

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

TITLE: PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION OF STUDENTS

CATEGORY: HEALTH AND SAFETY

NUMBER: 3170

Circulating until JANUARY 21, 2026

I. Rationale:

- A. The Board recognizes that it has a responsibility to ensure that the public school provides a safe environment for all of its students and employees.
- B. The Board further believes that respect for student rights, maintaining student dignity and the safety of all involved is paramount.
- C. The Board of Education believes that behaviour interventions for all students emphasize prevention and positive behaviour supports, and every effort is made to employ preventative actions that preclude the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.
- D. It is expected that school personnel will create, implement and follow positive behaviour supports and interventions, behaviour plans, emergency or safety plans and other plans to prevent and de-escalate potentially unsafe situations.
- E. Parents and, where appropriate, students will be consulted in the development of positive behaviour supports and interventions, behaviour plans, emergency or safety plans.
- F. It is further recognized that, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to apply physical restraint or seclusion when a student presents imminent danger of serious physical harm to self, others and/or property.

II. Definition of terms, as provided in Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines (June 3, 2015)

- A. “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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.
- D. “Seclusion” is the involuntary confinement of a person, alone in a room, enclosure, or space, which the person is physically prevented from leaving.
- E. 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.

III. Principles of Restraint and Seclusion

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- A. Employees will not endanger their own safety in employing physical restraint.
 - B. All school staff members shall be encouraged and given opportunities to take Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training in positive behaviour interventions and supports, and de-escalation techniques. Staff working in specialized programs or with identified students will be expected to maintain CPI certification, as per the specific job description. Principals will ensure that existing and newly hired staff have had the appropriate training and/or recertification.
 - C. School personnel 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, 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 and restraint and seclusion (CPI).
 - D. The intervention or restraint technique shall be appropriate to the intellectual, physical and emotional development of the student(s). Restraint and seclusion are not meant to be used as a disciplinary measure or to force compliance in an educational setting.
 - E. Physical restraint must be viewed as a temporary measure. Restraint or seclusion is required when the threat is **immediate** and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending imminent danger or serious physical harm.
 - F. It is recognized that there may be emergency situations 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 or themselves).

IV. Procedures for Physical Restraint and Seclusion

- A. The procedures involve the three basic steps of restraint and/or seclusion, debriefing and documentation.
- B. Physical restraint should be conducted following the steps of the CPI training:
 - 1. Without the use of mechanical devices.
 - 2. After a verbal warning to the student: the restrainer shall normally explain what is going to be done before restraint occurs.
 - 3. With controlled, unemotional and reassuring statements that give reasons for the restraint and/or seclusion and describing the necessary behaviour for ending the restraint and/or seclusion.
 - 4. With the least amount of force to protect the student and restrainer.
 - 5. With the least amount of disturbance to the rest of the class.
 - 6. In the presence of another adult when possible.
 - 7. With the assistance of other adults as needed.

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8. Never in a manner that could, in any way, cause harm to the student, i.e. never restricts the breathing of the student, never places a student in a prone position (face down on their stomach) or supine position (face up, on their back), never uses floor restraints.
- C. It is critical that:
1. Any space used for the purpose of seclusion will not jeopardize the secluded student's health and safety.
 2. Any student placed in seclusion is to be continuously visually observed by an adult who is physically present throughout the period of seclusion. All health and safety policies and regulations including WorkSafe BC regulations shall be followed.
- D. School personnel be able to communicate with the student in the student's primary language or mode of communication be present at all times. Debriefing should occur as soon as possible with involved school personnel, parents or guardians of the student, and where possible, with the student so that all parties understand the situation and to examine:
1. What happened,
 2. What could have been changed, and
 3. Preventative and response actions to be taken in the future.
- E. Documentation, using "Physical Restraint and Seclusion Record" must be completed as soon as possible after an incident involving restraint and/or seclusion and:
1. Notification to the principal as soon as possible after the incident, and, in any event, prior to the end of that school day.
 2. Direct communication between the principal or designate and the parent(s) shall be initiated within the same day.
 3. Notification by the principal to the Director of Instruction for Inclusive Education as soon as possible after the incident/always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred.
 4. Notification by the Director of Instruction to the Superintendent or designate as soon as possible after the incident/always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred.
 5. If an incident results in violence against staff, a Threat / Violent Incident Form will also be completed and submitted.
 6. In cases where a student's behaviour could potentially cause harm to self or others, the student's educational planning includes development of:

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- a. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) outlining the student's learning outcomes, required learning support services, and instructional and assessment methods, that is reviewed regularly, and at least, annually.
 - b. A formal positive behaviour support plan describing positive behaviour intervention supports and conflict de-escalation procedures that are in place.
 - c. An emergency or safety plan detailing emergency and safety procedures regarding the use of physical restraint and /or seclusion, and confirming the formal training of personnel.
 - d. Educational assessments, including functional behaviour assessments, are provided for all students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others – to inform the development of behaviour intervention plans.
- F. A review/revision of prevention/intervention strategies must occur in cases where there is:
- 1. Repeated use of physical restraint and/or seclusion for an individual student.
 - 2. Multiple use of physical restraint and/or seclusion occurring within the same classroom.
 - 3. Repeated use of physical restraint and/or seclusion by an individual staff member.

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References: Provincial Guidelines – Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings (June 3, 2015): <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/diverse-student-needs/physical-restraint-seclusion-guidelines.pdf>