



## ***RESTRAINT & SECLUSION POLICY***

### **Policy & Guidance**

- Regulation 25 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 provides that:  
‘A member of staff of a Government school may take any reasonable action that is immediately required to restrain a student of the school from acts or behaviour that is dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person.’  
Schools must report each instance of restraint or seclusion to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on [1800 126 126](tel:1800126126).
- Restraint and seclusion must be used only as a last resort in an emergency where there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others and should not form part of a behaviour management strategy or support plan for a student.
- Every instance of physical restraint or seclusion must be reported to enable data collection, monitoring and review of the effectiveness of existing strategies and the need for any additional resources.
- Prone restraint (holding a student face down) and supine restraint (holding a student face up) is not permitted within Victorian government schools. All restraint or seclusion incidents must trigger a review of the student's behaviour support plan.
- Every instance of physical restraint or seclusion can undermine the professional relationship between the student and school staff and the quality of the student's educational experience.
- Every instance of physical restraint or seclusion has the potential to place the student and staff member in a harmful situation, which can include injury and death.
- In every instance of physical restraint, breathing must be visually monitored.
- Every instance of seclusion must be visually monitored throughout the incident by a staff member to ensure that the seclusion is justified, time limited and that the student, and other students and staff are safe.
- Restraint or seclusion must not be used except in situations where:
  - the student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to self or others
  - where such action (i.e. to physically restrain or seclude) would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances
  - where there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.
- Restraint or seclusion should be discontinued as soon as the immediate danger has dissipated (refer to Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017, Regulation 25 — Restraint from Danger in [Restraint and seclusion: the law](#) for further information).

### **Purpose**

- To ensure the staff at Footscray North Primary school is informed about the Department's policy about student restraint including that it is only used when certain conditions are met and that appropriate standards and procedures are followed.

### **Definitions**

#### **Physical restraint**

In this policy, physical restraint means the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a student's body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained. Physical restraint should only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person. In some limited circumstances, it may also be necessary to restrain a student from imminent dangerous behaviours by secluding them in an area where such action is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.

**Seclusion** is the solitary confinement of a student in a room or area (e.g. a garden) from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person. When used by a staff member in immediate response to behaviours of concern, seclusion may also include situations where a student is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes they cannot leave that room or area even if they would physically be able to, i.e. it is not locked.

Examples of **Behaviours of Concern** that can cause physical harm or danger to self or others can include but are not limited to:

- self-injuring behaviour, such as hitting/kicking walls, head-banging
- aggression towards other students or staff, including;
- hitting
- biting
- kicking
- hair pulling
- throwing furniture or other objects at students or staff
- a verbal threat of harm which you reasonably believe a student will immediately enact
- running onto a road or near some other hazard

### **Implementation**

- The safety and wellbeing of children is our highest priority.
- The Principal will ensure:
  - school policy and practices are aligned with the guidance
  - staff have the opportunity to engage in professional development
  - staff are aware of the Department resources available to support schools to effectively manage behaviours of concern
- The school will update the Behaviour, Student and Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policies to ensure that restraint and seclusion is only used in accordance with the Regulation 15 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 as detailed above.
- The school explicitly will prohibit child restraint as described above, mechanical restraints and/or an exclusion room or area.
- Behaviour Support Plans will not include restraint or exclusion.
- Professional learning will be provided for all staff in relation to dealing with violent and dangerous child behaviour of concern.
- School staff may only use physical restraint on a student when there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others and where such action (i.e. to physically restrain or seclude) would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances and there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.
- If applying physical restraint in the limited circumstances set out above, staff must:
  - use the minimum force required to avoid the dangerous behaviour or risk of harm
  - only restrain the student for the minimum duration required and stop restraining the student once the danger has passed
- Staff must ensure the type of restraint used is consistent with a student's individual needs and circumstances, including:
  - the age/size of the student
  - gender of the student
  - any impairment of the student e.g. physical, intellectual, neurological, behavioural, sensory (visual or hearing), or communication
  - any mental or psychological conditions of the student, including any experience of trauma
  - any other medical conditions of the student
  - the likely response of the student
  - the environment in which the restraint is taking place.
- Staff must monitor the student for any indicators or distress. Staff should talk to the student throughout the incident, making it clear to the student why the physical restraint is being applied. Staff should also calmly explain that the physical restraint will stop once it is no longer necessary to protect the student and/or others.

- The staff member(s) involved in the incident must immediately notify the principal of the incident.
- A staff member should contact the student's parents and provide them with details of the incident as soon as possible.
- Following the use of restraint on a student, appropriate supports must be offered to the following people:
  - The student who has been restrained or secluded and their parents/carers. This may include participation in decisions involving the student's behaviour management, Student Support Group meetings, the development of a student Behaviour Support Plan, and involvement of Student Support Services.
  - Other students and staff members who were involved in or witnessed the incident. This may include a debriefing in relation to the incident, and counselling support.
- A written record of the incident and the physical restraint or seclusion used must be made by the Principal as soon as practicable. This record should be added to a student's file on CASES 21 and must be reported to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC). The record should detail:
  - the name of the student/s and staff member/s involved
  - date, time and location of the incident
  - names of witnesses (staff and other students)
  - what exactly happened (a brief factual account)
  - any action taken to de-escalate the situation
  - why physical intervention was used (if applicable)
  - the nature of any physical intervention used
  - how long the physical intervention lasted
  - names of witnesses (staff and other students)
  - the student's response and the outcome of the incident
  - any injuries or damage to property
  - immediate post incident actions, such as first aid or contact with emergency services
  - details of contact with the student's parent/carer
  - details of any post-incident support provided or organised
- The Principal should also arrange for all staff who were involved/present at the incident to prepare a statement / record of their involvement or observations of the incident.
- Post-incident, the school will consider the preventative and de-escalation strategies that might reduce the likelihood of an incident happening again. For example – reviewing and amending the student's Behaviour Support Plan, consider the training needs of staff working closely with the student/s involved in the incident.
- For further information about the guidance and resources, the school will refer to the website below.
- Please refer also to the school's *Duty of Care Policy*, the *Behaviour, Students Policy (DET Overview) Policy*, the *Reporting & Managing School Incidents (Including Emergencies) Policy*, *Medication, Health Care Needs Policy*, *Risk Management – Schools Policy* and the *Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy*.

### **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update mid-June 2020).

Mandatory for VRQA purposes  
School Council Approval No Longer Required

References:  
<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion>  
 and  
[Occupational violence risk assessment checklist](#)  
[Parent fact sheet – restraint and seclusion](#)  
[Parent fact sheet – behaviours of concern](#)  
[Applying the Restraint of Students School Policy \(Powerpoint\)](#)