

# KEY POINTS ABOUT RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION



Restraint and seclusion must only be used 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.

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 (BSP).

Every instance of 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 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 restraint, breathing must be visually monitored.

Every instance of 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.

Every instance of seclusion must be visually monitored throughout 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 and seclusion are not permitted within Victorian government schools, except:

- in situations where the student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to self or others; and
- where such action (i.e. to physically restrain or seclude) would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances; and
- 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.



# A framework for the reduction and elimination of restraint and seclusion in Victorian government schools

01

Department policy (*School Policy and Advisory Guide – Restraint of Student*) restricting the use of restraint or seclusion applies to all students in Victorian government schools.

02

Physical 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; and 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 (see Regulation 15 in *Legal Obligations* for further information).

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Every effort should be made to prevent the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.

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Schools should never use mechanical restraints or a drug/medication that restricts a student's freedom of movement or to control behaviour.

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Any behavioural intervention must be consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and also the student's rights to be treated with dignity and to be free from abuse.



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Physical restraint or seclusion must never be used as punishment or discipline (e.g. placing in seclusion for non-compliant behaviour); as a means of coercion or retaliation; or as a convenience.



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Physical restraint or seclusion should never be used in a manner that restricts a student's breathing or harms the student.

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Any use of physical restraint or seclusion must trigger a review and, if appropriate, a revision of behavioural strategies currently in place to address behaviour that causes harm to self or others. If positive behavioural strategies are not in place, staff should develop them.

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If students demonstrate behaviour that causes physical harm to self or others necessitating the use of physical restraint or seclusion, strategies to address this behaviour should address the underlying cause or purpose of the behaviour.

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Teachers, and relevant school staff should be trained regularly on the appropriate use of effective alternatives to physical restraint or seclusion, such as positive behaviour supports (PBS).

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In every instance in which physical restraint or seclusion is used, the student must be carefully and continuously monitored to ensure that the physical restraint or seclusion is being used appropriately, and that the student, other students and staff are safe.



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Parents/carers should be informed of the Department's policy (*School Policy and Advisory Guide – Restraint of Student*) on restraint and seclusion.



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Parents/carers should be notified as soon as possible following each instance in which physical restraint or seclusion is used with their child/student.



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The Department will regularly review and update, as appropriate, policy regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion.

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Each incident involving the use of physical restraint or seclusion must be documented in writing and specific data collected to add to staff understanding of the application of the *Principles* and to inform the review of the policy.