



Student Restraint & Seclusion Policy

Rationale:

The safety and wellbeing of all students and staff is the utmost priority.

Supporting students with challenging behaviours is part of ensuring all students have the opportunity to reach their potential – regardless of their personal challenges, circumstances or ability.

This policy is part of policies, processes and procedures for responding to violent and dangerous student behaviours.

The *Fifteen Principles* of student restraint and seclusion as outlined in the document *The Principles for Reduction of Restraint and Seclusion in Victorian Government Schools* (DE&T, 2017), provide the context for this policy along with the DE&T Restraint Policy.

Aims:

- To ensure that student restraint and seclusion is not used at Hopetoun P-12 College unless the student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to self or others, where no other actions would be considered reasonable, or where there is no less restrictive means available.
- To help prevent the occurrence of violent and dangerous behaviours, and respond should they occur.
- To support students to manage their challenging behaviours.
- To ensure the safety of students who exhibit challenging behaviours.
- To ensure the safety of all students or any other person.
- To ensure the safety of staff when managing students who display violent and dangerous behaviours.
- To detail guidelines for the use of restraint and or seclusion of students displaying violent or dangerous behaviours.

Definition of Terms

Restraint means the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a student's body or part of their body.

Seclusion is the solitary confinement of a student in a room or area (e.g. a garden) from which the student is prevented from leaving by a barrier or another person.

Policy Context

Regulation 25 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 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 that is dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person.”

Implementation:

- Staff will only use physical restraint and seclusion on a student when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.
- Where physical restraint is used it will be only as restrictive as necessary to avert the possible danger.
- Staff will use the minimum force needed to protect against the danger of harm.
- Staff will apply the physical restraint for the minimum duration required and remove it once the danger has passed.
- **Seclusion** will only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person, as permitted by Regulation 25.
- 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 in Victorian government schools hence will not be established at Hopetoun P-12 College.
- Restraint and seclusion will not be included in a Behaviour Support Plan or be used as a routine behaviour management technique, to punish or discipline a student.
- Any restraint which covers the student's mouth or nose, in any way restricts breathing, takes the student to the ground into the prone or supine position, involves the hyperextension of joints, or application of pressure to the neck, chest or joints, must not be used.
- 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.
 - Only restrain the student for the minimum duration required and stop restraining the student once the danger has passed.
 - Staff will 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.

- If restraint is used on any student detailed records must be maintained by staff involved, witnesses and the principal.
- The records will detail the incident, report on support provided and provide information on follow-up actions. The SSU must be contacted and an eduSafe form must be completed for College records.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle or earlier as required.

References:

School Policy Advisory Guide March 2017.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/restraint.aspx>

Department of Education and Training (2017), *The Principles for Reduction and Elimination of Restraint and Seclusion in Victorian Government Schools*, DE&T, Victoria.

This policy was last ratified by College Council on: