



## Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings

### Context

This procedure is to ensure that Central Okanagan Public Schools are inclusive learning environments that are safe, caring and secure for all students and staff. All students and staff are expected to contribute to and maintain this environment. Safety is compromised when a student's behaviour is dangerous to self or others.

The District maintains a strictly **hands-off approach** is the best practice in dealing with students who are displaying at-risk or dangerous behaviour. School staff are expected to implement proactive, positive and non-punitive supports and interventions that make the use of physical restraint and seclusion unnecessary.

### Definitions

**Physical Escort** - a temporary touching or holding of a student's hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of guiding a student to a safe location. Physical escort does not constitute physical restraint.

**Physical Guidance** - is the prompting of a student when teaching a skill, redirecting attention or providing comfort. Physical guidance does not constitute physical restraint.

**Physical Restraint** - 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.

**Seclusion** - the involuntary confinement of a person, alone in a room, enclosures or space that the person is physically prevented from leaving. The term seclusion does not apply to the following situations:

- a. When a student has personally requested to be in a different/secluded location/space;
- b. When a student is outside of the regular classroom and possibly alone (but supervised) for a calm or quiet break if these breaks are behaviour strategies that are proactive and are part of the student's daily routine.

### Procedures

The procedures for the use of physical intervention of students are aligned with the BC Ministry of Education *Provincial Guidelines for Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings*, June 2015.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/diverse-student-needs/physical-restraint-seclusion-guidelines.pdf>

In cases where a student could potentially cause harm to self or others, preventative and proactive plans should be collaboratively developed with the Principal or Vice-Principal, teachers, support staff, parents/guardians and, when appropriate for the student.

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for ensuring that all staff that are involved or work directly with the student (i.e. bus drivers, clerical, custodian and casual staff) read the plans and are aware the importance of adhering to these plans for their own and others safety.

### **Process**

Physical restraint and seclusion are used only in emergent situations and as a last resort when behaviour of a student poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including staff and where less restrictive measure have been ineffective in ending the threat of serious physical harm.

The process after an emergent situation, where restraint or seclusion is used, involves the following mandatory steps: notification, debriefing and documentation.

#### **Step 1: Notification**

- Staff member(s) notify the Principal or Vice-Principal as soon as possible after an incident (prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred);
- Notification, by the school principal, to the student's parent/guardian(s) as soon as possible (prior to the end of the school day on which the incident has occurred);
- Notification to the Director of Student Support Services and the Superintendent or Designate as soon as possible after an incident (prior to the end of the school day on which the incident occurred).

#### **Step 2: Debriefing**

A debriefing provides an opportunity to discuss the restraint or seclusion incident and strategies for preventing recurrence, including a review and revision of the current plan. The intent is to examine what happened or what caused the incident, and what modifications could be made to make the use of physical restraint or seclusion unnecessary. The debriefing meeting should involve staff, District consultant and/or Social Emotional Learning Teachers (formerly DBS), parent/ guardian(s) of the student, and where possible, the student.

#### **Step 3: Documentation**

Any time physical restraint or seclusion has occurred a [Physical Restraint Report Form](#) must be completed by the Principal or Vice-Principal, and filed as soon as possible with the Director of Instruction - Student Support Services, and the Superintendent of Schools/CEO or Designate.

\*\*\*\* Physical Restraint or Seclusion should never be part of any plan without the written approval from the Director of Instruction – Student Support Services and/or the Superintendent. \*\*\*\*

#### **Relevant Board Policy:**

Developed by: Director of Instruction – Student Support Services

Date Agreed: January 29, 2019

Date Amended:

Related Documents: