
USE OF SECLUSION

BACKGROUND

The Swan Valley School Division strives to ensure that all students and staff members are provided with a safe environment.

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **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 used often in association with physical restraint.

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, psychological trauma, damaged relationships, and increased challenging behaviour.

Seclusion has a negative impact on school staff, students, parents/legal guardians, and the school climate. 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 never used:

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

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

2. **Sensory/Regulation Space** is an umbrella term that encompasses a broad variety of therapeutic spaces (e.g. calming space, sensory modulation/integration room, and 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. Seclusion is not a therapeutic intervention.

3. **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 as a consequence of specific 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*:

- a. ***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.
- b. ***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 use interchangeably, are not synchronous. Time out may or may not involve the removal of a student to an isolated setting. It 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.

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Note: Any isolation of a student, regardless of the name or the intended purposes, should be exercised with due diligence.

B. GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF SECLUSION

Positive and proactive strategies are the first methods of addressing challenging behaviour. A continuum of interventions designed to de-escalate behaviour should be listed in the child's Student Specific Plan (SSP) or Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP). These interventions include proactive and reactive classroom management strategies and techniques, such as Low Arousal Approach, Working Effectively with Violent and Aggressive States (WEVAS), with the goal being both to address the student's challenging behaviour and to teach new replacement behaviour.

In critical or crisis situations, a student may require more specific skill and strategy instruction to meet their needs. It may be necessary to use specific de-escalating techniques, which may include seclusion.

1. **Use of Seclusion** - If seclusion is required, the Swan Valley School Division has established procedures to ensure the following:
 - a. The student is safe
 - b. Seclusion does not restrict freedom of movement in a manner that restricts the student's breathing or that physically harms the student
 - c. Regard and respect for the student's dignity is maintained
 - d. The student can communicate their basic human needs and have those needs met
 - e. Staff observing the student are able to communicate effectively with the student at all times
 - f. A staff member is assigned the role of observer and note-taker to record a factual account of the event (see documentation requirements); video/photo recordings are discouraged
 - g. Continuous visual and aural monitoring must be maintained for the entire period of seclusion; occasional checks are not acceptable
 - h. Health and safety policies and/or regulations related to the Workplace Health and Safety Act and Workplace Health and Safety Regulations (M.R. 217/2006) are to be followed (Manitoba)
 - i. Seclusion is discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm to self or others has dissipated
 - j. School and divisional emergency response procedures are followed in the event that further safety measures are necessary

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USE OF SECLUSION FORM

Date: _____

Time: _____

Student's Name: _____

School: _____

Name(s)/Roles of Personnel Involved: _____

Seclusion used for the following purpose:

- to prevent a student from harm
- to prevent harm toward others
- for the purpose of self-protection

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BEFORE:

Describe the activity before seclusion was required. Include location, event or events preceding the seclusion, interventions used to de-escalate the situation, and any other pertinent information. Who was at risk or immediate physical harm that resulted in the use of seclusion? Name of the staff member making the decision to use seclusion.

DURING:

Describe the seclusion. Include location, duration, and resolution. Include criteria for ending seclusion and how was this communicated to the student.

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Describe the student's behaviour during seclusion, including the following:

a) Any use of other restrictive measures (e.g. restraint).

b) A description of any harm to students, staff or others.

c) Provide a chronology noting observations of behaviour.

d) Provide a log that reports how the student was monitored during seclusion and by whom.

AFTER:

a) Action taken with student after the use of seclusion

b) Follow-up by school team (Debriefing, personnel involved, date)

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c) Next steps. (i.e. follow-up meeting dates, changes to programming, planning and/or services)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Notification of Parent/Guardian:

When: _____

How: _____

By whom: _____

Notes from conversation:

Signature: _____
 Staff Member who initiated Seclusion Principal

(Send copy to Student Services)

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