

388 BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS

Background

The Division believes that there are a variety of strategies and approaches to promote and encourage positive and respectful behaviour in children/students. It is important that teachers, school, school authority leaders and parents/guardians have a common and shared understanding of these strategies and approaches, and work together collaboratively to contribute to safe and caring learning environments.

The Division directs that its staff shall seek to utilize positive means in dealing with student behaviour (Administrative Procedure 340). However, when physical restraint or time-out strategies are appropriate, the Division directs that the least restrictive measure, which is likely to be effective, be used to control the situation.

The Division does not support the use of Seclusion Rooms, which involve the involuntary confinement or isolation of a student where the student is prevented or incapable of evacuating the space without the assistance of another person.

Definitions

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 controlling an individual's movement, reconstituting behavioural control, and establishing and maintaining safety for the individual and other individuals.

Physical restraint does not include physical escort, which may involve temporarily touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of accompanying and inducing a child/student who is beginning to act out or is slightly agitated to walk to a safe location. Such contact is often brief and directional and does not serve as immobilization or a means for reconstituting behavioural control.

Temporary physical contact for purposes such as moving a child/student away from danger or breaking up a fight is not considered physical restraint. Physical restraint does not include providing physical guidance or the prompting of a child/student when teaching a skill.

The term "time-out" is a shortened form of a behavioural management strategy known as time-out from positive reinforcement. It is a behavioural intervention that involves reducing or limiting the amount of reinforcement that is available to an individual for a brief period of time in order to decrease or stop a predefined challenging behaviour. Time-out does not include strategies or spaces intended for other purposes, such as calming a child/student. These situations are not considered time-out from positive reinforcement.

Procedures

1. The learning environment must be a welcoming, safe and caring one where children/students benefit from a variety of positive reinforcements and instructional strategies. Positive reinforcement strategies include, but are not limited to, praise, encouragement, and reward for positive behavior.

Physical Restraint

1. Appropriate physical restraint may be used by school employees in crisis situations in which a student is causing, or is likely to cause, physical harm to them self or others.
2. A positive behavior support plan, which includes preventative strategies as well as crisis response strategies, shall be jointly developed by the home, the school, and a professional competent in behaviour management, and will be included in the child/student Individual Program Plan (IPP).
3. Each program shall address, as its primary goal, the development of new behaviours through positive means that will reduce the likelihood of severe inappropriate behaviour.
4. Each program shall outline, in strict behavioural terms, when and how physical restraint procedures are to be used. The least restrictive physical restraint procedure which will be effective shall be used in the program.
5. Each program shall specify the type of individualized documentation/assessment it requires (e.g. Functional Behavioural assessment)
6. A copy of the plan shall be sent to the Director of Learning Services prior to it being implemented.
7. The informed consent of the parent(s) must be obtained in writing prior to the implementation of the program.
 - a. This consent may be terminated at any time upon submission of written notice by the parent(s).
 - b. In the event that parental consent is refused, it may be necessary to consider excusing, suspending or expelling the student from school if the student is causing, or is likely to cause, physical harm to themselves or others.
8. Each program shall be supervised on a regular basis, by the Director of Learning Services or designate. This supervision shall include routine evaluation of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the program.

9. All staff members who may, as part of their responsibilities in the program, be required to use physical restraint procedures, shall be properly trained in these procedures prior to the implementation of the program.
10. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the above procedures are adhered to.

Time-Out

1. Time-out is a behavioural intervention that needs to be strategically planned, implemented and linked to a positive behaviour support plan.
2. Time-out is to be used in a reasonable manner, in accordance with the expectations articulated in this Administrative Procedure and be appropriate for the child's/student's age and/or other characteristics.
3. Time-out, as a strategy, may take the form of Non-exclusion Time-out (time-out within the classroom or other instructional setting) or Exclusion Time-out (time-out in a separate space outside of the classroom or instructional setting)
4. The appropriate level of professional and/or specialized expertise (e.g., qualified professionals trained in function-based approaches to managing problem behaviour) is to be sought in planning and implementing time-out procedures.
5. The Principal shall:
 - a. Create opportunities and support school staff in accessing professional learning opportunities in positive behaviour interventions and supports, and function-based approaches to problem behaviours.
 - b. Ensure that school staff who implement time-out procedures have completed the relevant training prior to implementing these procedures.
 - c. Facilitate access to the appropriate specialized expertise to support school staff in managing problem behaviours.
6. The teacher shall:
 - a. Participate in training on implementing positive behaviour supports and function-based approaches to problem behaviours.
 - b. Complete training on the use of time-out procedures prior to implementing time-out procedures.
 - c. Consult with the appropriate level of professional and/or specialized expertise to support managing problem behaviours.

7. If exclusion time-out is to be used as a behaviour reduction strategy for a child/student who displays challenging behaviour that negatively affects their learning or the learning of others on an ongoing or recurrent basis, it is expected that prior to its use:
 - a. parents/guardians, and where appropriate, children/students, are provided with opportunities for meaningful involvement in discussions and decision-making regarding the use of such time-out intervention;
 - b. informed written parental/guardian consent is obtained and documented in the child's/student's positive behaviour support plan. If parents/guardians do not support the use of exclusion time-out, involve them in determining if alternative options are possible and include these in the child's/student's positive behaviour support plan
 - c. a positive behaviour support plan is developed and included in the child's/student's individual program plan (IPP)
 - d. a documented plan is in place should the child/student refuse to go to the designated space;
 - e. a plan and/or process is outlined for moving the child/student to the designated space should physical guidance or physical transporting/relocating the child/student be necessary;
 - f. safety features and specifications of the space are detailed; and the space to be used meets building codes and fire codes. Multi-use spaces within the school, such as a library, principal's office, etc. are better utilized for exclusion time-out, provided other sources of reinforcement are not available in these spaces.

Reference

Guidelines for Time-out in Alberta Schools
Standards for Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Alberta Schools

History

Developed: January 2020