

ROLLING RIVER SCHOOL DIVISION POLICY

Safe and Respectful Schools – Use of Seclusion in Schools

JHB/P

Rolling River School Division is committed to fostering inclusion for all people. Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members while supporting mental health and wellbeing. Schools are expected to provide students with safe, caring and inclusive learning environments that contain a continuum of supports, services, and interventions for all students.

Rolling River School Division understands that the use of seclusion may be used as a safety response when a student poses an immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others. Seclusion is used as a last resort after prevention strategies, de-escalation interventions, and less restrictive measures have been exhausted.

Seclusion is a safety procedure, not a teaching strategy. It is not used as an intervention strategy for anticipated behaviour. Rolling River School division will use proactive behavioral support plans to support students.

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Date Adopted: May 11, 2022

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A. Prevention

All behaviour is a form of communication. When a student is unable to communicate their needs verbally, they may use their behaviour to tell us they are stressed/distressed or that there is a problem that needs to be resolved.

In order to promote a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment, RRSD will provide opportunities for students and staff to increase their understanding of behaviour and to learn to manage/respond to behaviour in alternative ways that support a safe, caring, and inclusive school community.

A whole-school positive behaviour approach is the foundation for teaching students the skills they need to engage in positive behaviour. This will meet the needs of most students.

If a student requires more specific skill and strategy instruction to meet their needs, the student support team will work with the student and their parents/legal guardians to develop a student-specific plan.

Using a variety of assessment tools (e.g., Functional Behaviour Assessment, Areas of Impact Rubric, etc.) the student support team works together to identify the need the student is communicating through their behaviour. This information helps inform the selection of effective teaching strategies, identifies any needed environmental adjustments to set the student up for success, identifies ways to help students manage their own behaviour, teaches pro-social skills, develops positive replacement behaviours, and identifies appropriate response strategies that will be used in the student-specific plan.

Seclusion is a safety procedure, not a teaching strategy. It is not used as an intervention strategy for anticipated behaviour. Anticipated behaviour is predictable based on our knowledge of the student and can be managed proactively through effective planning. In most instances, proactive behavioural support plans will largely negate the need for restrictive measures.

A preventative approach requires a focus on developing a proactive skill set. This includes the use of positive behaviour interventions, conflict de-escalation techniques, and training of all school personnel on how to implement positive behaviour supports. School staff must increase their understanding of behaviour and their capacity to respond effectively.

See [Safe and Caring Schools: A Policy Directive Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Seclusion \(gov.mb.ca\)](#) for specific sources of information about preventative and proactive practices.

B. Definitions and Terminology

Seclusion

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area where the student cannot freely exit or is physically prevented from leaving. This generally occurs in a room with a door that has a lock that is engaged, or if not engaged, the door is otherwise blocked or held shut. Seclusion is often used in association with physical restraint.

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Seclusion is a safety response used only in situations when a student is in extreme distress and their behaviour has escalated to the point where it poses an immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others, and only after proactive strategies, de-escalation interventions, and less restrictive measures have been exhausted.

Seclusion is one of the most intrusive interventions used in response to student behaviour. It has been shown to have a detrimental impact on students. This includes physical injury (in some cases death has occurred), psychological trauma, damaged relationships, and increased challenging behaviour.

Seclusion has a negative impact on school staff, students, parents/legal guardians, and the school climate.

Seclusion is never used:

- as part of a student-specific plan to manage/change student behaviour
- as a substitute for appropriate educational programming or effective behavioural intervention planning
- as a punishment, a consequence, a disciplinary action, or a way to force compliance
- to protect property at risk for damage when there is no immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others
- when a student is non-compliant, confrontational, or verbally aggressive but there is no immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others

While it is commonly believed that seclusion is necessary for keeping students and staff safe, this may be inaccurate; students and staff often get hurt during seclusion.

Seclusion is not a defined space/room/area. Rooms, spaces, or areas designed specifically for the purposes of seclusion are not permitted.

The use of seclusion as a safety response differs from a variety of associated practices such as sensory/regulation interventions or time out. While these practices may share some properties of seclusion, they do not constitute seclusion as understood within these guidelines.

