

Pembina Hills Public Schools believes in providing an opportunity to learn in a safe and positive environment where each individual is respected and valued. School staff are expected to employ positive and proactive means of engaging a child/student to help prevent the use of seclusion or physical restraint. The principle of using the least restrictive and/or least intrusive option is to guide the use of physical restraint and/or seclusion. Seclusion and/or physical restraint are only to be employed as a last resort after less restrictive methods have been attempted, where possible.

Scope

This Administrative Procedure is to be employed when staff feels that a student is acting in an unsafe manner that is threatening to the safety of the student, the safety of others or is likely to damage property and restraint/ physical intervention is necessary to restore and maintain safety. Restraint cannot be chemical or mechanical. Restraint or seclusion must be immediately reported to the Principal.

1. Definition of terms

- a. **Chemical restraint** – the use of physical intervention to control a student’s behaviour or limit freedom of movement through administration of any medication or pepper spray for the purpose of restraining the student. **Chemical restraint is not allowed under any circumstances.**
- b. **Mechanical restraint** – the use of physical intervention to control a student or limit freedom of movement through the use of a mechanical device, including but not limited to, handcuffs, plastic ties, ankle restraints, leather cuffs or hospital-type restraints, tasers or batons. **Mechanical restraint is not allowed under any circumstances.**
- c. **Physical restraint** is defined as any method of using physical contact for restricting or immobilizing another person’s freedom of movement, physical activity, or normal access to their body. It is a personal restriction that serves as a means of controlling an individual’s movement, reconstituting behavioural control, and establishing and maintaining safety for the individual and other individuals. This would not include developmentally appropriate, gentle physical guidance for children in pre-school programs. Temporary physical contact for purposes such as moving a student away from danger or breaking up a fight is not considered physical restraint. Physical restraint also does not include providing physical guidance or the prompting of a child/student when teaching a skill.
- d. **Seclusion** is the involuntary confinement or isolation of a person, alone in a room or area from which the person cannot freely exit or is physically prevented from leaving. This generally occurs in a room with a door that has a lock. The lock may be engaged, or if not engaged, the door is otherwise blocked or held shut.

- e. **Time-out** is a behaviour intervention for the purposes of reducing or stopping challenging behaviour in the long-term, while seclusion and physical restraint are emergency or safety procedures that are to be used in exceptional situations for immediately preventing harm to self or others. This would include moving students to a different location in the classroom, a quiet corner, or a sensory room.

2. Authorization

Using restraint in schools may apply as a last resort in emergency situations in order to comply with *Section 33(1)(d) of the Education Act* which requires Boards to maintain a safe and caring environment. Reasonable physical force is necessary where:

- Alternative, non-physical interventions are not effective in removing the imminent threat of harm.
- The use of seclusion or physical restraint is to be immediately discontinued when the child's/student's behaviour no longer poses such danger.
- The action is consistent with a student's individual educational plan or behavioral plan, which has been developed by the learning team.
- If physical restraint is required for a student without a behaviour/safety plan due to an unexpected safety issue, it is expected that a behaviour/safety plan would immediately be developed.
- All seclusion environments are safe, humane and abide by all building, safety and fire codes.
- Seclusion and/or physical restraint procedures are conducted in a manner that reduces harm to a child/student and others.
- There is continual visual and aural monitoring of any child/student throughout the period of seclusion or physical restraint.
- Seclusion is not used when a child/student is engaging in severe self-injurious behaviours.
- School staff who are able to communicate with a child/student who is unable to adequately express themselves through speech alone are present at all times if seclusion is used with such a child/student.

3. Prohibited Practices

This procedure does not permit:

- Restraint as a means of punishment, or as a means of discipline.
- Restraint as a means of preventing behaviour that is not physically harmful from occurring.
- To stop a child/student who is engaged in destructive behaviour such as damaging property, unless there is a risk to the safety of the child/student or others.
- Restraint as a means of denying any basic necessity, including use of bathroom, access to food/lunch or appropriate articles of clothing.
- When a known medical, physical, psychological or other condition would make the use of seclusion or physical restraint dangerous for a child/student.
- Any position that interferes with breathing such as a face-down prone position, compression on the chest or back, or pressure against an object.

4. Training

Staff will be provided with the opportunity to receive relevant training for managing threatening student behaviour. School staff are expected to be aware or have knowledge of provincial and local legislation on the use of emergency procedures (e.g., *Occupational Health and Safety Act, Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Occupational Health and Safety Code, Alberta Fire Code, etc.*).

