# Physical Restraint and Vaccinations

### Vaccinations are strongly encouraged as the best way to protect individuals, families, and school communities from the spread of infectious diseases. This resource explains how vaccine delivery in Victorian government schools might intersect with the Restraint and Seclusion Policy.

## Physical Restraint and Vaccinations

## Physical restraint is not permitted to be used to vaccinate a student.

## No-one – including parents/carers, medical practitioners and health authorities, school immunisation coordinators or students themselves – can consent to or approve the use of physical restraint to vaccinate a student.

## The [Restraint and Seclusion Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy) applies to all Victorian government schools, school staff, external practitioners and volunteers working with students. The Policy applies to:

## the school-based Immunisation Program

## Doctors in Secondary Schools program

## school-based Pop-up COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics attended by school staff and/or students, even when provided by an external organisation and/or provided outside of school hours.

## It is the responsibility of school principals to ensure that the Restraint and Seclusion Policy and [Immunisation Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/immunisation/policy) are complied with and that non-school Department staff working with students are provided with a link to this resource.

## Under Regulation 25 (Restraint from danger) of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017, physical restraint of a student is only permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is immediately required and reasonably necessary to protect the safety of a student or another person from acts or behaviour that are dangerous to them.

## Physically restraining a student to administer a vaccination is inconsistent with Regulation 25 and the Department’s Restraint and Seclusion Policy.

## Holding and Vaccinations

Holding a student’s hand or placing an arm around the student’s shoulder to provide comfort or stability is permitted. Holding a student’s arm to provide stability during the vaccination is also permitted if the student’s body is not restrained.

‘Holding’ is a practice that is without physical force, where the purpose is providing comfort or stability.

‘Clinical holding’ is a planned practice of positioning a person that allows clinical staff to provide essential healthcare or personal care. ‘Clinical holding’ is not to be used for students who are unwilling to cooperate or who refuse to consent to vaccinations on school premises.

Students with disability may have additional support needs for receiving vaccinations. The Department recommends schools review the [Guidelines for Immunisation Practices in Schools for Students with Disabilities](https://www.mcri.edu.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/gihps_guideline_2021.pdf) for interactions and processes that maximise student wellbeing, minimise harmful effects and respect student dignity and autonomy.

## Contact

If you have any questions regarding vaccinations, please contact:

Health and Engagement Division

Email: health.advice@education.vic.gov.au

If you have any questions regarding physical restraint, please contact:

Principal Behaviour Support Adviser

Email: restraint.seclusion@education.vic.gov.au

If you have any questions regarding COVID-19, please go to:

## the [COVID-19 — School Operations Advice](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/covid-19-school-operations/advice)in PAL

## the [COVID-19 Advice](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx)on the Department's website for information and updates

## or phone 1800 338 663 (8:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm Saturday and Sunday excluding public holidays). If you need an interpreter, call 131 450 first.