

Use of Seclusion

A. Guiding Principles

Beautiful Plains School Division is committed to ensuring a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment, that allows every individual in the school community to feel accepted, valued, and safe.

Beautiful Plains School Division supports the following principles regarding the use of seclusion in school settings:

- In promoting and guaranteeing the rights of children, as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children should be free from all forms of physical or mental violence and be treated with dignity.
- In all decisions the best interests of the child should be the primary consideration.
- Schools are expected to engage in strengths-based practices that emphasize positive behavioural interventions and supports that make the need for seclusion unnecessary.
- Schools are aware of, and engage the assistance of, additional resources and supports that may be available in their community.
- Teachers and other professionals have a responsibility to engage in ongoing professional development on implementing positive behaviour supports and preventative strategies.
- Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are an integral part of the student support team.
- Seclusion is used only in exceptional circumstances when a student is engaging in intense violent behaviour that presents a significant and immediate risk to the student or others and should only be considered as a last resort.

B. Definitions

Seclusion

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. It is used in a situation where there is clear, significant and immediate danger to the student or others. Seclusion is a response not a room. Seclusion is not used to help students attain skills and knowledge and therefore not included in a student-specific plan.

Sensory/Regulation Spaces

A sensory space is an umbrella term used to categorize a broad variety of therapeutic spaces (e.g., calming space, sensory modulation/integration room, and multi-sensory room). A sensory space is used proactively to meet a student's sensory needs and promote self-regulation. The use of a sensory space would be set up and monitored in consultation with an occupational therapist and would be included in a student specific plan.

Time-out

Time-out and seclusion, although often used interchangeably, are not synonymous. Time-out is used to reduce behaviour by removing access to reinforcement for a specified and limited period. Time-out does not necessarily require removal of a student from a learning environment to an isolated or secluded setting.

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 in order 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.

C. Procedure

The following procedures shall address the use, or potential use, of seclusion in school settings:

- **Seclusion is only used:**
 - when a student is engaging in intense violent behaviour that presents a significant and immediate risk to the student or others *and* when all other less restrictive interventions have been tried and were unsuccessful
 - *and* until the danger of serious harm to self or others has dissipated
- **Seclusion is not used:**
 - as discipline, as a consequence, or to force compliance
 - in the student-specific plan (e.g., a strategy in a behaviour intervention plan)
 - as a substitute for appropriate educational programming
- **Before the use of seclusion, schools must:**
 - be engaged in whole school planning for safety and belonging
 - develop processes and supports that utilize a team approach for helping students with challenging behaviour
 - ensure all school staff receive ongoing training and professional learning in strengths-based positive interventions and supports
 - ensure specific school staff receive ongoing training and professional learning in conflict/crisis de-escalation strategies
 - educate staff and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) about the use of seclusion
 - include copies of procedures on the use of seclusion in teacher handbooks and the school crisis plan
- **During the use of seclusion, it is critical that:**
 - risk of further harm to the student is minimized
 - the student be treated with respect and dignity
 - the parent of the student must be contacted as soon as reasonably possible

- a student in seclusion must be continuously observed by an adult both visually and aurally for the entire period of seclusion - occasional checks are not acceptable
 - school staff are able to communicate effectively with the student
 - a staff member is assigned the role of observer and note taker to record a factual account of the event
 - all health and safety policies and/or regulations related to Workplace Health and Safety Manitoba regulation (M.R. 217/2006) are followed
 - 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
- **After the use of seclusion:**
 - the incident must be reported to the principal, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the Student Services Coordinator, and the Superintendent/CEO (or designate) on the day of the incident
 - the incident must be documented (i.e., a written report that includes details and necessary and relevant information) and a copy placed in the pupil file (it is recommended this be done within 48 hours)
 - debriefing(s) led by the principal (or designate) must occur to reflect upon the circumstances and impact of the seclusion and:
 - take place as soon as possible after the incident
 - include school staff, parent(s)/legal guardian(s), and student
 - be available to others in the school who may have been impacted
 - be noted in the pupil file
 - the student support team must meet as soon as reasonably possible:
 - to examine what happened/what caused the incident and what could be changed
 - to review the need for the development or revision of a student-specific plan to prevent future incidences
- Beautiful Plains School Division will annually review the use of seclusion, in conjunction with a review of its procedure, to:
 - examine patterns and general trends
 - update content and ensure consistency with any new developments
 - identify and plan for training needs

Approved November 2, 2021