



School

**Dunedin Rudolf Steiner**

Learning with head, heart and hands

## Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion Procedure

### Rationale

Serious situations can arise in schools where a student or students risk harm to themselves or others. School staff require safe ways to potentially manage dangerous situations. Teachers are the only staff permitted to use physical restraint.

### Purpose

1. To protect the well-being of staff and students.
2. To provide guidelines for the use of physical restraint when it is seen as a last resort.
3. To provide staff with guidelines and ideas for de-escalating serious situations.
4. To record any incidents of physical restraint and provide for debriefing of these incidents.
5. To provide a clear pathway for complaints.
6. To monitor the emotional impact of such an event on staff and students.

### Guidelines

#### *Preventative Techniques:*

This is about relationship building, and is particularly important for students who regularly present with high risk behaviours:

- Attempt to understand the student and try to learn the signs of stress or unhappiness.
- Respect the student by: demonstrating that you are there to help; being reasonable; providing choices and compromise while maintaining authority.
- Preserve the student's dignity. This may mean dealing with things in private. Do not mock or treat the matter lightly.

#### *De-escalation Techniques:*

- Create space and time: remove the audience; provide physical space; name the emotion calmly (e.g. "I can see that you are very frustrated"); wait.
- Communicate calmly and quietly (even when the student is loud).
- Monitor your own body language and provide opportunity for the student to move out of the situation with dignity.
- When appropriate, give the student clear choices and/or directions, to help them feel more secure and regain control.
- If escalation occurs move further away, have an exit plan and send for help if necessary.

#### *What may escalate the behaviour?*

- Threatening the student.

- Arguing or interrupting.
- Contradicting what the student says – even if they are wrong.
- Challenging the student.
- Trying to shame the student.
- Escalating the situation by reacting rather than staying calm.

### ***Physical Restraint:***

#### ***Use physical restraint only when:***

- There is ‘imminent danger of physical injury.’ This can be to the student themselves or others.
- Preventative and de-escalation techniques have not reduced the risk of injury.
- Situations where it may be appropriate include:
  - Breaking up a fight
  - Stopping a student from moving in with a weapon
  - Stopping a student who is throwing furniture close to others who could be injured
  - Preventing a student from running onto a road

#### ***Match the physical restraint to the situation:***

- Use only where justifiable.
- Use the minimum force necessary.
- Use only for as long as is necessary.

#### ***Examples of “imminent danger”:***

- A student moving in with a weapon or something being used as a weapon with a clear intent to harm another person.
- A student physically attacking another person, or about to.
- A student throwing furniture (for example), throwing equipment, breaking glass close to others.
- A student putting themselves in danger e.g. running on the road, or trying to harm themselves.

#### ***Examples which DO NOT represent “imminent danger”:***

- Refusal behaviours.
- Disruptive behavior that does not put another person in danger of being hurt.
- Verbal threats.
- Defiant behavior.
- A student wanting to leave without permission.
- A student damaging property, unless this could cause injury.

#### ***Guidance if you have to use physical restraint:***

- Ideally, physical restraint should only be used by **staff trained in its safe use**, and trained in emergency first aid.
- If there is no one with training nearby, and you feel you can use physical restraint safely – both for yourself and the student – use your judgement and intervene.
- If you do not have the skills or confidence, remove the other students and call for help.
- Call the police when a student cannot be managed safely and the imminent danger to students, staff or themselves remains after all alternatives have been explored.

***Do not use these restraints:***

- Any restraint that inhibits breathing.
- Any restraint that inhibits speaking or the main method of communication e.g. sign language if this is the student's main method to communicate.
- Prone (face-down) physical restraint.
- Pressure points and pain holds.
- Tackling, sitting, lying or kneeling on a student.
- Pressure on the chest or neck.
- Hyperextension (bending back) of joints.
- Headlocks.
- Using force to take/drag a student, who is resisting, to another location.
- Restraint when moving a student from one place to another – trying to get them into a van or taxi, for example – when they are in an escalated state, as this may escalate them further.

***Monitoring:***

- Monitor continuously while applying the restraint, and stop as soon as the danger has passed.
- Monitor the staff member and student for the rest of the school day. Watch for shock, unnoticed injuries and delayed effects, physical or psychological.

***Contact Parents:***

- Contact parents or caregivers on the same day, as soon as possible after the incident, so they can monitor their child's wellbeing at home. The management team will do this (see below).

***On the same day:***

- Fill out a Physical Restraint Incident Report (Appendix A), discuss this with one of the Management Team, and file a copy with the Principal.
- The Principal (or their proxy) is to contact the parents.
- The Principal is to inform the Board of Trustees.

***Within two school days of the incident:***

- Hold a formal staff debriefing of the incident. (Appendix B). Involve any MoE or RTLB practitioners if they are part of the student's team. Involve the Police if they were called to the incident.
- Hold a formal debriefing with the Parents (or caregivers) and the student. (Appendix C)
- The Principal is to decide if the MoE need to be advised and asked for support and assistance

***Individual Behaviour Plan:***

- If the student is on an Individual Behaviour Plan, or it is felt that one is required, then arrange a meeting with all stakeholders to attend to this, as soon as possible.

***Complaint:***

- If any student, parent or caregiver is dissatisfied with the way an incident has been handled, they are encouraged to follow the school's complaints procedure.
- This is available upon enquiry at the office and on the school's website.

***Note on Seclusion and Timeout:***

- Seclusion is when a student is involuntarily placed alone in a room, at any time or for any duration, from which they cannot freely exit. Even if the door is not locked or blocked, there may be a level of authority or coercion which leads the student to believe that they cannot exit the room. Seclusion is not used at the school.
  - ***Seclusion is not the same as the use of timeout.***
  - **Timeout** can be when a student is asked to leave an activity or area because of their behavior and go to another specified area where they must stay until told they can return. Follow behaviour management procedure.
  - Timeout can also be when a student voluntarily takes themselves to an agreed space.
  - With timeout, the room is not locked, and although the student may well understand that they should stay there, they also realise that they can leave the room at any time if they so choose. The point is that the student has a choice about whether to comply or not.
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Review Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_