

SECLUSION

The Seven Oaks School Division believes the best learning and behaving takes place in a safe, caring, respectful and inclusive environment. The division recognizes its responsibility to promote safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive learning environments for students, staff, and the community.

PREVENTION

In providing a safe environment for all students it is necessary to have a continuum of supports, services and interventions for all students.

All behaviour is a form of communication. When a student is unable to communicate their needs verbally, they may use their behaviour to tell us they are stressed/distressed or that there is a problem that needs to be resolved.

To promote a safe, caring, respectful and inclusive learning environment, opportunities for students and staff to increase their understanding of behaviour and to learn to manage/respond to behaviour in alternative ways is pertinent. A whole-school positive behaviour approach that is tiered to meet student need is the foundation for teaching students the skills they need to engage in positive behaviour.

DEFINITIONS/TERMINOLOGY

Seclusion

Seclusion is a safety procedure and not a teaching strategy. It is not used as an intervention strategy for anticipated behaviour.

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area where the student cannot freely exit or is physically prevented from leaving. This generally occurs in a room with a door that has a lock that is engaged or if not engaged, the door is otherwise blocked or held shut. Seclusion is often used in association with physical restraint.

Seclusion is a safety response used only in situations when a student is in extreme distress and their behaviour has escalated to the point where it poses an immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others and only after proactive strategies, de-escalation interventions and less restrictive measures have been exhausted.

Seclusion has a negative impact on school staff, students, parents/legal guardians and the school climate and as a result is never used:

- As part of a student-specific plan to manage/change student behaviour.
- As a substitute for appropriate educational programming or effective behavioural intervention planning.

- As a punishment, a consequence, a disciplinary action or a way to force compliance,
- to protect property at risk for damage when there is no immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others.
- When a student is non-compliant, confrontational or verbally aggressive but there is no immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others.

Seclusion is not a defined space/room/area. Rooms, spaces or areas designed specifically for the purposes of seclusion are not to be created.

The use of seclusion as a safety response differs from sensory/regulation interventions or time out.

Sensory Room/Area

A sensory space is used proactively to meet a student's sensory needs and promote self-regulation. It is a therapeutic intervention that is written into a student-specific plan based on the recommendation of a specialist who monitors its use. Seclusion is not a therapeutic intervention.

Time Out

Time out occurs when access to reinforcement is removed for a period of time following the occurrence of an identified problem behaviour in order to reduce or stop that behaviour. Time out may involve removing a student from sources of positive reinforcement as a consequence of specific undesired behaviour and is commonly used two ways: non-exclusion and exclusion.

Non-exclusion time out does not involve removal of the student from the learning environment. It occurs within the classroom where the student maintains the ability to continue to observe and hear what is going on for a period of time.

Exclusion time out occurs when the student is withdrawn from the classroom setting for a period of time where there is no longer access to what is going on in the classroom but where the student has access to other students or staff.

Time out and seclusion, although often used interchangeably, are not synonymous. Time out may or may not involve the removal of a student to an isolated setting. It is used as a consequence with the intent of supporting behaviour change. It is never used when the safety of a student is a concern. Seclusion requires a student be isolated as a safety response and is not used as a consequence to support behavioural change.

If a student chooses to be alone in a room, space or area and is free to leave at any point (e.g., independent work in a quiet space, student-initiated short break), this is not considered to be time out or seclusion.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint refers to a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move their torso, arms, legs or head freely to secure and maintain the safety of the person or the safety of others. Physical restraint is a safety response used only in situations when a student poses an immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others.

RESPONSE PROCEDURE

If a student's behaviour has escalated to the point where it poses an immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others, staff and people who have care and charge of the student should immediately call for assistance from the principal and those staff members who have adequate knowledge and training to de-escalate and manage the event. Stressors should be removed from the environment when possible.

Working as a team staff should focus on protecting the safety of all students including the student at risk of causing immediate serious physical harm to self or others. The goal is to secure and stabilize the situation in a calm, coordinated manner.

If necessary, other students in the vicinity should be moved in a calm, orderly manner to a safe distance. The student in crisis is not to be left alone. The environment should be scanned for potential dangers. Objects that could cause immediate serious physical harm should be removed if it is safe to do so. Attention should be given to procedures for safe evacuation.

Seclusion may need to be employed as a safety response as a last resort and only after proactive strategies, de-escalation interventions and less restrictive measures have been exhausted. A person familiar with the student should assess the risk for injury when the student's behaviour is escalated.

If seclusion is used it must be discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm to the student or others has dissipated. School staff must have clear criteria for discontinuation of seclusion and this must be communicated to the student.

If seclusion is used, school staff must ensure the following.

- The student is safe.
- Regard and respect for the student's dignity is maintained.
- The student can communicate their basic human needs and have those needs met.
- Staff are calm and always communicating with the student .
- A staff member is assigned the role of observer and notetaker to record a factual account of the event (see documentation requirements): video/photo recordings are discouraged.
- Continuous visual and aural monitoring must be maintained for the entire period of seclusion; occasional checks are not acceptable.

- Health and safety policies and/or regulations related to The Workplace Health and Safety Act and Workplace Health and Safety Regulation are to be followed (Manitoba).
- Seclusion is discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others has dissipated.
- School and divisional emergency response procedures are followed in the event that further safety measures are necessary.

REPORTING AN DOCUMENTATION

Any event that involves the use of seclusion must be reported on the day of the event to the:

- Principal (or designate).
- Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s).
- Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.
- Superintendent (or designate).

Each event of the use seclusion must be documented as an Incident (Incident Type - Seclusion) in AdminConnect.

DEBRIEFING

The event must be debriefed to review and reflect upon the circumstances and its impact. Where appropriate, debriefing meetings will occur with parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the student and school staff involved in the seclusion event. The student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and the student may have the opportunity to be accompanied and assisted by a person of their choosing during the debriefing. Debriefings should be in-person and take place as soon as possible after the event.

Additional debriefings should be made available to others in the school who were impacted physically and/or emotionally by the event.

Debriefings are led by the principal (or designate) who has training/experience in leading a debriefing process. The debriefing should focus on how the use of seclusion could have been prevented and should identify what can be done to avoid seclusion if a similar event occurs in the future. A summary of the debriefing(s) and any outcomes decided upon is documented on the Incident Form (Seclusion) in AdminConnect.

The student support team must meet (or be formed) as soon as reasonably possible after the seclusion event to:

- Examine what happened.
- Conduct a function-based assessment to learn more about the purpose of the behaviour and precipitating factors.
- Engage in the student-specific planning process to write or revise the student-specific plan identifying what needs to be changed to decrease the chance of the

behaviour recurring (e.g., changes to environment, changes to positive behaviour strategies, alternative responses to the student's behaviour).

- Identify staff development or training needs and initiate a plan for addressing these needs.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Data on use of seclusion will be monitored annually to evaluate and review data to understand the circumstances around the use of seclusion facilitating the implementation of more effective strategies to support educational and behavioural programming.

The review will include:

- Incident reports to identify any patterns or trends to inform decision making.
- Harm incurred by students and staff.
- Repeated use of seclusion for an individual student, multiple uses within the same classroom or multiple uses by the same individual that would trigger a review by the school and the school division and may indicate a need for additional training and/or support.
- Adherence to seclusion policies and procedures.
- Staff professional support and training needs.
- Environmental considerations.
- The effectiveness of policies and procedures in decreasing seclusion using indicators established in consultation with the safety and health committee, parents/legal guardians, students and community-based service providers.
- The need to update the content of seclusion policies and/or procedures to ensure consistency with any new developments/or new practices.