

SECLUSION AND PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Background

The Division believes all students have the right to receive educational programming and supports in a safe and least restrictive environment. The student population includes students whose behaviour presents a concern for the health and safety of the students themselves, other students in the school, and/or staff.

Early intervention is the first strategy to be used to prevent misbehaviour and promote academic and behavioural student success. All behavioural interventions assume a regard for well-being and dignity of students and staff. Educators, parents/guardians and other members of the school community will work together to promote positive behaviour, teach and reinforce appropriate social skills, and encourage the development of respect and responsibility in students.

If seclusion or physical restraint are used, strategies must be systematically planned, delivered, supervised and evaluated to determine their effectiveness with individual students and should only be used when less restrictive interventions have not been successful.

Definitions

Seclusion: the involuntary confinement or isolation of a person, alone in a room or area from which the person cannot freely exit or is physically prevented from leaving. This generally occurs in a room with a door that has a lock. The lock may be engaged, or if not engaged, the door is otherwise blocked or held shut.

Physical Restraint: any method of using physical contact for restricting or immobilizing another person's freedom of movement, physical activity, or normal access to their body. It is a personal restriction that serves as a means of controlling an individual's movement, reconstituting behavioural control, and establishing and maintaining safety for the individual and other individuals.

Seclusion and/or physical restraint are recognized as emergency, safety or crisis management procedures in educational settings and not as behaviour management procedures. They may only be used as a last resort when a student's behaviour poses significant imminent danger of serious physical harm to themselves or others.

Guidelines

- A. Students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others should receive appropriate specialized assessment, including functional behaviour assessments followed by behavioural intervention plans that incorporate appropriate positive behavioural interventions.
- B. Seclusion or physical restraint procedures should be used in school settings only when the physical safety of the student and/or others is in imminent danger.
- C. Seclusion or physical restraint is viewed as a "last resort" intervention while maintaining student dignity as much as possible. "Last resort" means that all other available interventions have been implemented with fidelity and these interventions have failed to prevent or de-escalate a situation and there is significant concern for the personal safety of the student and/or others.

- D. Seclusion and physical restraint should be used for the purpose of redirection of misbehaviour that has resulted in repeated and directed aggression or hostility that compromises safety and not as punishment or as a substitute for appropriate educational support.

Procedures

1. If seclusion and/or physical restraint are used, it is expected that:
 - 1.1 Seclusion environments are safe, humane and abide by all building, safety and fire codes.
 - 1.2 Procedures are conducted in a manner that reduces harm to a student and others.
 - 1.3 There is continual visual and aural monitoring of any student throughout the period of seclusion or physical restraint.
 - 1.4 Seclusion is not used when a student is engaging in severe self-injurious behaviours.
 - 1.5 School staff who are able to communicate with a student who is unable to adequately express themselves through speech alone are present at all times.
2. When the use of seclusion and/or physical restraint is being considered for a student as a pre-planned safety, emergency or crisis measure, it is expected that parents/guardians are involved in the development of these plans and provide their informed consent. Where appropriate, students should also be involved.
3. The School Administrator(s) will be notified as soon as seclusion or physical restraint is used.
4. Parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible if physical restraint or seclusion has been utilized for the student.
5. As soon as possible after each instance where seclusion and/or physical restraint is used, detailed information regarding the use is to be documented and regularly reviewed for frequency of use and appropriate educational planning for the student.
6. Each use of seclusion and/or physical restraint is to be reported to the Assistant Superintendent-Learning for purposes of reviewing frequency of use, planning, oversight and identifying issues and/or practices that require further attention (Form 365-1).
7. All staff and administration involved in programming for a student, in which the potential to use physical restraint is present, must be trained in appropriate procedures.
8. Should a student present with behaviours that compromise the safety of others, and the student has never presented such behaviours before, the use of physical restraint and/or seclusion for safety reasons may occur at the discretion of a school based administrator(s). This incident must be documented and reported to parents/guardians.

Follow-up

9. After each incident where there is use of seclusion and/or physical restraint:
 - 9.1 A debriefing session with all involved staff occur within three days of the incident. The purpose is to help determine the cause of the behaviour and what preventative actions could be implemented in the future to avoid the use of seclusion or physical restraint. When possible, appropriate expertise should be involved in the debriefing session
 - 9.2 An opportunity to de-brief with parents/guardians and the student, where appropriate, is provided as soon as possible after the incident.
 - 9.3 A review of the individual behaviour plan, where one has been previously created, occurs and the plan is updated to prevent and reduce recurrence.

Reference: Ministerial Order 3038/2019
Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools, August 2019

Forms: Seclusion/Physical Restraint Monthly Report 365-1