

RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTIONS POLICY

RATIONALE

Victory Christian College (VCC) is committed to ensuring the safety of our students, staff, visitors, parents/guardians and all members of the College community. It is an expression of our Christian ethos and part of our legal duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students.

The College aims to, wherever possible, avoid the use of restraint and seclusion with our students, but acknowledges that in some cases, these actions are necessary as a last resort to ensure the safety of students, staff and others.

DEFINITIONS

Physical Restraint- Physical restraint is the use of force to restrict or subdue the student's movement against their will. It should only be used when there is an immediate danger to the student's safety or to prevent harm to another person. The physical restraint must not itself cause harm, for example, a restraint that prevents breathing.

Seclusion- Seclusion is the solitary confinement of a student in an area from which the student cannot leave, or believes they cannot leave. Seclusion does not include the action of separating a student from others for a short period of time and from which they are free to move. The use of timeout or chill-out spaces is permitted (and not a form of seclusion). Seclusion does not include in-school suspensions or detentions.

SCOPE

The application of this policy is relevant to the College Board, Principal, all school staff, students, and parents.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Board and all staff are responsible for discharging the school's duty of care to prevent harm to students and to staff.
- The Board is responsible for overseeing the Restrictive Interventions Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented by all staff.
- The Principal is responsible for the provision of training and guidance in the use of restrictive practices.
- The Principal is responsible for ensuring restrictive practice incidents are recorded and monitored.
- All staff in the school are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and for following the school's guidelines.

WHEN PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION MAY NOT BE USED:

Restraint and seclusion should not be used:

- as part of a behaviour support plan for a student
- as a routine behaviour management technique
- to punish or discipline a student
- to do harm
- in a discriminatory manner
- to respond to:
 - a student's refusal to comply with a direction, unless that refusal to comply creates an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
 - a student leaving the classroom or College without permission, unless that conduct causes an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person
 - verbal threats of harm from a student, except where there is a reasonable belief that the threat will be immediately executed
 - property destruction caused by the student unless that destruction is placing any person at immediate risk of harm.

Mechanical restraints should never be used unless the device is for a therapeutic purpose with written evidence of the prescription or recommendation of use, or if the restraint is required for safe travel in a vehicle. Chemical restraints (drugs or medication) will not be used to restrain a student.

Corporal punishment is not permitted at VCC.

Further detail about appropriate and inappropriate forms of discipline can be found in the Discipline Policy.

WHEN PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION MAY BE USED:

College staff may only use physical restraint on a student:

- when there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others; **AND**
- where such action (i.e. to physically restrain or seclude) would be considered reasonable in the circumstances, and there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

As with physical restraint, seclusion should only be used when it is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.

Examples of behaviours which may necessitate restraint include but are not limited to:

- self-injuring behaviour, such as hitting or kicking walls, head-banging
- aggression towards other students or staff, including hitting, biting, kicking, hair pulling
- throwing furniture or other objects at students or staff
- a verbal threat of harm that you reasonably believe a student will immediately enact
- running onto a road or near some other hazard.

The use of physical restraint or seclusion is only ever a last resort and must continue only for the shortest time possible to remove the imminent danger.

The decision about whether to use physical restraint or seclusion rests with the professional judgment of the staff member/s involved, who will need to take into account both their duty of care to their students, their right to protect themselves from harm and obligations under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

OUR COMMITMENT TO MINIMISING RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

VCC is committed to minimising restraint and seclusion.

We educate staff regarding restrictive interventions by ensuring staff are familiar with this policy which can be found on our internal SharePoint site. Staff induction and dedicated professional development sessions will include training to ensure staff understand their obligations regarding restrictive interventions. All staff should fully understand the circumstances under which restrictive interventions are permitted and the form they are allowed to take.

In developing training resources, VCC has referred to the information developed by the Victorian Department of Education and Training.

Training will include specific information including:

- Fifteen Principles to help schools eliminate restraint and seclusion (see Appendix 1)
- Information for parents and guardians, including fact sheets, and when referral may be required to other professionals
- Guidance on prevention and early intervention
- Guidance on incident intervention
- De-escalation tactics
- Response and recovery procedures

PROCEDURE

- If applying physical restraint in the limited circumstances set out above, staff must:
 - Use the minimum force required to avoid the dangerous behaviour or risk of harm
 - Only restrain the student for the minimum duration required and stop restraining the student once the danger has passed.

- Staff should ensure the type of restraint used is consistent with a student's individual needs and circumstances, including:
 - The age/size of the student
 - Gender of the student
 - Any impairment of the student e.g. Physical, intellectual, neurological, behavioural, sensory (visual or hearing), or communication
 - Any mental or psychological conditions of the student, including any experience of trauma
 - Any other medical conditions of the student
 - The likely response of the student
 - The environment in which the restraint is taking place.

