

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION OF STUDENTS

The Administrative Procedures for the physical restraint and seclusion of students is aligned with the BC Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines for Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings. June 2015.

The Comox Valley Board of Education believes that access to an effective educational program is a basic right of each student. The board further considers positive educational/behavioural interventions, mental health supports and least restrictive approaches to the provision of students supports to be best practice. Respect for human rights, maintaining student dignity and the safety of all involved is paramount. The board believes that schools should be safe and caring places in which educational programs are carried out in positive and supportive learning environments. Every effort should be made to structure learning environments and to provide learning supports that make physical restraint and seclusion unnecessary. The overarching goal of learning environment design is the creative use of space to facilitate and support positive student learning experiences, rather than punitive disciplinary ones. The board acknowledges that employees use a variety of educative, preventative and restorative interventions to respond to a range of disruptive student behaviours that compromise student safety. In exceptional circumstances when student behaviour presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including school personnel and where less restrictive interventions have proven to be ineffective in ending the danger or serious physical harm it may be necessary, as a last resort, for staff to use reasonable physical restraint or seclusion.

The decision to use reasonable physical restraint is guided by the professional judgement of staff. Staff will have the full support of the board in their efforts to maintain a safe learning environment to the extent that their actions comply with relevant legislation and district policy and procedures governing the physical restraint and seclusion of students.

The Comox Valley School Board does not support any form of physical restraint or seclusion as an on-going intervention. Any intervention that involves physical restraint or seclusion may be used only in cases of extreme emergency where they physical actions of the student threaten to cause harm to self or others.

Guiding Principles

1. Behavioural interventions for students must promote the rights of all students to be treated with dignity, honour and each student's right to feel safe.
2. Behavioural interventions for all students emphasize prevention and positive behaviour supports. Every effort must be made to employ preventative actions that preclude the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.

3. Positive emotional and behavioural interventions and mental health supports are provided for all students who need them in a safe and least restrictive environments.
4. Effective implementation of school-side programs that support positive behaviour, such as Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS), are linked to greater academic achievement among students, and to significantly fewer disciplinary problems, increased constructive instructional time, and to increased perception of safer teaching and learning environments (pg.2 Provincial Guidelines – *Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings*.)
5. There is a continuum of interventions in the management of disruptive behaviour. Behavioural interventions address the underlying cause and purpose of potentially harmful behaviour.
6. For students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others, a functional behaviour assessment is recommended to inform the development of a behavioural intervention plan. These plans incorporate positive interventions and include instruction in appropriate behaviour and strategies that will help students to learn to regulate and de-escalate their behaviour. Opportunities for parents/guardians and where appropriate, students to be consulted in the development of these plans must be offered.
7. Physical restraint or seclusion is only used in exceptional circumstances where the behaviour of a student poses imminent danger or serious physical harm to self or others and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending danger or serious physical harm. Physical restraint or seclusion is discontinued once imminent danger or serious physical harm to self/and or others has dissipated.
8. It is expected that all staff working in situations that involves physical restraint or seclusion is trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (CPI).
9. Students exhibiting behaviour that is compromising safety of self and/or students should be supported by appropriate documentation support (i.e. IEP and/or Behaviour Plan and/or Safety Plan and/or specialist consultation).
10. Parents/guardians of students who require physical restraint or seclusion will be informed as soon as possible when these interventions are used.
11. Recurring practice of physical restraint or seclusion is not common practice in any student's education program. If a student struggles to show safe behaviour and interrupts the learning of other consistently, educational programming may need to be reviewed with parents, outside agency and team. This review may include and is not exclusive to: an abbreviated school day, an alternate setting, alternate programming, home schooling, Distributed Learning until the student's behaviours have stabilized.