



Restraint of Students Policy

Purpose of this policy

To ensure all staff are informed and comply with the Department's policy about student restraint including that it is only used when certain conditions are met and that appropriate standards and procedures are followed.

Definitions

Physical restraint is the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a person's body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained.

Physical restraint includes an action that results in the student being in a prone or supine position on the floor, or extends any joint in an unnatural way. Note: Physical restraint should not be confused with protective physical interventions, which involve physical contact that serves to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage from a student's grip, but from which a student can move freely away.

Physical restraint should only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.

Seclusion is the solitary confinement of a student in a room or area (e.g. a garden) from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person. When used by a staff member in immediate response to behaviours of concern, seclusion may also include situations where a student is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes they cannot leave that room or area even if they would physically be able to, i.e. it is not locked.

Policy

This policy is in line with Regulation 25 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 provides that:

“A member of staff of a Government school may take any reasonable action that is immediately required to restrain a student of the school from acts or behaviour that is dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person.”

When physical restraint or seclusion should not be used

Physical restraint and seclusion should not be used unless immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.

Rooms or areas designed specifically for the purpose of seclusion or which are used solely or primarily for the purpose of seclusion are not permitted in Victorian government schools.

Restraint and seclusion must not be included in a Behaviour Support Plan or be used as a routine behaviour management technique, to punish or discipline a student or to respond to:

- a student's refusal to comply with a direction, unless that refusal to comply creates an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
- a student leaving the classroom/school without permission, unless that conduct causes an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
- verbal threats of harm from a student, except where there is a reasonable belief that the threat will be immediately enacted
- property destruction caused by the student unless that destruction is placing any person at immediate risk of harm.

Any restraint which covers the student's mouth or nose, in any way restricts breathing, takes the student to the ground into the prone or supine position, involves the hyperextension of joints, or application of pressure to the neck, chest or joints, must not be used.

When physical restraint or seclusion may be used

Mickleham Primary staff may only use physical restraint on a student when there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others; and where such action (ie to physically restrain or seclude) would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances and there is no less restrictive means of responding to the particular circumstances. An example of when a physical restraint may be necessary, is when a student is beating another student and is so overcome with rage that they are unable to comprehend what is being asked of them.

As with physical restraint, seclusion should only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person, as permitted by Regulation 25.

The decision about whether to use physical restraint or seclusion rests with the professional judgment of the staff member/s involved, who will need to take into account both their duty of care to their students, their right to protect themselves from harm and obligations under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Mechanical restraint

Mechanical restraints should never be used in schools to restrict a student's freedom of movement, unless the restraint is for a therapeutic purpose with written evidence of the prescription / recommendation, or if required to travel safely in a vehicle.

During Restraint

If applying physical restraint in the limited circumstances set out above, staff must:

- use the minimum force required to avoid the dangerous behaviour or risk of harm
- only restrain the student for the minimum duration required and stop restraining the student once the danger has passed.

Staff should ensure the type of restraint used is consistent with a student's individual needs and circumstances, including:

- the age and size of the student
- gender of the student
- any impairment of the student e.g. physical, intellectual, neurological, behavioural, sensory (visual or hearing), or communication
- any mental or psychological conditions of the student, including any experience of trauma
- any other medical conditions of the student
- the likely response of the student
- the environment in which the restraint is taking place.

Staff should monitor the student for any indicators or distress. Staff should talk to the student throughout the incident, making it clear to the student why the physical restraint is being applied. Staff should also calmly explain that the physical restraint will stop once it is no longer necessary to protect the student and/or others.

Steps to take when a student is violent

When a student is behaving violently and the safety of staff and other students is threatened, that is they are in imminent danger of being physically attacked, the following strategies should be applied:

- Remove the class from the room. This can be to the classroom next door or outside into the yard, making sure someone is available to watch the child concerned from a safe distance
- When in the yard implement an emergency evacuation of the yard and send all students inside or to the opposite side of the yard, leaving the violent student within site of a member of staff until they calm down

If a child is refusing to comply with a teacher request, for example to do the work required, the teacher should direct all attention to the remaining students and continue with the lesson. Reinforce the positive behaviours strategies of the classroom making sure they are obvious for the remaining students.

Actions after any restraint has been used

This table explains the follow up actions that must be undertaken after a student has been physically restrained or secluded.

Action	Description
Understanding the triggers and reasons behind the actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep constant records of poor behaviour, include what was happening at the time, for example, a maths lesson, child didn't understand, found it too hard, wasn't engaged or interested 2. What strategies were tried before the escalation – include both positive and negative interventions 3. What particular situation trigger the escalation to violence, for example the actions of another child, the implementation of a certain consequence <p>These notes should be analysed carefully and patterns of behaviour defined</p> <p>At all times, the aim is to find strategies that will eliminate or de-escalate unacceptable behaviour</p>
Reporting of the physical restraint/ seclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The staff member(s) involved in the incident must immediately notify the principal of the incident. 2. A staff member must contact the student's parents and provide them with details of the incident as soon as possible. (in every case when restraint or seclusion was implemented) <p>The incident may need to be reported to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Security Services Unit (previously known as the Emergency Management Unit), see: Reporting (emergency and incidents) • Edusafe see: Report an Injury, Incident or Hazard • WorkSafe, see: WorkSafe Notification.
Maintain records of the incident	<p>A written record of the incident and the physical restraint or seclusion used must be made to the principal as soon as practicable. This record should be added to a student's file on CASES 21 or SOCS as appropriate. The record should detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name of the student/s and staff member/s involved • date, time and location of the incident • names of witnesses (staff and other students) both to the initial incident and to the use of restraint or seclusion • what exactly happened (a brief factual account) • any action taken to de-escalate the situation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why physical intervention was used (if applicable) • the nature of any physical intervention used • how long the physical intervention lasted • the student’s response to the intervention and the outcome of the incident • any injuries or damage to property • immediate post incident actions, such as first aid or contact with emergency services • details of contact with the student’s parent/carer • details of any post-incident support provided or organised. This may be to the student restrained/ secluded, the student’s parents, other students who witnessed the incident or the staff member/s involved or witnessing <p>The principal should also arrange for all staff who were involved or present at the incident to prepare a written statement / record of their involvement or observations of the incident.</p>
Plan for the future	<p>The aim is to develop preventative and de-escalation strategies that might reduce the likelihood of an incident happening again.</p> <p>The following tasks are to be completed within the week following any incidence of restraint or seclusion being used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the causes or triggers of the behaviour prompting the restraint or seclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was happening at the time? - Are there any patterns relating to when these behaviours occur? • Review and amend the Student’s Behaviour Support Plan addressing positive strategies that could be included to minimise or de-escalate the behaviour • If a Behaviour Support Plan is not in place one must be devised • Provide any necessary training to support the staff member involved

Related policies

- [Accident Recording and Reporting](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Personal Liability of School Employees](#)
- [Reporting \(emergency and incidents\)](#)
- [Risk Management](#)
- [Safety Management](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [WorkSafe Notification.](#)

Related legislation and regulations

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)

Department resources

- [Restraint and Seclusion](#) - see: *Principles for the Reduction and Elimination of Restraint and Seclusion in Victorian Government Schools*
- [Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance](#)
- [Health Safety and Worksafe](#)
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)