

Wantirna South Primary School

Restraint/Seclusion of Children Policy and Procedures

Rationale:

The policy informs the school community about the Department's standards and procedures in relation to student restraint or seclusion, further ensuring that students can attend an environment that is safe and inclusive.

Definitions

This policy refers to:

Physical restraint: the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a student's body or part of their body, preventing them to be able to move away or be free in movement.

Seclusion: is 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, or 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.

Expectations:

Based on this rationale, and in line with Regulation 25 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017, expectations of this policy are that:

- a Government school staff member may take reasonable action required to restrain a student of the school from acts or behaviour that is dangerous to a member of staff, the student, or any other person.
- Physical restraint should only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.
- In some limited circumstances, seclusion of a student from imminent dangerous behaviours may be immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.

Implementation:

Consistent with these expectations, this policy shall be implemented according to the following guidelines and procedures:-

Restraint or seclusion of a student by a school staff member may be used:

- If there is imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others; and where there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.
- If professional judgement of the staff member/s involved took into account both their duty of care to their students, their rights to protect themselves from harm and obligations under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Restraint or seclusion of a student by a school staff member should not be used:

- Through the engagement of mechanical restraints 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.
- If the restraint 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.
- As a strategy/implementation of a Behaviour Support Plan or be used as a routine behaviour management technique, to punish or discipline a student or to respond to:
 1. 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;

2. a student leaving the classroom/school without permission, unless that conduct causes an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person;
3. verbal threats of harm from a student, except where there is a reasonable belief that the threat will be immediately enacted;
4. property destruction caused by the student unless that destruction is placing any person at immediate risk of harm.

In the limited circumstances, as set out above, of applying physical restraint or seclusion 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.
- ensure the type of restraint used is consistent with a student’s individual needs and circumstances, considering:
 1. *the age/size of the student*
 2. *gender of the student*
 3. *any impairment of the student e.g. physical, intellectual, neurological, behavioural, sensory (visual or hearing), or communication*
 4. *any mental or psychological conditions of the student, including any experience of trauma*
 5. *any other medical conditions of the student*
 6. *the likely response of the student*
 7. *the environment in which the restraint is taking place.*
- monitor the student for any indicators or distress.
- talk to the student throughout the incident, making it clear to the student why the physical restraint is being applied.
- calmly explain that the physical restraint will stop once it is no longer necessary to protect the student and/or others.

Actions/procedure after restraint has been used

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

Action	Description
Reporting of the physical restraint/seclusion	<p>The staff member(s) involved in the incident must immediately notify the Principal of the incident.</p> <p>A staff member should contact the student’s parents and provide them with details of the incident as soon as possible.</p> <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
Providing supports for those involved	<p>Following the use of restraint on a student, appropriate supports must be offered to the following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student who has been restrained or secluded and their parents/guardians. This may include participation in decisions involving the student’s behaviour management, Student Support Group meetings, the development of a student Behaviour Support Plan, and involvement of Student Support Services. • Other students and staff members who were involved in or witnessed the incident. This may include a debriefing in relation to the incident, and counselling support.
Maintain records of the incident	<p>A written record of the incident and the physical restraint or seclusion used must be made by 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • names of witnesses (staff and other students) • what exactly happened (a brief factual account) • any action taken to de-escalate the situation • why physical intervention was used (if applicable) • the nature of any physical intervention used • how long the physical intervention lasted • names of witnesses (staff and other students) • the student's response 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. <p>The principal should also arrange for all staff who were involved/present at the incident to prepare a statement / record of their involvement or observations of the incident.</p>
Plan for the future	<p>Post-incident, the school should consider the preventative and de-escalation strategies that might reduce the likelihood of an incident happening again. For example – reviewing and amending the student's Behaviour Support Plan, consider the training needs of staff working closely with the student/s involved in the incident.</p>

Related policies

- [Behaviour Management Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safe Environment Policy](#)
- [Discipline Policy](#)
- [Child Protection and Reporting Policy](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)

Related legislation and regulations

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

Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed as part of a three year cycle or as directed by School Council.

Review date: July 2019.

This Policy was ratified by School Council.