# Guide for conducting a school-based review meeting

The [Restraint and Seclusion Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy) and Guidelines applies to every Victorian government school.

Application of the [Restraint and Seclusion Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy) and Guidelines is the responsibility of every Principal.

Effective application of the [Restraint and Seclusion Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy) and Guidelines relies on all incidents of physical restraint or seclusion being reviewed and, if appropriate, behavioural strategies being revised.

This guide will assist school staff to reflect on, and review, a physical restraint or seclusion incident so as to reduce the risk of such occurrences happening in the future and/or identifying new strategies or interventions, not to apportion blame or to discipline students or staff.

We recommend that staff meet as a team between 3 and 5 working days of an incident to go through the following questions.

## Review

For every school-based review meeting, begin by documenting:

* school name
* date of review
* date and time of the incident
* name of principal
* facilitator or meeting chair’s name
* names of other participants present
* name of student(s) and staff involved in the incident.

Note: Not all questions will be relevant for every incident.

Question for discussion: What has been done within the classroom and school environment to minimise this behaviour occurring again?

This question is designed to draw out broad considerations of the school environment and consideration of the general approaches and strategies that are applied across the school (including proactive and preventative behaviour support strategies and solutions).

It is an opportunity to consider relationships and how relationships are formed and sustained; to explore both healthy relationships and those that can contribute to risk behaviours.

It is an opportunity to describe what might be done to manage risk and ensure that support plans are practical and focused on the individual student’s needs.

Prompting questions:

* Is the school environment predictable? Are there identifiable environmental factors or constraints that may increase unpredictability for the student?
* With whom has the student formed relationships with at school? What are the relationships the student would describe as valued by them? How are these persons proactively involved in supporting the student?
* Is there ambiguity in messages given by staff to students about expectations and rules and how they are enforced?

Question for discussion: Could the trigger for the behaviour have been avoided, or not?

This question is designed to draw out whether (or not) everyone who requires it, has the information necessary to respond to the individual student when their behaviour is escalating.

This intervention opportunity should consider how information is shared, how plans are developed, whether the necessary information has been incorporated, and if all staff are implementing the plan as it is designed.

Prompting questions:

* What were the triggers or situational factors that contributed to the incident? What did staff and/or students do immediately before the behaviour?
* In the previous hours or days did the student exhibit any behaviour that may have indicated they were likely to endanger themselves or others?
* Was anyone aware of any external factors that might be impacting on the student that led to the behaviour of harm to self or others?
* If this is a new or unexpected behaviour, what might have contributed to the change in behaviour of the student?
* If there are any plans in place to support the student, are they adequate and up to date? Do all the staff who need to know about the plans, know of them and understand them?

Question for discussion: Was it possible to provide the most effective response to events as they occurred? Were staff present and able to be responsive?

This question is not designed to apportion blame but rather to look at how resources are being used, and whether it is possible to change the environment or staff responses to reduce risk.

This is an opportunity to explore the various responses of students, staff and others to the escalating situation.

Prompting questions:

* Who responded to the student and at what point in the incident?
* Was the response appropriate in these circumstances?
* Were there any factors that prevented staff responding to the student?
* Were there any barriers/factors that prevented staff from providing the most effective or planned response?
* How might any barriers be overcome in the future?

Question for discussion: Were the responses effective?

This question is designed to prompt the team to explore their response and whether their level of knowledge, skills and abilities are helpful to them in identifying and applying the least restrictive or last resort response.

This is an opportunity to reflect on practice and identify what, if anything, may need to change, and whether staff require additional training or support.

Prompting questions:

* What did staff do in response to escalating risk?
* Why were strategies or approaches used?
* Were there any environmental barriers to managing the situation?
* Was there any delay in providing a response to the student or staff who requested assistance?

Question for discussion: What are the learning points? When exploring the strategies used during the incident, what were the response of the student to the intervention and what was effective?

This question is designed to help the team identify what worked and what didn’t work and why.

This is not to attribute or apportion any blame or make statements of failure, but to identify what can change in the future, and how any strategies or intervention will be more effective in the future.

Prompting questions:

* What else could have been tried in these circumstances?
* Was there anything that was tried by a staff member that seemed to make the situation worse?
* Was there anything that was tried by a staff member that appeared to improve the situation, even if the student’s behaviour escalated in the period following?
* When the physical restraint or seclusion was implemented was it effective? How? If it was not, why was this case?
* Are there other responses that might be considered in the future?

Question for discussion: When physical restraint or seclusion was used, was it implemented as a last resort response to an unforeseeable emergency, OR was it used after the implementation of proactive behaviour support, following the implementation of behavioural and de-escalation strategies?

