

5012: PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS (A/P)

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BACKGROUND

Student access to an effective educational program is a basic right of each student in British Columbia's K-12 education system. Positive and least restrictive approaches in the provision of student supports are considered best practice. Respect for student rights, maintaining student dignity and the safety of all involved is paramount.

Learning environment design has been shown to have a direct impact on teacher-student and student-teacher and, consequently, on student learning and achievement. 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.

In recent years, our understanding of the 'learning environment' has evolved. A wide variety of creative approaches to teaching/learning and to the configuration of physical spaces within and beyond the traditional classroom setting, including accommodations for students' sensory and self-regulation needs, are employed to support students' academic and social-emotional learning goals.

Every effort should be made to structure learning environments, and to provide learning supports that make physical restraint and seclusion unnecessary. It is expected that school personnel implement effective supports and interventions to prevent and de-escalate potentially unsafe situations.

DEFINITIONS

Behaviour – The actions by which an individual adjusts to their environment. It is commonly understood that behaviour is communication. It is the impact of the behaviour that dictates whether a behaviour is negative or positive.

Physical Restraint – is a method of restricting another person's freedom of movement or mobility, 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 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 also 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 away from a group, 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.

Time-out – is the removal of a child from a presumably reinforcing setting to a presumably non-reinforcing setting for a specified and limited period because of a specific undesirable behaviour.

Separation of students – is an intervention where the separation of a student(s) is the outcome of demonstration of disruptive or dangerous behaviours that interfere in learning for the individual or other students. Separation can range from quiet time aside in the regular classroom to a time in a quiet space outside the classroom, in the school. A time away in response rising agitation is used to prevent escalation to unsafe behaviours, assisting with self-regulation and a calm and functional return to the learning environment.

Typically, separation of student(s) is used in tandem with positive interventions that can maximize student learning and assist in regulation and the acquisition of replacement behaviours.

PRINCIPLES

- Behaviour interventions for students must promote the rights of all students to be treated with dignity.
- Behaviour interventions for all students emphasize prevention and positive behaviour supports, and every effort is made to employ preventative actions that preclude the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.
- Behaviour interventions and mental health supports are provided routinely for all students who need them, and they are provided in a safe and least-restrictive instructional environment.
- Physical restraint is used *only* in exceptional circumstances, where the behaviour of a student poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including school personnel, and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending imminent danger of serious harm.
- Restraint is not used as a punishment, discipline, or to force compliance in an educational/learning setting.
- Educational assessments, including functional behaviour assessments, are provided for all students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others – to inform the development of behaviour intervention plans. These plans incorporate positive behaviour interventions and include instruction in appropriate behaviour and strategies to support student learning and meaningful participation.
- Pacific Rim School District will include among their staff members, professionals who are trained in positive behaviour intervention supports, conflict de-escalation, and crisis de-escalation and non-violent crisis intervention techniques to enable them to defuse conflict and crisis situations.
- School and district staff are to be aware of and to engage the assistance of additional program and resource supports that may be available in their community.

GUIDELINES

Physical Escort/Assistance

- 1.0 Physical Guidance may be used to support the teaching of a skill, redirecting attention, and/or appropriately providing comfort. It does not constitute physical restraint.
- 2.0 Physical escort/assistance may be used to support a student who is not able to safely navigate the school environment without support. In these instances, the use of physical escort/assistance shall be planned, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, and explicitly documented in the student's plan.

Seclusion

- 1.0 School District 70 does not practice the seclusion of students and does not have rooms allocated for this purpose. Where student behaviour has escalated, it may result in a separation from others to an alternate quiet space to calm, or process in privacy until such time as the emotions are settled, or a parent is called.

Physical Restraint

- 1.0 School District 70 provides training in behavioural safety training to all Education Assistants, Principals, Vice Principals and Inclusion Support Teachers. Retraining is scheduled bi-annually to maintain skills. In addition, the training is open to other staff groups.
- 1.1 Restraint procedures are not covered in this training. Where it is deemed necessary for a student to be restrained, this training would be provided to any staff working *directly* with the student and be considered a part of individualized planning to support the student's unique needs.
- 1.2 Emergency restraint is used *only* in exceptional circumstances, where the behaviour of a student poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including school personnel, and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending imminent danger of serious harm. Restraint is discontinued once the imminent danger or serious physical harm to self or others has dissipated.
- 1.3 Situations where emergency restraint may be required include:
 - There must be imminent risk of serious harm to the student or others
 - There must be no other practical way to prevent the harm without physical restraint
 - The risk of not intervening must be greater than the risk of intervening.

PROCEDURES

- 1.0 Where safety of students or staff is a concern, the following plans are in place, based on a consultation with parents and specialized staff, and are reviewed annually:
 - 1.1 A plan created by the inclusion support staff in consultation with classroom teacher and Administration for positive behaviour supports and interventions addressing the underlying cause of the behaviours
 - 1.2 Worker Safety Action Plans (WSAP)
 - 1.3 Other emergency plans as required

- 2.0 Staff should not use physical restraint unless there is imminent danger and if they have had specific training for that student. In the exceptional circumstance where it is determined that restraint is a necessary part of a students' carefully considered response plan, the action of restraint will require follow-up after each incident and includes:
- 2.1 notification to the school administration or designate as soon as possible after an incident, always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred
 - 2.2 notification by the school administration, to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible, always prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred
 - 2.3 notification to the Director of Instruction responsible for inclusive education services or designate as soon as possible after an incident, ideally prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred
 - 2.4 debriefing with involved school personnel to examine the incident. A subsequent meeting will be arranged by the school administration to review or develop plans to address behaviours and safety.
 - 2.5 school based administration will complete the Report of Physical Restraint Form. Copies of the form and debriefing summary will be sent to the Director of Instruction overseeing inclusive education services and confidentially filed at the school office as well as the board office.
 - 2.5.1 Workers are to complete the district online reporting form to report the incident requiring the use of emergency restraint. The district online reporting tool will advise the worker of necessary next steps. Debriefing of the incident will also support subsequent planning and training.
 - 2.6 These procedures are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure alignment with current and best research/practices.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

BC Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines – Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings
Nanaimo School District 602.10AP Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students
Pacific Rim School District Policy XXX:
Pacific Rim School District 70 2023/2024 – 2027/28 Strategic Plan
West Vancouver School District AP 310 – Restraint and Seclusion
Safety-Care Core Curriculum, Version 7

APPENDIX I

REPORT OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Student Name	Grade	Date
Teacher/Class	School	Ministry Designation
Nature of Restraint (Describe exactly what procedure was used)		
Other individuals present:		
Time procedure began:	Time procedure Ended:	Staff member(s) involved:
		☐ SAFETY CARE TRAINED
Describe the behaviour that led to the emergency use of restraint, location, activity and other contributing factors:		
Was there ☐ Imminent serious physical harm to themselves ☐ Imminent serious physical harm to others		
Procedures used to attempt to de-escalate the student prior to using restraint		
Follow-up with student after the restraint including time, location, activity and other factors:		
A debriefing is scheduled to review incident and existing plans and revising them if necessary Date debriefing held or scheduled _____ Who was included ☐ School personnel _____ ☐ Student if appropriate ☐ Subsequent parent/guardian follow-up date:		
Recommendations arising out of debrief:	Actions Taken:	
When was the parent/guardian notified:	Name of Principal/Vice Principal completing the form	
By Whom:		

Copy to Director of Instruction – Inclusive Education Services or Designate