

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION**

### **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 judicious parent. In order to meet these responsibilities, the District accepts that on occasions where the physical actions of a student threaten to cause harm to self, others, or based on uncontrolled violence cause damage to property, it may be necessary to physically restrain or seclude the student.

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

### **Definitions**

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.

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.

A behavioral strategy, such as “time out” used for social reinforcement as part of a behavior plan does not constitute seclusion.

The term “seclusion” does not apply where a student has personally requested to be in a different/secluded location/space or where school staff, formally trained in de-escalation techniques or restraint, are physically present with a student in an unlocked room.

### **Procedures**

#### **1. When to Restrain or Seclude**

- 1.1. 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.

- 1.2. 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).

## 2. Who is to Restrain or Seclude

- 2.1. 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 “out of control” behavior incidents.
- 2.2. Personnel will be offered opportunities for training in positive behavior interventions, supports and de-escalation techniques; and safe use of physical restraint and seclusion.

## 3. Restraining and/or Seclusion

The procedures involve the three basic steps of restraining, debriefing and documenting.

### 3.1. Physical contact is to be conducted:

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

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

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

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

### 3.4. For the purposes of seclusion, it is critical that:

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

### 3.5. Documentation and Follow up

#### 3.5.1. Documentation includes:

- 3.5.1.1. Time and location of incident;
- 3.5.1.2. Names of all people involved or witnessing the incident;
- 3.5.1.3. Written statements that lead to and describe the incident and the resolution
- 3.5.1.4. (direct quotes are advisable);
- 3.5.1.5. Notification of restraining to the Principal (as soon as possible);
- 3.5.1.6. Notification to the Director of Instruction, Student Services (as soon as possible/always prior to the end of the day on which the incident has occurred.)

#### 3.5.2. Follow up includes:

- 3.5.2.1. The Principal shall arrange for the parent to be notified of the incident as soon as practical;
- 3.5.2.2. If restraint or seclusion is required more than once, prevention/intervention strategies will be reviewed and revised in a meeting with personnel and parent;
- 3.5.2.3. If restraint occurs in a public space, persons in charge (e.g. curator of the aquarium, manager of the shopping mall) are to be informed of the situation whenever possible;
- 3.5.2.4. A debriefing with involved school personnel; parents 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);
- 3.5.2.5. Regular review of the physical restraint and seclusion procedures to ensure alignment with current research and practices.

Reference: Sections 6, 7, 20, 22, 26, 65, 85 School Act  
Youth Justice Act  
Youth Criminal Justice Act (Canada)

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