

RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS POLICY

*The Currajong School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)***

PURPOSE

To ensure our school community is informed about student restraint, and the contingent legal obligations.

DEFINITIONS

Physical restraint means the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a student's body or part of their body, and where students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained.

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student in a room or area 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 refer to a situation 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, for example: it is not locked.

DET POLICY

The Currajong School acts in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET). Regulation 25 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 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 dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person."

WHEN PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION MAY BE USED

Physical restraint has been associated with injury and increased trauma to the student and the staff member responsible for the physical restraint. Staff of the Currajong School may only use physical restraint on a student when there is imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others; and where the action of physical restraint or seclusion would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances and there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

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 their duty of care to their students, their right to protect themselves from harm, and their obligations under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter).

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 (see above).

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 at The Currajong School.

Restraint and seclusion **must not** 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.

Types of physical restraint which **must not** be used include:

- any restraint which covers the student's mouth or nose, in any way restricts breathing.
- the application of pressure to a student's neck, chest, abdomen, joints, or pressure points to cause pain or which involves the hyperextension of joints.
- holding a student's head forward, headlocks, choke holds.
- take-downs which allow students to free-fall to the ground whether in a prone or supine position or otherwise.
- wrestling holds (including 'full or half nelsons'), using a hog-tied position or straddling any part of a student's body.
- basket holds, bear hugs, 'therapeutic holding'.

MECHANICAL RESTRAINT

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

Medication primarily used to control or subdue behaviour and which is not being used to treat an underlying physical or mental illness or a physical condition should never be used in schools.

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
AND
- only restrain the student for the minimum duration required and stop restraining the student once the danger has passed.

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

- the age/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 of 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.

ACTIONS AFTER RESTRAINT HAS BEEN USED

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

Action	Description
Reporting the physical restraint/ seclusion	<p>The staff member(s) involved in the incident must immediately notify the Principal of The Currajong School of the incident.</p> <p>The Principal or Principal's delegate 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 WorkSafe.</p>

Action	Description
Providing supports for those involved	<p>Following the use of restraint on a student, appropriate supports must be offered to 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 and the development of a Behaviour Support Plan. • Other students and staff members who were involved in or witnessed the incident. This may include a debriefing session in relation to the incident, and the offer of counselling support. •
Maintain records of the incident	<p>A written record of the incident and the physical restraint or seclusion used must be made as soon as practicable. This record should be added to a student’s file 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) • 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 • 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 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, considering the training needs of staff working closely with the student/s involved in the incident.</p>

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)

EVALUATION

This procedure will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Approval date	Approved by	Next Review
April 2020	School Board	February 2023