This question provides an opportunity for the team to explore whether (or not) they believe the use of physical restraint or seclusion was appropriate at the point in time when it was used.

This discussion must be managed with sensitivity. It allows the team to objectively consider whether or not alternative strategies, such as proactive behaviour responses or a non-aversive reactive strategy, could have been employed, and what factors contributed to the use of physical restraint or seclusion at the point when a decision was taken to use it.

Prompting questions:

* Were all possible proactive and preventative measures used so far as was possible at the time of the incident? If not, what were the barriers?
* What was happening immediately prior to making the decision to apply physical restraint or seclusion? Describe the student’s behaviour immediately before the decision was taken to implement physical restraint or seclusion.
* On reflection, do you think that the physical restraint or seclusion was used as a last resort response in that no other alternative course of action was likely to reduce the imminent risk at that moment in time?
* How was the decision made to implement physical restraint or seclusion?
* Does the recent use of physical restraint or seclusion indicate that there is a need to develop/review the students’ Behaviour Support Plan?

Question for discussion: Were there any new risks identified and did the use of physical restraint or seclusion minimise any risks?

This question provides an opportunity to explore whether there were any safety issues highlighted because of the incident being discussed. This will include whether the use of physical restraint or seclusion was in line with the Restraint and Seclusion school policy, training and any written plans (e.g. Behaviour Support Plan).

This is an opportunity to ensure the safety of the student and staff in the future and provide opportunity to acknowledge how this can be improved. The questions are not intended to seek to find or apportion blame.

Prompting questions:

* If this is not a new behaviour, do the staff team or individual staff members believe that the risk of the behaviour has increased? Why?
* Are there any environmental factors that increase physical risk to staff or students?
* If individual people are at risk and that risk has changed, who are those people? What can be done to mitigate the risk?
* Did the number of people involved increase the risk to staff or students? Were there too many people involved?
* How were bystanders managed? This includes other students, staff or others who were present.
* Was the use and application of the physical restraint or seclusion as safe as it could be?
* Who was managing or leading the incident from a staff perspective? Who had oversight of the situation?
* Was anyone injured during the incident? If so, how?

Question for discussion: How was the safety of everyone managed?

This question provides an opportunity to explore the broad issues related to safety during an incident. It is an opportunity to consider the safety of all students, the student who was subject to physical restraint or seclusion and all staff.

It’s an opportunity for considering what went well and what can be improved.

Prompting questions:

* Was the use of physical restraint or seclusion in line with policy?
* When the physical restraint or seclusion was implemented, how was the student monitored and by whom?
* Did the use of the physical restraint or seclusion reduce risk and enable the staff to support the student safely?
* Were students in the vicinity managed in a safe way?
* Did the physical restraint or seclusion deviate from anything that had been taught as a technique by a training provider? If it did, why was this the case and what might be done to reduce the risk of such changes in future?

Question for discussion: When was the restrictive practice ceased and how did the incident conclude?

This question provides an opportunity to explore decisions made as the risk decreased. This is an opportunity for the team to consider their decision-making skills, responses and overall awareness of procedure and best practice.

The focus should be on the team response and not individual roles during the incident.

Prompting questions:

* How long had the physical restraint or seclusion lasted when it was ceased?
* Who made the decision to cease the physical restraint or seclusion?
* Were there opportunities to cease the physical restraint or seclusion sooner?
* Was the decision to cease the physical restraint or seclusion taken at the right time?
* Describe the behaviour of the student when the physical restraint or seclusion was ceased?
* Was control returned to the student as soon as possible?

Question for discussion: What happens afterwards?

This is an opportunity to assist the team to explore how people were supported; this includes students, staff, and other people. It is also an opportunity to ensure that procedural aspects were managed in a timely way, for example reporting and documenting the incident.

Prompting questions:

* Who was present throughout the whole period of the incident and what was their role in the situation?
* Who was present when the physical restraint or seclusion ceased and what was their role in the incident?
* Was the Principal notified immediately of the incident?
* Has the incident been reported on [eduSafe Plus](https://services.educationapps.vic.gov.au/edusafeplus), or by calling the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC)?
* As a result of the incident, was there a need to contact external agencies for additional support or assistance?
* Were the parents/carers of the student contacted as soon as practicable?
* Did the student or their parent/s have a view that needs to be considered/discussed?

## Learning from the incident

The key learnings and actions from the review should be summarised. This enables the team to objectively identify what they can change, how they can improve and highlight their real achievements. This should be used in future planning and supports.

Prompting questions:

* What were the main learning points?
* Are there any things that could change because of reviewing the incident?
* What are the positive learning points and what was done well by the team?
* What are the things to do next as a team that will improve supporting our students and staff?

## Contact

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