Any isolation of a student, regardless of the name used or the intended purpose, should be exercised with due diligence.

Sensory/Regulation Spaces

Sensory space is an umbrella term that encompasses a broad variety of therapeutic spaces (e.g., calming space, sensory modulation/integration room, multi-sensory room).

The use of a sensory/regulation space is not to be confused with the use of seclusion. A sensory space is used proactively to meet a student's sensory needs and promote self-regulation. It is a therapeutic intervention that is written into a student-specific plan based on the recommendation of a specialist who monitors its use.

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Time Out

Time out occurs when access to reinforcement is removed for a period of time following the occurrence of an identified problem behaviour in order to reduce or stop that behaviour. Time out may involve removing a student from sources of positive reinforcement of undesired behaviour. It is one option along a continuum of behaviour interventions supporting behaviour change.

Time out is commonly used two ways: non-exclusion and exclusion.

- *Non-exclusion time out* does not involve removal of the student from the learning environment. It occurs within the classroom where the student maintains the ability to continue to observe and hear what is going on for a period of time.
- *Exclusion time out* occurs when the student is withdrawn from the classroom setting for a period of time where there is no longer access to what is going on in the classroom but where the student has access to other students or staff.

Time out and seclusion, although often used interchangeably, are not synonymous. Time out may or may not involve the removal of a student to an isolated setting.

Time out is used as a consequence with the intent of supporting behaviour change. It is never used when the safety of a student is a concern.

Seclusion requires a student be isolated as a safety response and is not used as a consequence to support behavioural change.

If a student chooses to be alone in a room, space, or area, and is free to leave at any point (e.g., independent work in a quiet space, student-initiated short break), this is not considered to be time out or seclusion.

Physical Restraint – See [JGA/P/R](#)

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 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 is frequently associated with seclusion because it is often used to transport a student to an environment where they are secluded. However, these are separate procedures and one may occur without the other. Both the use of seclusion and physical restraint pose risks to the student and staff.

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.

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Physical interventions should not exceed what are reasonable or proportionate under the circumstances and should be discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm to the student or others has dissipated.

C. Response Procedures

Principals have the responsibility and authority over the conduct of a student. They must ensure that the interventions and responses used or implemented in carrying out duties to maintain order and safety in school are appropriate, given the frequency and severity of the event and take into account the student's state of development. The principals must ensure that all staff be made aware of the school's safety response procedures (Manitoba Education & Training, Code of Conduct).

If a student's behaviour has escalated to the point where it poses an immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others, staff and people who have care and charge of the student should immediately respond and call for assistance from the principal ([Manitoba Public Schools Act](#)) and those staff members who have adequate knowledge and training to de-escalate and manage the event. Stressors should be removed from the environment when possible.

Working as a team, staff should focus on protecting the safety of all students including the student at risk of causing immediate serious physical harm to self or others. The goal is to secure and stabilize the situation in a calm, coordinated manner.

If necessary, other students in the vicinity should move in a calm, orderly manner to a safe distance. The student in crisis should not be left alone. The environment should be scanned for potential dangers. Objects that could cause immediate serious physical harm should be removed if it is safe to do so. Attention should be given to procedures for safe evacuation.

Seclusion may need to be employed as a safety response as a last resort and only after proactive strategies, de-escalation interventions, and less restrictive measures have been exhausted. A person familiar with the student should assess the risk for injury when the student's behaviour is escalated.

If seclusion is used, it must be discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm to the student or others has dissipated. School staff must have clear criteria for discontinuation of seclusion, and this must be communicated to the student.

If seclusion is used, schools must ensure the following:

- The student is safe.
- Seclusion does not restrict freedom of movement in a manner that restricts the student's breathing or that physically harms the student.
- Regard and respect for the student's dignity is maintained.
- The student can communicate their basic human needs and have those needs met.
- Staff observing the student can communicate effectively with the student at all times.

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- A staff member is assigned the role of observer and notetaker to record a factual account of the event (see documentation requirements): video/photo recordings are prohibited.
- Continuous visual and aural monitoring must be maintained for the entire period of seclusion: occasional checks are not acceptable.
- Policies and regulation for staff related to the Manitoba [Workplace Health and Safety Act](#) and [Workplace Health and Safety Regulation](#) (M.R. 210/2020) are to be followed
- Seclusion is discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others has dissipated.
- School and divisional emergency response procedures are followed in the event that further safety measures are necessary.

