



Restraint of Student Policy

Purpose of this policy

To ensure schools are 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. Detailed guidance is available for school staff in the [Guidance for Responding to Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern](#).

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. 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 violent or 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 involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held closed by staff. It does not include timeout, which is a behaviour management technique that is part of a Behaviour Support Plan, involves the monitored separation of the student in a non-locked setting, and is implemented for the purpose of calming.

Further detail and guidance for staff is provided in the [Guidance for Responding to Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern](#)

Policy

Regulation 15 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 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 dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person."

When physical restraint or seclusion may be used

Physical restraint has been associated with injury and increased trauma to the student and the staff member responsible for the physical restraint. School staff may only use physical restraint on a student when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person noting that:

- for physical restraint to be immediately required there should be no less restrictive action that could be taken to avert the danger in the circumstances
- staff should use the minimum force needed to protect against the danger of harm
- staff should apply the physical restraint for the minimum duration required and remove it once the danger has passed.

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 15.

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* (the Charter). In taking into account the Charter, staff should consider the [Guidance for Responding to Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern](#).

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 above).

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 in Victorian government schools.

Restraint and seclusion must not be included 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.

Mechanical restraint

Mechanical restraints 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.

How to Restrain

If applying physical restraint in the limited circumstances set out above, staff must:

- use the minimum force required to avoid the dangerous behavior 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 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 should 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 Department has issued detailed guidance for schools and staff to assist with responding to violent and dangerous student behaviours. This guidance includes information about legal obligations, resources for training, and fact sheets for parents, see [Guidance for Responding to Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern](#).

Actions after restraint has been used

This table explains the follow up actions that must be undertaken after a student has been physically restrained or secluded.

Action	Description
Reporting of the physical restraint/ seclusion	<p>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.</p> <p>The incident may need to be reported to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the Security Services Unit (previously known as the Emergency Management Unit), see: Reporting (emergency and incidents)▪ Edusafe see: Report an Injury, Incident or Hazard▪ WorkSafe, see: WorkSafe Notification.

Action	Description
Providing supports for those involved	<p>Following the use of restraint on a student, appropriate supports must be offered to following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student who has been restrained or secluded and their parents/guardians. 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. For policy advice on the prevention of endangering behaviour and promoting positive behaviours see: Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance. For detailed guidance on Responding to Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern 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.
Maintain records of the incident	<p>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 or SOCS as appropriate. The record should detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>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.</p>
Plan for the future	<p>Post-incident, the school should 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.</p>

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle

This policy was ratified by School Council in: DRAFT August 2016

Related policies

- [Accident Recording and Reporting](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Personal Liability of School Employees](#)
- [Reporting \(emergency and incidents\)](#)
- [Risk Management](#)
- [Safety Management](#)