- Staff should
 - visually monitor the student for any indicators or distress.
 - talk to the student throughout the incident, making it clear to the student why physical restraint is being applied.
 - calmly explain that the physical restraint will stop once it is no longer necessary to protect the student and/or others.

IMPORTANT: It is vital to remember that every instance of restraint or seclusion can undermine the professional relationship between the student and staff member, and the quality of the student's educational experience.

Every instance of restraint or seclusion has the potential to place the student and staff member in a harmful situation, which can include injury and death.

CRITICAL ACTIONS

The following actions must be undertaken *after* a student has been physically restrained or secluded.

Action	Description
Reporting of the physical restraint/ seclusion	The staff member(s) involved in the incident must immediately notify the Principal. Under the Principal's direction (or authorised representative), a staff member should contact the student's parents and provide them with details of the incident as soon as possible.
Providing support for those involved	<p>The student who has been restrained or secluded, and their parents/guardians will be provided with appropriate support. This may include participation in decisions involving the student's behaviour management, Student Support Group meetings, the development of a Behaviour Support Plan, and referral to external support services.</p> <p>Other students and staff members who were involved in or witnessed the incident will be provided appropriate support. This may include a debriefing in relation to the incident, and counselling support.</p>
Completing an Incident Report	<p>A written record of the incident and the physical restraint or seclusion used must be made as soon as practicable using the Incident section of Xuno. This record will be added to the student's file. The incident form (Restrictive Interventions Incident) will prompt the staff member to detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The name of the student/s and staff member/s involved ▪ Date, time and location of the incident ▪ Names of witnesses (staff and other students) ▪ What exactly happened (a brief factual account) ▪ Any action taken to de-escalate the situation ▪ Why physical intervention was used (if applicable) ▪ The nature of any physical intervention used ▪ How long the physical intervention lasted ▪ Names of witnesses (staff and other students) ▪ The student's response and the outcome of the incident ▪ Any injuries or damage to property ▪ Immediate post-incident actions, such as first aid or contact with emergency services ▪ Details of contact with the student's parent/carer ▪ Details of any post-incident support provided or organised. <p>The Principal should also arrange for all staff who were involved/present at the incident to prepare a statement / record of their involvement or observations of the incident.</p>
Plan for the future	Post-incident, the school should consider the preventative and de-escalation strategies that might reduce the likelihood of an incident happening again. For example: reviewing and amending the student's Behaviour Support Plan, considering the training needs of staff working closely with the student/s involved in the incident.

RESOURCES

[The Principles for Reduction and Elimination of Restraint and Seclusion in Victorian Government Schools](#), Department of Education and Training

[Victorian Charter of Human Rights Legislation 2006](#)

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

- Disability Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

RELATED COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Behaviour Support Plan
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Emotional Wellbeing Plan

APPENDIX 1

VCC PRINCIPLES FOR REDUCTION AND ELIMINATION OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

1. VCC policy outlines restricted use of restraint or seclusion
2. Physical restraint or seclusion must not be used except in situations where the student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to self or others; where such action (i.e. to physically restrain or seclude) would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances; and where there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances. Restraint or seclusion should be discontinued as soon as the immediate danger has dissipated (see Regulation 25 of Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 for further information).
3. Every effort should be made to prevent the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.
4. Schools should never use mechanical restraints or a drug/medication that restricts a student's freedom of movement or to control behaviour.
5. Any behavioural intervention must be consistent with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and also the student's rights to be treated with dignity and to be free from abuse.
6. Physical restraint or seclusion must never be used as punishment or discipline (e.g. placing in seclusion for non-compliant behaviour); as a means of coercion or retaliation; or as a convenience.
7. Physical restraint or seclusion should never be used in a manner that restricts a student's breathing or harms the student.
8. Any use of physical restraint or seclusion must trigger a review and, if appropriate, a revision of behavioural strategies currently in place to address behaviour that causes harm to self or others. If positive behavioural strategies are not in place, staff should develop them.
9. If students demonstrate behaviour that causes physical harm to self or others necessitating the use of physical restraint or seclusion, strategies to address this behaviour should address the underlying cause or purpose of the behaviour. This includes completing a referral to Wellbeing Team concern form on Xuno.
10. Teachers, and relevant school staff should be trained regularly on the appropriate use of effective alternatives to physical restraint or seclusion, such as positive behaviour supports.
11. **In every instance** in which physical restraint or seclusion is used, the student must be carefully and continuously visually monitored to ensure that the physical restraint or seclusion is being used appropriately, and that the student, other students and staff are safe.
12. Parents/carers should be informed of the policy on restraint and seclusion.
13. Parents/carers should be notified as soon as possible following each instance in which physical restraint or seclusion is used with their child/student.
14. VCC will regularly review and update, as appropriate, policy regarding the use of physical restraint and seclusion.
15. Each incident involving the use of physical restraint or seclusion must be documented in writing using a Xuno Restrictive Intervention Incident form. This form will collect specific data which will be used to review VCC practices/policies and improve staff understanding of the application of these principles.