



## AP 4-404 – USE OF SECLUSION

Students in Manitoba have a right to appropriate educational programming in a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment in accordance with Manitoba Education (2021) [Safe and Caring Schools: A Policy Directive Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Seclusion \(gov.mb.ca\)](https://www.gov.mb.ca/education/policy-directive/enhancing-proactive-supports-to-minimize-the-use-of-seclusion)

Western School Division schools have a responsibility to provide a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment by implementing a positive whole-school approach for student safety and student belonging in the school environment.

Western School Division schools have a responsibility to engage in preventative and positive practices as opposed to those that are punitive and reactive. Preventative and positive measures help ensure a positive school climate and support the facilitation of a culture of trust and respect.

Western School Division recognizes that schools may need to use seclusion when a student is engaging in intense violent behavior that presents a significant and immediate risk to the student or others.

The use of seclusion is a last resort. Strategies that support prevention, de-escalation and less restrictive measures, must be utilized and exhausted prior to any form of seclusion implementation.

### DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

#### Behaviour

The way in which a student acts in response to a particular situation or stimulus and may be a way to communicate need or a way to cope with stress/stressors.

#### Sensory/Regulation Space

Sensory/Regulation Space is an umbrella term that encompasses a broad variety of therapeutic spaces (e.g., an identified calming space, sensory modulation/integration room, regulation room, workout room, multi-sensory room, etc...) that is used proactively to meet a student's sensory needs and promote self-regulation. It is a therapeutic intervention that is part of the student-specific plan if being used on a regular basis. Its use would be set up and monitored in consultation based on the recommendations of a clinician who monitors its use. It should not be confused with the use of seclusion, as seclusion is not a therapeutic intervention.

#### Seclusion

The involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area where the student cannot freely exit.

Seclusion should only be used in exceptional circumstances when a student is engaging in intense violent behavior that presents a clear, significant and immediate risk to the student or others and should only be considered as a last resort. Seclusion is a response not a room. Seclusion is not used to help students attain skills and knowledge and therefore would not be included in a student-specific plan.

Seclusion is one of the most intrusive interventions used in response to behaviour. Its use can have a harmful impact on students, including physical or psychological injury, damaged relationships, and increased challenging behaviour. It also has a negative impact on school staff, students, parents/guardians, and the school climate.



Seclusion is never used when there is no immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others and is never used as a substitute for appropriate educational programming or effective behaviour planning.

### **Physical Restraint**

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.

Physical restraint differs from other physical interventions, such as physical guidance and physical escort. Physical guidance is the prompting of a student when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, or providing comfort. Physical escort is the temporary touching or holding of a student's hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of accompanying and inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location.

Western School Division staff are expected to use the least restrictive approach to supporting students to support inclusion, maintain safety, and demonstrate respect for their autonomy, agency, rights, individual worth and dignity.

### **Time Out**

A strategy to reduce student behavior by removing the student for a specified and limited period. Time-out does not necessarily require removal of a student to an isolated or secluded setting.

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.

## **SECLUSION PROCEDURES**

The following procedures shall address the use, or potential use, of seclusion in Western School Division schools. Schools using seclusion must have fully addressed the following requirements:

- 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 (ie: divisional WEVAS training)
  - ensure specific school staff receive ongoing training and professional learning in conflict/crisis de-escalation strategies (ie: divisional WEVAS training and Crucial Conversations training, etc...)
  - 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/emergency response plans.
  
- During the use of seclusion, it is critical that:
  - risk of further harm to the student is minimized and the student is observed continuously throughout the entire period of seclusion – occasional checks are not acceptable.
  - a staff member is assigned the role of observer and note taker to record a factual account of the event
  - the student be treated with respect and dignity
  - school staff are able to communicate effectively with the student
  - seclusion is discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm ends
  
- After the use of seclusion:
  - the incident must be reported to the principal, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the Student Services Administrator, and the Superintendent/CEO (or designate) on the day of the incident
  - the incident must be documented (it is recommended this be done within 48 hours)
    - Principals and/or designates are to complete the “Student Seclusion Event Report”
    - A copy of “Student Seclusion Event Report” is to be filed in the pupil file
  - 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

Western School Division will annually review the use of seclusion, in conjunction with a review of its procedure, to determine any further actions that need to be considered for safe, caring and inclusive learning environments.

**Adopted:** August 2023