

Administrative Procedure 354

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

Background

The District believes in creating inclusive and nurturing environments for all students. The District is responsible for maintaining a safe, secure environment for students and staff. The District recognizes its responsibility under the [School Act](#) to deal with students in a manner which is similar to that of a kind, firm and judicious parent. In order to uphold these beliefs and meet these responsibilities, the District 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 the student. The District recognizes that seclusion of a student who is threatening to cause harm to self or others is not permitted unless approved by the Director of Learning Support Services.

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 and the student or others are in imminent physical danger.

Definitions

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 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.

- 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 non-violent crisis intervention, de-escalation techniques and restraint, are physically present with a student in an unlocked room, for the purpose of co-regulation.

Procedures

1. When To Restrain Or Seclude:

- 1.1. Physical restraint is used only in exceptional situations where the actions 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 is discontinued once imminent danger of physical self-harm or harm to others has dissipated. Restraint procedures are for emergency situations and are not to be used as treatment procedures.
- 1.2. It is recognized that there may be occasions when physical restraint may be appropriate even though less restrictive interventions have not been used (e.g. a student is in the process of causing harm to another person).
- 1.3. Seclusion of students is not permitted in District schools. Principals can seek an exemption to this ban on an individual student basis if the following conditions have been met:
 - 1.3.1. An external medical professional or behaviour consultant/analyst familiar with the child believes that it would be an effective and least harmful intervention to allow for educational programming to continue.
 - 1.3.2. The parent/guardian/caregiver has asked for this intervention to allow for educational programming to continue.
 - 1.3.3. The principal believes that it would be an effective and least harmful intervention to allow for educational programming to continue.
 - 1.3.4. The Director, Learning Support Services consents that it would be an effective and least harmful intervention to allow for educational programming to continue; and
 - 1.3.5. A room can only be used for seclusion if it is deemed safe by the Director, Learning Support Services and it is kept for the exclusive use of the student requiring it.

2. Who Should Restrain:

- 2.1. Only school personnel who are trained in non-violent crisis intervention; have received child specific restraint training; 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.
 - 2.1.1. 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 for specific students on an individual basis.
- 2.2. Any employee acting reasonably (whether trained or not) may need to use reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from an imminent assault or serious physical harm.

3. Restraining Procedures:

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

3.1. Restraining

- 3.1.1. Physical contact shall be conducted in accordance with child specific training provided by District staff.
 - 3.1.1.1. In a controlled and unemotional manner in accordance with the Safety Plan.
 - 3.1.1.2. With the least amount of force to protect student and restrainer, and to achieve the required change in behavior.
 - 3.1.1.3. With the least amount of disturbance to the rest of the class; and,
 - 3.1.1.4. In the presence of another adult when possible.
- 3.1.2. Physical restraint is never conducted in a manner that could, in any way, cause harm to a student.
 - 3.1.2.1. Never by restricting the breathing of the student.
 - 3.1.2.2. Never by placing the student in a prone position (i.e. facing down on his/her stomach).
 - 3.1.2.3. Never by placing the student in a supine position (i.e. on his/her back, face up); or
 - 3.1.2.4. By employing the use of mechanical devices.
- 3.1.3. Where the restrainer has less strength than the student, it may be necessary to obtain additional assistance in order to affect physical restraint. In such an instance, both staff members must be trained in a two-person hold specific to the student.

3.2. Documenting / Communication

- 3.2.1. Documentation of every instance will include:
 - 3.2.1.1. Time and location of incident.
 - 3.2.1.2. Names of all people involved or witnessing the incident.
 - 3.2.1.3. Written statements describe the incident and the resolution (direct quotes are advisable).
 - 3.2.1.4. Notification of restraint to the principal (as soon as possible) always prior to the end of the day; and,
 - 3.2.1.5. Notification to the Superintendent by the principal (as soon as possible/always prior to the end of the day on which the incident has occurred).
- 3.2.2. Communication includes:
 - 3.2.2.1. The principal arranging for the parent/guardian/caregiver to be notified of the incident as soon as possible/always prior to the end of the day.

3.3. Debriefing

- 3.3.1. If restraint is required more than once, prevention/intervention strategies will be reviewed and revised in a meeting with personnel and parent/guardian/caregiver when available.
- 3.3.2. A debriefing with involved school personnel, parents/guardians/caregivers of the student; and where possible, with the student; and where necessary District staff 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 unnecessary).
- 3.3.3. All instances of restraint will be reviewed by the Director of Learning Support Services on an, at minimum, monthly basis; and,
- 3.3.4. Regular review of the physical restraint and seclusion Administrative Procedure to ensure alignment with current research and practices.

3.4. Planning

- 3.4.1. Students requiring physical restraint 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 support plan and safety plan.
- 3.4.2. Parents/guardians/caregivers and, where appropriate, students will be offered opportunities to be consulted in the development of the IEP, behavior support plan and safety plans.
- 3.4.3. Prevention/intervention strategies will be reviewed and revised in situations where seclusion or physical restraint is repeatedly needed.
- 3.4.4. Additional community supports and resources will be engaged whenever appropriate or available; and,
- 3.4.5. Student and site-specific training shall be made available by the District.

4. Seclusion Procedures

- 4.1. If a seclusion exemption is granted by the Director of Learning Support Services, all procedures listed for restraint are to be followed in addition to the following:
 - 4.1.1. A room can only be used for seclusion if:
 - 4.1.1.1. It is deemed safe by the Director of Learning Support Services.
 - 4.1.1.2. It has a window; and,
 - 4.1.1.3. It is kept for the exclusive use of the student requiring it.
 - 4.1.2. An adult trained by District staff visually observes the student and is present for the entire time they are secluded.
 - 4.1.3. School personnel are able to communicate with the student in their primary language or mode of communication and are available at all times.

4.2. Debriefing

4.2.1. All instances of seclusion will be reviewed by the Director of Learning Support Services on a weekly basis.

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

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