

RATIONALE:

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment for students and employees. All students and employees are expected to contribute to and maintain this environment. Safety is compromised when a student's behaviour puts others in harm's way.

PROCESS:

Restraint or seclusion of students should be done in exceptional situations and in accordance with the following:

1. Definitions

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

The provision of physical escort, such as 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.

- 1.2 **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 behavioural strategy, such as "time out" used for social reinforcement as part of a behaviour 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, and are physically present with a student in an unlocked room.

2. When to Restrain or Seclude

Physical restraint or seclusion is used *only* in exceptional situations where the behaviour of a student poses an imminent danger of physical harm to self or others, including school personnel and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending the imminent danger of physical harm. Restraint or seclusion is discontinued once the 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).

3. Who Should Restrain?

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 behaviour incidents. The District will provide training in positive behaviour support interventions and de-escalation as well as training in the correct use of physical restraint and seclusion.

4. Restraining/Seclusion Procedures

The procedures involve the three basic steps of restraining/secluding, review/notification, and debriefing/planning.

An annual review of the physical restraint and seclusion procedures will be conducted to ensure alignment with current research and practices.

5. Restraining/Secluding

Physical restraint should be conducted:

- 5.1 only after a verbal warning is provided. The verbal warning will be controlled, and unemotional and include reassuring statements. The reason for the restraint shall be provided and the necessary behaviour for ending the restraint shall be explained;
- 5.2 with the least amount of physical force to protect the student and restrainer;
- 5.3 with the least amount of disturbance to others; and,
- 5.4 in the presence of another adult, when possible; and, with the assistance of other adults as needed.

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

- 5.5 Never by restricting the breathing of the student;
- 5.6 Never by placing the student in a prone position (i.e., facing down on their stomach)
- 5.7 Never by placing the student in a supine position (i.e., on their back, face up); and,
- 5.8 Never by employing the use of mechanical devices.

For the purposes of seclusion, it is critical that:

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

Follow-up must occur for the student who was restrained/secluded, the staff involved and any students who witnessed the incident. The purpose of the follow-up is to re-establish and maintain a safe learning environment.

6. Review/Notification

Documentation of every instance will include:

- 6.1 Time and location of the incident;
- 6.2 Names of all people involved or witnessing the incident; Description of the incident including what happened before, during and after the restraint/seclusion incident.
- 6.3 Time and date of notification to the principal (as soon as possible);
- 6.4 Review of the incident by the principal or vice principal; Time and date of notification to the parents/Caregivers by the principal/vice principal as soon as possible or prior to the student returning home; and,
- 6.5 Time and date of notification to the Superintendent or designate (as soon as possible/always prior to the end of the day on which the incident has occurred)

7. Debriefing/Planning

The principal will schedule a debriefing meeting as soon as possible after the incident with involved school personnel, parents/Caregivers of the student and, where possible, with the student. The purpose of the meeting will be 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).

Students requiring physical restraint or seclusion will have a safety plan in place to proactively prevent behaviour incidences and to support the student's learning to de-escalate their behaviour. Parents/Caregivers and, where appropriate, students will be offered opportunities to be consulted in the development of the safety and emergency plans.

Prevention/intervention strategies will be reviewed and revised in situations where seclusion or physical restraint is repeatedly needed. Additional community support and resources will be engaged whenever appropriate or available. Staff working with a student in conjunction with a restraint and seclusion plan will be trained in necessary restraint and seclusion procedures.

Link to form:

[APF 550-1 Restraint and Seclusion Incident Report Form](#)