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## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 485 USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION OF STUDENTS

The District is responsible for maintaining a safe, secure environment for students and staff. It is expected that school personnel implement preventative, pro-active and positive supports and interventions that are non-punitive and grounded in the foundational understanding that behaviour is communication. These supports and interventions make the use of seclusion and physical restraint unnecessary in most circumstances.

As per British Columbia Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines on [Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings](#), this procedure outlines the limited situations where staff members are authorized to physically restrain or seclude students as an emergency measure of last resort, when alternate methods of defusing a situation have failed and the student is in imminent danger of causing harm to self or others.

### Definitions

- Physical Restraint – a method of restricting another person’s freedom of movement or mobility in order to secure and maintain the imminent safety of the person or the imminent safety of others. The term physical restraint does not apply in the following situations:
  - The provision of gentle physical guidance or prompting of a student when teaching a skill, redirecting attention or providing comfort.
  - A temporary, gentle touch on a student’s arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of guiding a student to a safe location.
- Seclusion – the involuntary confinement of a person, alone in a room, enclosure or space that the person is physically prevented from leaving. The term seclusion does not apply in the following situations:
  - When a student has personally requested to be in a different/secluded location/space.
  - When a student is outside of the regular classroom for a calm or quiet break if these breaks are behaviour strategies that are proactive and are part of the student’s daily routine.

### Plans for Student and Staff Safety

In cases where an individual student could potentially cause harm to self or others, an Escalation Indicator Response Plan (EIRP) and Individual Safe Work Instruction (ISWI) should be collaboratively developed with the principal, teacher(s), support staff, parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) and, when appropriate, District Staff, outside professionals and/or the student. Consider information from assessment reports if available.

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These plans should include:

- The student's triggers, patterns of escalation and appropriate adult responses.
- Direct instructions to staff for how to work safely with the student when they are escalated.

To support student learning:

- A Positive Behaviour Support Plan or Behaviour Intervention Plan is created to describe the competencies the student needs to develop in order to communicate their needs safely, and the strategies that will be used to teach these competencies. These strategies may be listed in a student's Competency Based Individualized Education Plan (CBIEP).

It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that any staff likely to be in contact with the student such as teachers, education assistants, bus drivers, clerical, custodians and all replacement staff read the EIRP and ISWI and understand the importance of adhering to this plan for their own and others' safety.

It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that staff who require training to support the student have access to training at the next available opportunity.

A review/revision of prevention/intervention strategies/plans must occur in cases where there is:

- Re-occurring incidents of escalation causing harm.
- Repeated use of physical restraint or seclusion for an individual student.
- Multiple use of physical restraint or seclusion occurring within the same classroom.
- Repeated use of physical restraint or seclusion by an individual staff member.

## **Guidelines For Physical Restraint**

1. The District recommends a "hands off" approach as the best practice when dealing with students who are experiencing dysregulation. It is expected that school personnel implement preventative, pro-active and positive supports and interventions that are non-punitive and grounded in the foundational understanding that behaviour is communication. Physical restraint must be used only in exceptional circumstances where a student is in imminent danger of causing serious harm to self or others.
2. Physical restraint will only be employed until the imminent danger or serious harm to self or others has dissipated.
3. Any time physical restraint is necessary a [Seclusion and Restraint Data Reporting Form](#) must be filed out on the day that it occurs with the District Principal of Student Services. The parents/guardians/caregivers must also be informed about the use of restraint as soon as possible and prior to the student leaving school.
4. Physical restraint must be conducted in a safe manner by staff who are trained in the proper methods of physical restraint. This training will ensure:

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Related Legislation: Provincial Guidelines – Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings, British Columbia, Ministry of Education, June 3, 2015

Adopted: January 27, 1998

Amended: March 5, 2007; November 27, 2018; February 20, 2019; November 3, 2023; November 7, 2023

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- 4.1 Student's breathing is not restricted.
- 4.2 Student is not in a prone position (facing down on their stomach).
- 4.3 Student is not in a supine position (on their back, face up).
- 4.4 Mechanical restraint devices are never used.
5. Training sessions in positive behaviour support planning, trauma informed responses, non-violent crisis intervention, conflict de-escalation techniques and planning for student and staff safety are offered to school personnel on a regular basis.
6. The need for staff to be trained in the use of physical restraint for a student will be determined during the EIRP Plan development. This plan is developed in consultation with trained district staff, school administration, school staff and the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) and when appropriate outside professionals.

## Guidelines for Seclusion

1. It is expected that school personnel implement preventative, pro-active and positive supports and interventions that are non-punitive and grounded in the foundational understanding that behaviour is communication. Seclusion must be used only in exceptional circumstances where a student is in imminent danger of causing serious harm to self or others.
2. The space used for seclusion must not jeopardize the student's health and safety – emotionally or physically. Seclusion should only be employed in exceptional circumstances where a student is in imminent danger of causing serious harm to self or others.
3. Seclusion will only be employed until the imminent danger of serious harm to self or others has dissipated.
4. Any time seclusion is necessary a [Seclusion and Restraint Data Form](#) must be filed with the District Principal of Student Services. Parents/Guardians/Caregivers must be informed about the use of seclusion as soon as possible and prior to the student leaving school.
5. A student must never be unsupervised and locked into a room.
6. Any room that is to be used for seclusion must have an observation window and the student must be under continuous visual observation. The student's behaviour must be noted at regular intervals by the observing adult to gather information that may be helpful for their plan, and/or to note when the student has returned to a state of regulation and is ready to re-connect with their team.
7. The space used for seclusion will be shared with the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s).
8. The IERP/ISWI and all other health and safety policies will be followed including WorkSafe BC Regulations.

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## **Debrief and Response to Incidents of Physical Restraint and Seclusion**

- If restraint or seclusion is required more than once, prevention/intervention strategies will be reviewed in a meeting with school personnel. If revisions are required, the EIRP/ISWI will be amended and signed by members of the team.
- All instances of restraint or seclusion will be reviewed by the District Principal of Student Services on a monthly basis.

## **Application and Review of Procedure**

The school district administration will ensure that employees are made aware of this administrative procedure and provide any necessary training or resources to uphold these expectations.

Employees should report any concerns or violations of this administrative procedure to their immediate supervisor or the appropriate designated authority within the school district.

Regular review of the Administrative Procedure will occur to ensure alignment with current research and practices.