclusion in BC Schools – Survey Results and Recommendations, November 2013, Inclusion BC and Family Support Institute of BC

<http://www.inclusionbc.org/sites/default/files/StopHurtingKids-Report.pdf>

British Columbia Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines – Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/diverse-student-needs/physical-restraint-seclusion-guidelines.pdf>