D. Response Procedures

Any event that involves the use of seclusion must be reported on the day of the event to the:

- Principal (or designate)
- Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s)
- Student Services Coordinator
- Superintendent

E. Debriefing

Debriefings are led by the principal (or designate) who has training/experience in leading a debriefing process. The debriefing should focus on how the use of seclusion could have been prevented and should identify what can be done to avoid seclusion if a similar event occurs in the future. A summary of the debriefing(s) and any outcomes decided upon is placed in the Pupil Support File component of the Pupil File and the division student services information system.

See Appendix A – Seclusion and Debriefing Report

It is expected that debriefing meetings will occur with parents(s)/legal/guardian(s) the student, and school staff involved in the seclusion event. The student's parents(s)/legal/guardian(s) and the student may have the opportunity to be accompanied and assisted by a person of their choosing during the debriefing. Debriefings should be in-person and should take place as soon as possible after the event.

Additional debriefings should be made available to others in the school who were impacted physically and/or emotionally by the event.

The student support team must meet (or be formed) as soon as reasonably possible after the seclusion event to:

- examine what happened
- conduct assessments to learn more about the purpose of the behaviour and precipitating factors
- engage in the student-specific planning process to write or revise the student-

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specific plan identifying what needs to be changed to decrease the chance of the behaviour recurring (e.g., changes to environment, changes to positive behaviour strategies, alternative responses to the student's behaviour)

- identify staff development or training needs and initiate a plan for addressing these needs

F. Monitoring and Review

Rolling River School Division will annually monitor, evaluate, and review data related to the use of seclusion. The use of seclusion as a safety response is an indication that further work needs to be done to ensure a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the ongoing Board of Trustees policy review process.

[Transfer of Safe and Caring Schools: Policy Directive on the Use of Seclusion in Manitoba School Settings | Manitoba Education \(gov.mb.ca\)](#)

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Date Adopted: May 11, 2022

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“APPENDIX A”

Seclusion and Debriefing Report

SECLUSION	
Student Name: _____	
Date: _____	
Specific Student Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Date of Event of Seclusion: _____	Location of Event: _____
Start Time of Seclusion: _____	End Time of Seclusion: _____
Names of Witnesses: 	
Describe student's behaviour immediately prior to the use of seclusion: 	
List interventions used prior to implementation of seclusion: 	

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Name of person at risk of immediate serious physical harm that resulted in the use of seclusion:

Name of staff member who made decision to implement seclusion:

NAMES OF OTHER STAFF MEMBERS INVOLVED AND THEIR ROLE IN THE SECLUSION EVENT.

Name	Role

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Other restrictive measures used (e.g., restraint):

Describe any harm to students, staff, or others:

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Criteria for ending seclusion:
How was this communicated to the student?
<p>Check immediate Post-Seclusion Actions taken (What did staff do immediately after seclusion?):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor secluded student for safety and wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor affected students and staff (physical harm, worried students, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Contact parent <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Principal, Superintendent, Student Services Coordinator as per policy <input type="checkbox"/> Begin documentation
Date of Planned Debriefing:

REPORT SUBMITTED TO:		
Name	Role	Date
	Principal (or designate)	
	Superintendent	
	Student Support Coordinator	

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“APPENDIX B”

Debriefing Guide

DEBRIEFING GUIDE (As soon as possible after the event of seclusion)	
Participants – As applicable	
Name	Role
	Principal (or designate)
	Parent(s)/legal guardian(s)
	Support to Parents
	Teacher
	EA
	Guidance Counselor

Agenda Items	Discussion	Decision (Who/What/When)
Check participants' well-being		
Review Report		
REVIEW CURRENT STUDENT SPECIFIC PLAN TO IDENTIFY:		
1. How could the use of seclusion have been prevented?		

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2. What can we do to avoid using seclusion in the future?		
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Date of Planned Student Support Team Meeting:

Seclusion Report and Debriefing Guide placed in Student Support File.

