

Administrative Procedure 6020

Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students

This Administrative Procedure for the physical restraint and seclusion of students is aligned with the BC Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines for Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings. June 2015.

The Comox Valley Board of Education believes that access to an effective educational program is a basic right of each student. The board further considers positive educational/behavioural interventions, mental health supports and least restrictive approaches to the provision of student supports to be best practice. Respect for human rights, maintaining student dignity and the safety of all involved is paramount. The board believes that schools should be safe and caring places in which educational programs are carried out in positive and supportive learning environments. Every effort should be made to structure learning environments and to provide learning supports that make physical restraint and seclusion unnecessary. The overarching goal of learning environment design is the creative use of space to facilitate and support positive student learning experiences, rather than punitive disciplinary ones. The board acknowledges that employees use a variety of educative, preventative and restorative interventions to respond to a range of disruptive student behaviours that compromise student safety. In exceptional circumstances when student behaviour presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including school personnel and where less restrictive interventions have proven to be ineffective in ending the danger or serious physical harm it may be necessary, as a last resort, for staff to use reasonable physical restraint or seclusion.

The decision to use reasonable physical restraint is guided by the professional judgement of staff. Staff will have the full support of the board in their efforts to maintain a safe learning environment to the extent that their actions comply with relevant legislation and district policy and procedures governing the physical restraint and seclusion of students.

The Comox Valley School Board does not support any form of physical restraint or seclusion as an on-going intervention. Any intervention that involves physical restraint or seclusion may be used only in cases of extreme emergency where the physical actions of the student threaten to cause harm to self or others.

Guiding Principals

1. Behavioural interventions for students must promote the rights of all students to be treated with dignity, honour and each student's right to feel safe.

2. Behavioural interventions for all students emphasize prevention and positive behaviour supports. Every effort must be made to employ preventative actions that preclude the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.
3. Positive emotional and behavioural interventions and mental health supports are provided for all students who need them in a safe and least restrictive environment.
4. Effective implementation of school-wide programs that support positive behaviour, such as Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS), are linked to greater academic achievement among students, and to significantly fewer disciplinary problems, increased constructive instructional time, and to increased perception of safer teaching and learning environments (pg. 2 Provincial Guidelines - *Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings*).
5. There is a continuum of interventions in the management of disruptive behaviour. Behavioural interventions address the underlying cause and purpose of potentially harmful behaviour.
6. For students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others, a functional behaviour assessment is recommended to inform the development of a behavioural intervention plan. These plans incorporate positive interventions, and include instruction in appropriate behaviour and strategies that will help students to learn to regulate and de-escalate their behaviour. Opportunities for parents/guardians and where appropriate, students to be consulted in the development of these plans must be offered.
7. Physical restraint or seclusion is only used in exceptional circumstances where the behaviour of a student poses imminent danger or serious physical harm to self or others and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending imminent danger or serious physical harm. Physical restraint or seclusion is discontinued once imminent danger or serious physical harm to self and/or others has dissipated.
8. It is expected that all staff working in situations that involves physical restraint or seclusion is trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (CPI).
9. Students exhibiting behaviour that is compromising safety of self and or others should be supported by appropriate documentation support (i.e. IEP and/or Behaviour Plan and/or Safety Plan and/or specialist consultation).
10. Parents/guardians of students who require physical restraint or seclusion will be informed as **soon as possible** when these interventions are used.
11. Recurring practice of physical restraint or seclusion is not common practice in any student's educational program. If a student struggles to show safe behaviour and interrupts the learning of others consistently, educational programming may need to be reviewed with parents, outside agency and team. This review may include and is not exclusive to: an abbreviated school day, an alternate setting, alternate programming, home schooling, Distributed Learning until the student's behaviours have stabilized.

Administrative Procedures

1. At the beginning of each school year, principals will review this policy with all staff and others working with students as appropriate. Principals are advised to ensure that staff are aware of the Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines for Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings along with the following definitions of physical restraint and seclusion:
 - *Physical Restraint*: is a method of restricting another person's freedom of movement or mobility in order to secure and maintain the safety of the person or the safety of others.
 - The provision of a "physical escort", i.e. temporary touching or holding of a student's hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of accompanying and inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location, does not constitute physical restraint.
 - The provision of physical guidance or prompting of a student when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, or providing comfort does not constitute physical restraint.
 - *Seclusion*: is the involuntary confinement of a person, alone in a room, enclosure, or space which the person is physically prevented from leaving.
 - Behaviour strategies such as time out, used for social reinforcement as part of a behaviour plan, are not considered seclusion.
 - The term seclusion does not apply where a student has personally requested to be in a different/secluded location/space.
2. It shall be made clear to all staff and others working with students that physical restraint and seclusion procedures are for extreme emergency situations only, are not to be used as a regular means of intervention and are to be used as a last resort.
3. The school district will provide appropriate training opportunities for staff in order to maintain supportive, safe environments for staff and students.
4. The school district will provide opportunities for district and school staff to acquire the training necessary to conduct Functional Behaviour Assessments, analyses, interviews and to write Individual Behaviour Plans, Positive Behaviour Support Plans and Employee Risk Reduction Plans.
5. The case manager and classroom teacher will develop in consultation with district staff, and interagency team Behaviour Support Plans for students whose behaviour could potentially pose imminent danger of harm to self or others.
6. Behaviour Support Plans and/or Risk Reduction Plans shall be attached to the Students IEP and shall be reviewed regularly.
7. Parents/guardians, and where appropriate, students are to be consulted as part of the development process for behavioural intervention and/or risk reduction plans.

8. If physical restraint or seclusion have been used in an extreme emergency situation, as a last resort, to prevent harm to self or others, the school must provide notification, written documentation, and follow up that confirms that:

- the school principal was notified as soon as possible after the incident; (if possible prior to the end of the school day on which the incident occurred);
- the students parents were notified as soon as possible; and,
- the superintendent or designate was notified as soon as possible.

Debriefing occurred with:

- involved school personnel;
- parents/guardians of the student;
- the student by a school counsellor or case manager;
- the debriefing, examining what happened, what caused the incident and what can be changed i.e. preventative and response actions that can be taken in the future to make the use of physical restraint or seclusion unnecessary.

9. A School District Threat/Violence Report Form must be completed and forwarded to the District Health and Safety Officer.