In circumstances where an approved plan involving restraint or seclusion exists for a student, staff will be provided with adequate training and information:

- If seclusion and/or physical restraint are to be used within a school, it is expected that Behaviour Specialists (e.g., qualified professionals trained in function-based approaches to managing problem behaviour) are consulted on the use of seclusion or physical restraint as a general safety procedure or an emergency measure prior to their use.
- Division Student Services will designate at least two staff members that are responsible for training and oversight of the use of these procedures.
- Schools are expected to include among their staff, individuals with training in: conflict de-escalation; crisis de-escalation; non-violent crisis intervention; and implementing positive behaviour interventions to facilitate defusing conflict and crisis situations.
- School staff are expected to undertake training in implementing positive and proactive strategies to reduce the need for crisis response strategies.
- Seclusion and physical restraint are to be implemented only by staff who have adequate knowledge and training in the use of these procedures.
- School staff who work with a child/student in situations where there is a potential for imminent danger of serious harm to the child/student or others are expected to have practical training in prevention and de-escalation strategies, recognizing situations where imminent harm is likely to occur and safely implementing crisis responses when warranted.

5. Data Collection

Schools will maintain a record of each incident when the use of restraint/isolation is applied to a student. At a minimum, the school will utilize Form 5-18-A Incident Report on the Use of Restraint/Seclusion which will record the following information:

- Name of the student
- Name of the individual(s) who applied the restraint/isolation.
- Time, date and manner in which the student's parent or guardian was informed of the restraint.
- Type of restraint/isolation applied.
- Duration of the restraint/isolation.
- Description of the student's behaviour that was the cause of the restraint/isolation.
- Names of school staff who witnessed the restraint/isolation.
- Whether the restraint resulted in any injury to the student, other students or the staff member(s) who applied the restraint.
- What disciplinary follow-up action was taken toward the student, if any.

This report will be provided to the Principal or designate by the end of the day and placed in the student's cumulative file with a copy forwarded to the Director of Student Services (within two days). Incidents will be reviewed by the student's support team to determine ways to reduce the need to use such intervention.

6. Debriefing

- After each incident where there is use of seclusion and/or physical restraint, it is expected that a debriefing session with all involved staff occur within three days of the incident. Details should be documented on Form 5-18-B Debriefing on the Use of Restraint/Seclusion.
- The purpose of this debriefing session is to help determine the cause of the behaviour and what preventative actions could be implemented in the future to avoid the use of seclusion or physical restraint. When possible, appropriate expertise should be involved in the debriefing session.
- An opportunity to de-brief with parents/guardians and the student, where appropriate, is provided as soon as possible after the incident.
- A review of the individual behaviour plan, where one has been previously created, occurs and the plan is updated to prevent and reduce recurrence.

7. Parent or Guardian

When the use of seclusion and/or physical restraint is being considered for a child/student as a pre-planned safety, emergency or crisis measure, it is expected that parents/guardians are involved in the development of these plans and provide their informed consent. Where appropriate, children/students should also be involved.

If parents/guardians do not support the use of seclusion, involve them in determining if alternative options that are equally protective of the child/student and staff safety are reasonable, and include these in the child's/student's Individual Program Plan (IPP).

Parents/guardians are to be informed as soon as possible after each incident involving the use of physical restraint or seclusion with their child. Reasonable efforts to reach the parent/guardian are expected to be made and documented before the end of the school day.

Parents have the same right of appeal as with all programming practices ([AP 20-03 School Dispute Resolution \(External Communication Protocol\)](#)).

8. Review and Accountability

School staff are to complete Form 5-18-A Incident Report on the Use of Restraint/Seclusion and forward this document to the Director of Student Services. All documentation for the previous month must be sent by the third day of the next month.

The Director of Student Services will forward the Division's use of Seclusion rooms to Alberta Education each month. A summary of this information will be shared annually during the Student Services Assurance report to the Board.

Reference

[Education Act](#)

[Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools](#)

[AP 20-03 School Dispute Resolution \(External Communication Protocol\)](#)

[AP 60-12 Inclusive Practices \(Student Placement and other Programming Decisions\)](#)

[Form 5-18-A Incident Report on the Use of Restraint/Seclusion](#)
[Form 5-18-B Debriefing on the Use of Restraint/Seclusion](#)