



RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS POLICY

OBJECTIVE

To ensure staff understand the practical implications of the Restraint of Students Policy and feel able to act appropriately, in accordance with this policy.

DEFINITIONS

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. In such circumstances of being physically restrained, students are not free to move away. 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 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.

Cheder staff may take any reasonable action that is immediately required to restrain a student of the school from behaviour that is dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person.

When physical restraint or seclusion should not be used

Physical restraint and seclusion should not be used unless immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person (see below).

Rooms or areas designed specifically for the purpose of seclusion or which are used solely or primarily for the purpose of seclusion are not permitted.

Restraint and seclusion must not be advocated in a Behaviour Support Plan or be used as a routine behaviour management technique, to punish or discipline a student, or to respond to:

- a student's refusal to comply with a direction, unless that refusal to comply creates an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
- a student leaving the classroom/school without permission, unless that conduct causes an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
- verbal threats of harm from a student, except where there is a reasonable belief that the threat will be immediately enacted
- property destruction caused by the student unless that destruction is placing any person at immediate risk of harm.

Any restraint which covers the student's mouth or nose, in any way restricts breathing, takes the student to the ground into the prone or supine position, involves the hyperextension of joints, or application of pressure to the neck, chest or joints, must not be used.

When physical restraint or seclusion may be used

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 (ie 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.

As with physical restraint, seclusion should only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person, as permitted by Regulation 25.

The decision about whether to use physical restraint or seclusion rests with the professional judgment of the staff member/s involved, who will need to take into account both their duty of care to their students, their right to protect themselves from harm and obligations under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Mechanical restraint

Mechanical restraints (any restrictive device (e.g., seatbelt, straitjacket or vest) used to restrict a person's free movement) should never be used in schools to restrict a student's freedom of movement, unless the restraint is for a therapeutic purpose with written evidence of the prescription / recommendation, or if required to travel safely in a vehicle.

During Restraint

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 should ensure the mode of restraint poses the minimum possible intervention in consideration of circumstances, including:

- the age/size of the student;
- gender and size of the student relative to that of the staff member seeking to restrain;
- 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 (including because of others present); and
- the environment in which the restraint is taking place.

Staff should monitor the student for any indicators of distress. Staff should talk clearly and calmly 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 and what the student can do to have the restraint cease.

Actions after restraint has been used

The staff member/s involved in the incident must immediately notify the principal of the incident.

The principal must fill out an incident form (or review and approve an incident form completed by the staff member) and contact the parents as soon as practicable.

Providing supports for those involved

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 the student's parents/guardians. This may include the collaborative involvement of parents in: development of a student Behaviour Support Plan, participation in Student Support Group meetings, and liaison with 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 or behaviour management of others if their behaviours were provocative prior to the incident.

Maintaining a record of the incident

An incident form must be completed and followed up by the Principal. The record of the incident will be filed in the Student's Personal File.

For detailed guidance including information about legal obligations, resources for training, and fact sheets for parents refer to the *Principles for the Reduction and Elimination of Restraint and Seclusion in Victorian Government Schools* on the Department's [Restraint and Seclusion](#) webpage.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/restraint.aspx>

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This procedure is to be reviewed annually.

The review by management may involve input from staff and other interested parties.

Last reviewed: <August 2021>

Date for next review: <August 2022>