# Fact sheet for Student Support Services (SSS) and Visiting Teachers:

# Physical restraint and seclusion

This information on physical restraint and seclusion is for Student Support Services (SSS) and Visiting Teachers.

## The Law

Regulation 25 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 permits school staff:

* to take reasonable action, that is immediately required, to restrain a student from acts or behaviour that are dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person.

As examples, the use of physical restraint might be considered ‘reasonable’ if a student is prevented from running onto a busy road, a student is prevented from physically injuring someone or is stopped from engaging in self-injurious behaviour.

The Department has accepted ‘restraint of a student’ as physical restraint and seclusion of a student.

**The** [**Restraint and Seclusion Policy**](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy)

* Physical restraint and seclusion are only permitted within Victorian government schools in an emergency and when immediately required to protect the safety of a student or another person.
* Physical restraint and seclusion must not be included in [Behaviour Support](https://content.sdp.education.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/Behaviour-Students-Behaviour-Support-Plan_0.pdf) or Safety Plans or similar documents.
* Schools are not permitted to have designated seclusion rooms or areas.
* [Chemical restraint](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/restraint-seclusion-chemical-restraint-administering-prn-medication-to-control-behaviour.docx) and [mechanical restraint](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/restraint-seclusion-mechanical-restraint.docx) are not permitted in Victorian government schools.
* No one (including student, parent/carer, teacher, clinician, or practitioner) can authorise, consent to, or approve the use of physical restraint or seclusion of a student in a school.
* Physical restraint does not include protective physical interventions.
* Non-school Department staff, such as allied health practitioners and NDIS-funded therapists working with students, are required to comply with the [Restraint and Seclusion Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy) and Guidelines.
* Schools must report every physical restraint and seclusion incident on eduSafe Plus, the department’s online incident reporting and hazard management system, or by calling the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126.

## What are physical restraint and seclusion?

Physical restraint is the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student’s body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained.

Physical restraint does not include protective physical interventions which use physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage a student's grip, but from which a student can move freely away.

Seclusion refers to leaving a student alone in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving by a barrier or another person. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held closed by another person.

Seclusion does not include supervised situations such as time-out, in-school suspensions, detentions, or exam situations; other situations where the student can freely exit an area, or suspension and expulsion from school.

## Practice guidance

School staff must only use physical restraint or seclusion when other less restrictive measures have not been effective.

Use of physical restraint or seclusion must stop as soon as the immediate threat of harm or danger has passed.

School staff must continuously visually monitor student/s during a physical restraint or seclusion incident for signs of distress or pain and to ensure the student’s physical health is not jeopardised.

School staff must not use physical restraint or seclusion as behaviour management strategies. Staff must not plan for the use of physical restraint or seclusion and physical restraint and seclusion must not be included in [Behaviour Support](https://content.sdp.education.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/Behaviour-Students-Behaviour-Support-Plan_0.pdf) or Safety Plans or similar documents.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has its own rules about restrictive practices. These rules do not apply to schools.

All Department staff, including Student Support Services and Visiting Teachers, must act if they observe the physical restraint or seclusion of a student which is inconsistent with the policy. Such action includes alerting the principal to the incident, ensuring the incident is reported, alerting their line manager, and if necessary, contacting the Principal Behaviour Support Adviser.

## Incidents of physical restraint and seclusion

Parents and carers have the right to be informed about policies pertaining to the use of physical restraint and seclusion.

Parents and carers must be informed, as soon as practicable, following an incident in which physical restraint or seclusion has been used with their child.

Principals are responsible for reporting every physical restraint and seclusion incident on eduSafe Plus, the department’s online incident reporting and hazard management system, or by calling the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126.

Principals are responsible for reviewing physical restraint and seclusion incidents. An [in-school-review](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/restraint-seclusion-guide-for-conducting-school-based-review-meeting.docx) should happen within three to five working days of the incident.

The goal of an in-school-review is to reduce the risk of an incident happening again. A review might include developing or modifying risk management, safety, and behaviour support plans, developing school-wide positive and preventative strategies, modifying or intensifying support for individual student/s and identifying training and support for staff.

Principals are responsible for liaising with Area and Regional teams and external agencies to ensure appropriate supports are implemented as required.

## Prevention of physical restraint and seclusion

Preventing behavioural emergencies is more effective than responding to them when they happen.

Student Support Services and Visiting Teachers can encourage staff to foster open communication and collaboration with parent and carers to better understand the needs of students.

Student Support Services and Visiting Teachers can encourage staff to adopt a school-wide approach that assures all students receive positive and preventive interventions in a safe and least restrictive environment.

Student Support Services and Visiting Teachers can assist schools to prevent behavioural emergencies by providing specialised interventions to individual students, groups of students and teachers and schools.

Student Support Services and Visiting Teachers can support schools to ensure that students whose behaviour impedes their learning, or the learning of others, receive functional behavioural assessments accompanied by behaviour support plans.

## Further information

[Restraint and Seclusion Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy)

## Contact

Principal Behaviour Support Adviser

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