

Seclusion Rooms and Physical Restraint

Background

Seclusion and physical restraint are two separate responses that share similar requirements for use. These requirements apply to unanticipated events where a student's behavior poses a danger and imminent harm to self or others or when, with parental/guardian consent, these procedures are being considered as pre-planned safety, emergency or crisis measures.

Definitions:

Seclusion: Seclusion is 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: Physical restraint is defined as 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 behavioral control, and establishing and maintaining safety for the individual and other individuals.

Procedures

1. Appropriate educational supports and behavioral interventions should be provided to students who need them in a safe and least restrictive environment.
2. Seclusion or physical restraint procedures will only be used in school settings when the physical safety of the student and/or others is in imminent danger.
3. The restraint or seclusion will be discontinued when the student no longer presents an immediate threat to self or others.
4. Administration will contact the Director of Student Services to ensure compliance with the standards for seclusion rooms and physical restraint.
5. Seclusion and/or physical restraint should:
 - 5.1 Be conducted in a manner that reduces harm to a student and others;
 - 5.2 Have visual and aural monitoring throughout the seclusion or physical restraint
 - 5.3 Not be used when a child/student is engaging in severe self-injurious behaviours

6. For a child/student who is unable to adequately express themselves through speech alone, school staff who are able to communicate with the child/student are present at all times if seclusion is used with such a child/student.
7. Seclusion and/or physical restraint are **not** used:
 - 7.1 as punishment, discipline or to force compliance;
 - 7.2 to stop a child/student who is engaged in destructive behaviour such as damaging property, unless there is a risk to the safety of the child/student or others;
 - 7.3 as substitutes for appropriate educational support; and
 - 7.4 when a known medical, physical, psychological or other condition would make the use of seclusion or physical restraint dangerous for a child/student.
8. School staff are expected to have knowledge of provincial and local legislation on the use of emergency procedures (e.g., *Occupational Health and Safety Act, Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Occupational Health and Safety Code, Alberta Fire Code, etc.*).

If seclusion and/or physical restraint are to be used within a school, it is required that trained and appropriately certified professionals (e.g., qualified professionals trained in function-based approaches to managing problem behaviour) are consulted on the use of seclusion or physical restraint as a general safety procedure or an emergency measure prior to their use.

9. Principals will designate at least two staff members to be trained in positive and proactive strategies to reduce the need for crisis response strategies.
(i.e The Third Path, SIVA etc.)
10. Seclusion and physical restraint are to be implemented only by staff who have adequate knowledge and training in the use of these procedures.
11. Staff who work directly with a student where there is a potential for imminent danger of serious harm are required to have practical training in prevention and de-escalation strategies.
12. A behaviour plan will be developed for a student with complex behavioral needs.
13. Parents/guardians will be involved in the development of these plans and provide their informed consent.
14. Parents/guardians are to be informed as soon as possible after each incident involving the use of physical restraint or seclusion with their child. Reasonable efforts to reach the parent/guardian are required to be made and documented before the end of the school day.
15. If a student has a history of crisis-level behavior or they have the potential to pose a danger to self or others the following steps must be followed.
 - Conduct a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) with a trained professional
 - Develop a specific positive, preventative and proactive support plan as part of the IPP with safety or emergency measures as part of the safety or crisis management plan

- Train staff who may be involved with the use of seclusion or physical restraint
 - Consult with professional experts
 - Seek written informed consent for the plan from parents/guardians on the emergency or safety measures to be implemented
16. Documentation of the use of seclusion or physical restraint will be completed and sent to the Director of Student Services after each incident.
17. After each incident where there is use of seclusion and/or physical restraint:
- Staff will notify Principal or designate on the same school day on which the incident occurred;
 - Principal will notify the child's/student's parents/guardians on the same school day during which the incident occurred; and
 - Director of Student Services is to be notified as soon as possible after the incident occurs.
18. After each incident where there is use of seclusion and/or physical restraint, it is required that:
- A debriefing session will occur and be documented within three days of the incident.
 - A de-brief with parents/guardians and the child/student, where appropriate, is provided as soon as possible after the incident;
 - A review of the individual behaviour plan will be updated to prevent and reduce recurrence.
19. Principals will make parents aware of processes for resolving differences, filing complaints or making appeals.

Reference:

Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools: An Intensive Individualized approach (Alberta Education 2008)
Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools (November 2019)
Education Act: 31-33, 197