

USE OF SECLUSION AND PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Background

Holy Spirit Catholic School Division is committed to providing each student entrusted to our care a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment rooted in our Catholic faith. Students are supported through comprehensive, proactive, universal and targeted positive behaviour supports as well as individualized supports designed to teach pro-social behaviours. Seclusion and physical restraints are emergency or safety procedures to be used as a last resort when a student's behaviour poses a significant, imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others.

Definitions

Seclusion refers to the temporary blocking of a student from exiting a room when the student's behaviour poses a significant imminent danger of serious physical harm to themselves or others. This is to be used only as a safety or crisis management procedure to manage a child/student's behaviour that has the potential to be dangerous.

This differs from a seclusion room which is a designated space that is locked, blocked or held shut restricting the person from freely exiting. Seclusion rooms are prohibited.

Physical restraint is any method of using physical contact for restricting or immobilizing a student's freedom of movement. It serves as a means of reconstituting behavioural control and establishing and maintaining safety for the student and other individuals. If physical restraint is deemed necessary due to the imminent danger of the student's actions, the least restrictive restraint possible will be employed.

Temporary physical contact (touching or holding of hand, arm, shoulder or back) to move a student away from danger or to escort a slightly agitated student to a safe location is not considered physical restraint.

Procedures

1. Physical restraint and/or seclusion shall only be employed as a last resort after less restrictive methods have been attempted.
2. Physical restraint and/or seclusion shall never be used when a known medical, physical, psychological or other condition would render their use dangerous for a student.

3. Seclusion shall not be used when a student is engaging in severe self-injurious behaviours.
4. Only staff with training in emergency safety interventions shall use physical restraint and/or seclusion.
5. If physical restraint and/or seclusion are used with a nonverbal student, staff who can communicate with the student must be present at all times.
6. Staff shall continually monitor a student throughout the period of physical restraint and/or seclusion.
7. Physical restraint and/or seclusion shall be discontinued when the student's behaviour no longer presents an immediate threat to self or others.
8. Physical restraint and/or seclusion shall not be used to stop a student who is engaged in destructive behaviour such as damaging property unless there is a risk to the safety of the student or others.
9. After each incident involving the use of physical restraint and/or seclusion:
 - 9.1. The principal shall be notified as soon as possible and on the same day on which the incident occurred; and
 - 9.2. The principal or designate shall notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible after the incident and on the same school day on which the incident occurred; and
 - 9.3. Staff involved in the incident shall complete a report; and
 - 9.4. The Director of Support Services shall be notified as soon as possible after the incident occurs; and
 - 9.5. A debriefing session with all involved staff shall occur as soon as possible after the incident; and
 - 9.6. An opportunity to debrief with parents/guardians and the student, where appropriate, shall be provided as soon as possible after the incident; and
 - 9.7. The learning team shall review and update the student's Behaviour Support Plan, if already created, to prevent or reduce the chance of reoccurrence.
10. All staff members who may, as part of their regular responsibilities, be required to use physical restraint and/or seclusion procedures, shall be properly trained in these procedures prior to the implementation of the plan.
11. The Director of Support Services shall designate at least two school authority staff that are responsible for training and oversight of the use of physical restraint and/or seclusion in schools.

11.1. The designated school authority staff shall acquire training in conflict de-escalation, crisis de-escalation, non-violent crisis intervention and implementing positive behaviour interventions to facilitate defusing conflict and crisis situations.

12. When it is determined that, based on a student's history of engaging in crisis-level behaviour, there is a reasonable probability that incidents requiring the use of physical restraint will reoccur, the following procedures must be followed:

12.1. The student's learning team in conjunction with the Behavior Support Specialist Teacher shall develop a Behaviour Support Plan, including proactive teaching strategies. A safety plan outlining reactive procedures may also be developed.

12.2. The safety plan shall outline when and how physical restraint and/or seclusion will be used in reaction to a student posing significant, imminent danger of serious physical harm to themselves or others.

12.3. The informed consent of the parent or guardian must be obtained in writing prior to implementation of the program. This consent may be terminated at any time upon submission of written notice by the parent. In the event that parental consent is refused, it may be necessary to involve them in determining alternate options that are equally protective of the child/student and staff safety.

12.4. Each plan will be reviewed on a regular basis. This review shall include evaluation of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the plan.

Legal References: Ministerial Order (#42/2019) Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools