

# **Ensuring Student and Staff Safety: Guidelines for Restraint and Seclusion Procedures in Schools**

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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## Introduction

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) is committed to ensuring a safe and positive learning environment of all students and school personnel. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that all students and staff are safe in school, and that students who may have a behaviour crisis are free from inappropriate use of physical restraint or seclusion. They are applicable to all New Brunswick public schools.

School personnel have a responsibility to adopt and implement evidenced-based practices designed to teach prosocial behaviours for students' with behavioural challenges. Students engage in violent behaviour when they are lacking skills to meet and communicate their needs in more appropriate ways. Similar to academic learning, students can learn new social, communication, and adaptive skills when high quality instruction and evidence-based practices are implemented.

EECD supports Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and other evidence-based programs and services that motivate, teach and support positive behaviour to create a positive learning environment.

## Goals and Principles

These guidelines are consistent with, and are to be applied within the framework of *Policy 703 – Positive Learning and Working Environment* and *Policy 322 – Inclusive Education*.

- Good citizenship and civility are modeled and reinforced throughout the school community. Every person is valued and treated with respect.
- School personnel and students in the public school system have the right to work and to learn in a safe, orderly, productive, respectful and harassment-free environment.
- Inclusive educational practices are supported and promoted. Students are responsible for their behaviour in accordance with their age and stage of development, and to the extent to which their behaviour is voluntary. When disruptive behaviour is attributable to the student's exceptionality and he or she is unable to control this behaviour, appropriate interventions will be employed with the needs of the student in mind.
- Students have a sense of belonging and connection, feel they are supported by school personnel, and have a positive relationship with at least one adult in the school system.
- Parents, school personnel, district staff and the school community understand that social skills, self-discipline, empathy, compassion and ethics are learned throughout life. Each partner in education plays a role in transmitting these values through instruction and by example.

(Policy 703; Section 5.0)

To be prepared to respond to student behaviour that poses imminent danger of physical harm to self or others, the principal must:

- Ensure that a School Positive Learning and Working Environment plan, as per section 6.2 of *Policy 703 – Positive Learning and Working Environment*, is in place to effectively manage any behaviour crisis within the learning environment so that students are removed from the school only when all other options have been exhausted.
- Establish practices that create a welcoming and supportive learning environment and promote, recognize and reinforce appropriate student behaviour.
- Implement evidence-based practices designed to teach pro-social behaviours for students with behavioural challenges.
- Ensure time-out procedures are in compliance with *Policy 703 – Positive Learning and Working Environment*, and any specific guidelines issued by EECD.
- Ensure any removal from the common learning environment is temporary.
- Ensure any removal from the common learning environment is never used as a punishment. School protocols and personalized learning plans must have measures in place to guard against the effect of humiliating or intimidating the student.

- Follow guidelines and standards of practice about emergency physical intervention and supervised de-escalation, including requirements for documentation and reporting, as per relevant departmental policy.
- Ensure that emergency physical intervention and/or supervised de-escalation are only used as a last resort in an emergency situation, when doing so does not endanger the student, and where continuous monitoring is provided.

(Policy 322; Section 6.5)

## What is Restraint?

Used in response to serious problem behaviour that places the student or others at risk of injury or harm, restraints are measures used to control an individual's physical activity to prevent injury or harm.

More specifically, **physical restraint** involves direct physical contact by one or more persons to prevent or significantly restrict another person's freedom of movement, physical activity, or normal access to their body.

For the purposes of these guidelines, physical restraint does **not** refer to:

- taking away a weapon (such as a knife or gun);
- breaking up a fight;
- physical guidance and prompts provided in the course of instruction of minimal intensity and duration, and/or in the context of interventions described in a Personalized Learning Plan – Individual Behaviour Support Plan (PLP-IBSP) based on a functional behaviour assessment;
- physically blocking a student from injuring himself or others;
- holding a student for a brief time in order to prevent an impulsive behaviour that threatens the student's immediate safety (e.g., running in front of a car);
- guiding the physical movement of a student to ensure safety, such as holding a student's hand or arm to cross a street.

Physical restraint is not an instructional tool for teaching appropriate behaviour in the classroom or school. Rather, it is a method to prevent students from harming themselves or others. It should only be used in emergency situations when an imminent (likely to happen within a matter of seconds) and significant threat to the physical safety of the student and/or others exists.

## What are the circumstances when physical restraint might be used?

Physical restraint should only be used when a student is displaying physically violent behaviour that presents substantial, imminent risk of injury to the student or others.

The following conditions should be respected:

1. Less restrictive methods of de-escalating the situation have been attempted without success.
2. Physical restraint should last only as long as is necessary for the student to regain behavioural stability, and the risk of injury has ended, usually a matter of minutes.
3. The degree of physical restriction employed should be sensitive and proportionate to the severity of the behaviour, the chronological and developmental age, physical size and condition of the student, and the potential risk of injury to the student.

4. Physical restraint should only be used by school personnel who are qualified/credentialed in EECD approved certification in the use of physical restraint procedures. The credentialing should be deemed up-to-date by district standards. In clearly unavoidable emergency circumstances when fully trained school personnel are not immediately available, an untrained staff member or whose certification has expired may need to intervene to ensure student safety. The untrained staff member should request assistance from trained staff as soon as possible. **Note:** School personnel who have received training not associated with their employment with the school district (e.g., former law enforcement officers) should be trained in the EECD approved crisis intervention training and should not apply techniques or procedures acquired elsewhere.

*“School personnel have the authority and responsibility for taking appropriate action, within the scope of their prescribed duties, whenever unacceptable behaviour occurs. The focus of intervention should be on assisting students who have been victimized as well as those who need assistance to address inappropriate behaviour.” (Policy 703, Appendix B)*

5. Physical restraint of a student should be conducted in a manner consistent with the techniques prescribed in the provincially approved crisis intervention training programs.

6. In the event that frequent violent behaviour is experienced, a PLP-IBSP is required. When school personnel have observed the student engage in a pattern of violent behaviours that is dangerous to the point of causing injury to self or others, members of the Education Support Services Team will conduct a **functional behaviour assessment** and develop a PLP-IBSP including a plan for teaching replacement behaviours. The plan will be developed in collaboration with the parent or guardian. The intervention plan should be documented and the effect of intervention should be monitored and reported on a regular basis. The plan should be closely monitored to determine its effectiveness and altered if the data does not indicate progress. When physical restraint and seclusion is frequently used as a response to violent behaviour, the ESS Team should consult with individuals with expertise in behavioural interventions such as: a child and youth team member, a psychologist, Education Support Teacher-Autism, or a teacher who is being supervised to obtain certification as a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA), or is certified as a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst.

**Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)** is the ongoing process of gathering information that can be used to hypothesize about the relations between environmental events and student behaviour. The information is used to inform an intervention plans for the learner.

7. Emergency Floor Procedure is an advanced procedure taught by a CPI Applied Physical Training Certified Instructor that has the intent to ensure an individual's safety if he/she goes down to the floor him/herself and there is a threat to the safety of the individual or others when he/she is on the ground. A student is never taken down to the floor.

Emergency floor procedure should only be taught:

- by an NVC I Applied Physical Training Certified Instructor who monitors its use (i.e. reviews frequency of use of procedures, conducts observations and engages in discussions with team to ensure the procedure is carried out appropriately);
- when the staff members involved have already completed basic Nonviolent Crisis



- Intervention (NVCI) training and have demonstrated an increased skill level in carrying out NVCI techniques in the context of training and in real life situations, as assessed by the Applied Physical Training Certified Instructor;
- to the team where there is an identified need because the student repeatedly brings him/herself to the ground and poses a danger to self or others;
  - when documented in the student's PLP-IBSP.

## **When should physical restraint procedures not be employed?**

Physical restraint should not be used:

- as a response to verbal threats or verbally aggressive behaviour. This does not itself indicate a substantial risk of injury, and should not result in restraint;
- as a response to property damage unless the associated actions are creating a risk of injury to the student or others;
- when the known medical, physical or psychological condition of the student would make the restraint procedures dangerous for that student (e.g. students with heart or circulatory conditions, etc.). In these situations, alternative strategies should be planned in collaboration with the parent and in consultation with a medical specialist;
- as a punishment, or to force compliance with staff commands.

## **Other Restraint Procedures:**

**Mechanical restraints should not be used.** Mechanical Restraint is the use of any device or object (e.g., tape, ropes, straps, weights, weighted blankets) to limit an individual's movement to prevent or manage out-of-control behaviour. For the purposes of these guidelines, the definition of mechanical restraint does not include:

- adaptive and medically prescribed devices whose purpose it is to compensate for orthopedic weaknesses, to protect from falling or to permit the student to participate in activities at school, when recommended by an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, or physician;
- personal protective equipment (e.g., protective clothing such as gloves, helmets, other garments or equipment) designed to protect the individual's body from injury. However, in all cases, their use should be carefully considered with consultation from appropriate multidisciplinary professionals;
- vehicle restraints (e.g., seatbelts, safety harnesses) to ensure student safety during transportation.

**Chemical Restraint**, use of medications to control behaviour, should only be used when prescribed and monitored by a medical professional (i.e. a member of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of New Brunswick).

## What is Seclusion?

Seclusion involves placing an individual alone in a room or area from which the individual is physically prevented from leaving.

Seclusion may involve the use of a Time-out Room (or other name), which is a room specifically designed for exclusionary time-out or seclusion or primarily used for those purposes.

## What are the circumstances when seclusion might be used?

Seclusion should only be used if a student is engaging in intense violent behaviour that presents substantial risk to the student or others and the risk can be diminished by placing the student in a safe environment away from others.

The following conditions should be respected:

1. Less restrictive methods of de-escalating a dangerous situation have been attempted without success.
2. Seclusion should be discontinued when the student no longer poses an immediate threat to others.
3. Seclusion should be used only when the student can safely be transported to the seclusion environment by trained staff members using appropriate techniques based on crisis intervention training.
4. Seclusion may not be used by staff members unless they have received specific Department of EECD approved crisis intervention training in physical restraint procedures.
5. In the event that frequent violent behaviour is experienced, a PLP-IBSP is required. When school personnel have observed the student engage in a pattern of violent behaviours that is dangerous to the point of causing injury to self or others, members of the Education Support Services Team will conduct a **functional behaviour assessment** and develop a PLP-IBSP including a plan for teaching replacement behaviours. The plan will be developed in collaboration with the parent or guardian. The intervention plan should be documented and the effect of intervention should be monitored and reported on a regular basis. The plan should be closely monitored to determine its effectiveness and altered if the data does not indicate progress. When physical restraint and seclusion is frequently used as a response to violent behaviour, the ESS Team should consult with individuals with expertise in behavioural interventions such as: a psychologist, Education Support Teacher – Autism, or a

**Exclusionary time-out** is a procedure in which the student is removed from the setting for a period of time immediately following a challenging behaviour and the goal is to decrease in that behaviour in the future. This procedure should always be used in combination with other proactive and teaching strategies as part of a student's Personalized Learning Plan – Individual Behaviour Support Plan (PLP-IBSP) with signed parent consent.

teacher who is being supervised to obtain certification as a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA), or is certified as a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst.

6. The Superintendent or designate will ensure all seclusion environments, including Time-Out rooms, should meet the norms identified in the *Planning Guidelines for Educational Facilities* and be inspected annually for adherence to Fire Marshall standards and regulations.

Seclusion environments:

- have adequate lighting and ventilation including heat as appropriate;
  - be free of any potential or predictable safety hazards such as sharp corners, light switches, exposed electrical outlets or wiring, equipment, and breakable glass;
  - permit direct continuous visual and auditory monitoring of the student and with a means for the student to see the adult;
  - not be locked;
  - be part of school emergency evacuation procedure protocols.
- Students should be permitted to use the restroom upon request, and be escorted to and from the restroom.
  - Students should be provided water on request.

## **When should seclusion not be employed?**

Seclusion should not be used:

- when substantial risk of injury no longer exists;
- when a known medical, physical or psychological condition of the student would make the seclusion procedures dangerous for that student (e.g., students expressing suicidal thoughts, students with heart or circulatory conditions, history of trauma, or other conditions). In these situations, alternative strategies should be planned in collaboration with the parent/guardian and in consultation with a medical or mental health specialist. These alternative strategies should be reflected in the PLP-IBSP.
- when the student engages in severe self-injurious behaviours;
- as a punishment, or to force compliance with staff commands.
- without parental/guardian consent.

## Training

Crisis Intervention Training is training provided to selected staff members which addresses how to deal with aggressive, violent, or out of control behavioural crises. It includes specific techniques for physical restraint as well as prevention, and de-escalation. The curriculum should result in certification of the individuals who complete the training and be approved by EECD.

**De-escalation** means causing a situation to become more controlled, calm and less dangerous, thus lessening the risk for injury.

The curriculum currently approved by EECD is ***Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) training***. NVCI is a behaviour management system designed by the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) to aid staff members in maintaining the best possible care, welfare, safety, and security for disruptive, assaultive and out-of-control individuals during their most violent moments. This includes the recognition of escalating behaviours, preventative measures, appropriate de-escalation techniques, and NVCI physical intervention techniques.

Training in the use of physical restraint should include:

- Procedures for de-escalating problematic behaviors before they increase to a level or intensity necessitating physical intervention
- Information regarding the risks associated with manual physical restraint and procedures for assessing individual situations and students to determine if its use is appropriate and sufficiently safe
- The actual use of specific techniques that range from the least to most restrictive with ample opportunity for trainees to demonstrate proficiency in their use
- Techniques for implementing manual physical restraint with multiple staff members working as a team
- Techniques for assisting the student to re-enter the instructional environment and re-engage in learning
- Instruction in the district's documentation and reporting requirements
- Procedures to identify and deal with possible medical emergencies resulting from the use of manual physical restraint

The Superintendent, in collaboration with EECD, may select another curriculum and method of providing training related to physical restraint and seclusion that meets applicable provincial standards (Appendix A).

School Districts are responsible for providing refresher training on physical restraint techniques on a regular basis to all staff members who have successfully completed the initial training component. The school district should identify those personnel to be trained and maintain a record that includes the name and position of the person trained; the date of the most recent training; an indication of whether it was initial training or "refresher" training; and whether the individual successfully completed the training and achieved proficiency.

A core group of personnel in each school should be “certified” in crisis intervention techniques which will include the use of physical restraint.

## **Communicating, Documenting and Debriefing**

### **Communicating**

Immediately after the student has restored emotional and behavioural control following the use of physical restraint and/or seclusion, a staff member not involved with the incident should observe the student to ascertain if any injury has been sustained during the physical restraint or seclusion.

If appropriate and unless contraindicated in the student’s PLP-IBSP, the student, with assistance from staff, will process the event at the earliest appropriate time.

Procedures and methods should be in place for instances of the use of physical restraint and seclusion to be reported to the administration at the school level (i.e., the principal or other administrator).

It is recommended that the Principal or designate verbally notify the parent/guardian as soon as possible each time physical restraint or seclusion is used. Notification by telephone should be provided before the end of the school day in which the restraint occurred. It is understood that phone contact may not always be feasible due to lack of availability of contact information and inability to reach the family. Reasonable efforts to reach the parent or legal guardian by telephone should be made and documented. If it was not possible to reach the family by telephone, written notification should be provided at the end of the school day. An alternate communication plan may be determined with the family as part of the PLP-IBSP.

### **Documenting**

All use of physical restraint and seclusion should be documented in an incident report containing the elements listed below. It is recommended that all staff involved contribute to the completion of the incident report within one school day of the incident. Emergency interventions that result in injury must also be documented and reported in accordance with existing departmental and district policies and procedures.

A minimum of the following should be included in the incident report created after each instance of physical restraint or the use of seclusion:

- the student’s name
- the date and time of the incident
- the duration of the physical restraint or seclusion
- interventions used immediately prior to the implementation of physical restraint or seclusion
- a brief description of the incident and/or student behaviour that resulted in implementation of physical restraint or seclusion

- restraint technique(s) used
- injuries (to students, staff, or others), and property damage if applicable
- whether the interventions were part of a PLP-IBSP
- a list of the school personnel who participated in the implementation, monitoring, and supervision of physical restraint or seclusion and whether they have up-to-date training related to physical restraint or seclusion
- the date and time of communication with the parent/guardian notifying him/her of the incident, and the summary of that communication
- additional follow-up required

The Principal will send a summary of the incident report to the parent/guardian within two school days following the use of physical restraint or seclusion unless another system has been established with the parent/guardian as part of the PLP-IBSP, and maintain a confidential copy of the report. (Appendix E)

Incident reports should be sent to a designated district administrator on a schedule determined by the school district.

## **Debriefing**

It is strongly recommended that each staff member involved in an incident will engage in debriefing as determined in the provincially approved crisis intervention training model. Debriefing serves many purposes. For the purpose of these guidelines, the goal is to determine what could be done to prevent future instances for the need of physical restraint or seclusion for the student, and possible improvements in implementation of process and procedures.

## **Monitoring and Reporting**

Monitoring of physical restraint and seclusion procedures should occur at multiple levels: school, district, and EECD.

### **School**

The Principal and School-based Education Support Services (ESS) Team should be involved in monitoring the use of physical restraint and seclusion procedures for specific students, as well as the general use of these strategies within the school.

For specific students, the team should examine the circumstances of the event and what strategies may be appropriate to avoid the use of physical restraint or seclusion procedures.

Monitoring of physical restraint and seclusion procedures at the school-level should include an analysis of:

- the frequency, duration, and location of these procedures
- staff members involved
- the appropriate use of these procedures
- documentation

School administrators use this information to determine if programming changes should be considered for individual students and whether staff members require additional training and support.

## **District**

The Superintendent or designate is responsible for planning and oversight of the use of physical restraint and seclusion procedures, and data collection and review in the district.

The Superintendent or designate will conduct an annual review of all data associated with these guidelines. The process shall include summary data taken from the incident reports. The purpose is to identify any issues and/or practices that require further attention.

## References

[Policy 322: Inclusive Education](#)

[Policy 703: Positive Learning and Working Environment](#)

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## Appendix A

### Provincial Standards for Crisis Intervention Training Programs for Supporting Individuals Engaging in Violent Behaviour

An effective crisis intervention training model:

- Is externally developed and has a record of successful implementation in a variety of settings (i.e., developed by a program or individual independent of the school).
- Includes a curriculum that is available for review. Emphasizes prevention of the type of events that require physical intervention, including relationship building, positive approaches to prevention of escalation, and an emphasis on de-escalation skills.
- Promotes safety as the only acceptable reason to use physical intervention.
- Includes instruction in the physiological effects of restraint and the monitoring of physical distress signs, including positional asphyxia.
- Includes instruction in personal safety and evasion techniques.
- Includes instruction in safe holding techniques. This instruction must include discussion and modeling, an opportunity to physically practice the techniques, and a requirement that the staff member demonstrate competency in the model.
- Includes techniques on how to help the student process or debrief the event.
- Includes information on how staff members are to debrief the event, including reviewing the event to understand how it evolved and to uncover areas of improvement for future situations; assisting staff members in managing the stress of the event; documentation of the event; and communication about the event to appropriate parties, including parents, the school administration, and, as needed, other students and staff members.
- Requires that staff successfully complete post-training assessments of knowledge and skill.
- Specifies a minimum training/refresher training schedule.

Project REST, 2004

## Appendix B

### Debrief and Problem Solving Process

*Fill in during a staff debriefing after every physical intervention*

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Physical/verbal Action: \_

Staff names: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recovered** - Before entering the problem solving process it is important that those involved have time to recover from the incident. This will require the person leading the session to explore the needs of those involved. Being empathic and acknowledging that everyone processes events differently based on their experiences and coping skills. It is important to acknowledge the fears and/or anxiety of those involved and develop a shared understanding of the issues that need to be solved.

- Are there any medical needs (tetanus, injury etc)?
- Has all necessary paperwork been filled out?
- Has time been provided to regain control?
- Has support been accessed (Guidance, colleague etc)?

**Debrief**- When incidents occur, particularly traumatic ones, the effects can be far reaching and can affect not just those involved in the incident but those on the peripheral. Take time to consider all that may be affected. Being part of the solution can help people regain control and relieve fear of the unknown.

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Where did it occur?
- What were you thinking at the time?

**Brainstorm** – This is the time to be solution focused. What can we do to reduce the likelihood of this occurring in the future?

- What could have triggered this?
- How did we react? What could we do differently?
- What do we know/understand about those involved (triggers/diagnosis/what has been tried in the past?)
- Do we need additional training?
- Who can help, if needed?

**Decide/Action items**– Come to a decision on what changes will improve future interventions?

- What will we do in the future?
- Who is responsible for action items?
- How will we report/communicate these changes?

**Provide support** – Thank everyone for their hard work and commitment to the process

## Appendix C

**BRIEF INCIDENT SUMMARY – to be completed as soon as possible to be used for staff debriefing (Postvention) later:**

**What** happened?

**Who** was present?

**Where** did the incident happen?

**When** did the incident happen?

**How** was the incident resolved?

**What** else is important to know about this incident? (e.g. was anyone hurt?)

**Who** else may require support in debriefing the incident? (e.g. student/volunteer/ bystander?)

**Incident summary completed by:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (position)

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Appendix D

### Restraint/Seclusion Incident Report

<b>Student's Name:</b>	
<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date &amp; time of incident:</b>	
<b>Duration of Physical Restraint or Seclusion: [beginning and end time]</b>	
<b>Interventions used immediately prior to physical restraint or seclusion:</b>	
<b>A brief description of the incident and/or student behavior that resulted in implementation of physical restraint or seclusion:</b>	
<b>Description of injuries [to students, staff, or others] or property damage:</b>	
<b>Restraint technique used:</b>	
<b>Plan for dealing with student behaviour in the future:</b>	
<b>Who participated in the implementation, and monitoring and what is their training:</b>	
<b>Date and time parent was notified:</b>	
<b>Was the intervention related to the PLP-IBSP?</b>	
<b>Additional follow-up required:</b>	

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

cc Cumulative Record  
Coordinator of Education Support Services/PLEP

Director of Schools/ESS

## Appendix E

### Restraint/Seclusion Incident Report Summary for Parents

<b>Student's Name:</b>	
<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date &amp; time of incident:</b>	
<b>Duration of Physical Restraint or Seclusion: [beginning and end time]</b>	
<b>Interventions used immediately prior to physical restraint or seclusion:</b>	
<b>A brief description of the incident and/or student behavior that resulted in implementation of physical restraint or seclusion:</b>	
<b>Restraint technique used:</b>	
<b>Plan for dealing with student behaviour in the future:</b>	
<b>Was the intervention related to the PLP-IBSP?</b>	
<b>Additional follow-up required:</b>	

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_