

## REDUCING AND ELIMINATING RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOLS

All students have the right to learn in a safe, positive and supportive environment.

Sometimes behaviours of concern or behaviours causing harm to self or others can be a challenge for schools. Teachers have a duty of care to protect the safety of all students and they also have the right to be safe themselves.

### PREVENTING STUDENT BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

The best way to manage behaviours of concern is to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

This is why Victorian government schools have a strong focus on positive behaviour support, effective planning, early intervention and de-escalation.

To learn more about available supports and working in partnership with your child's school, see: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/behaviourofconcern.aspx>

### PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION

There may be times when school staff need to use physical restraint or seclusion to protect the safety of your child, other students and/or themselves.

Victorian government schools operate under policy and guidance and this includes the adoption of 15 *Principles* for the reduction and elimination of restraint and seclusion.

### POLICY AND THE LAW

The policy and the law permits school staff to take reasonable action to restrain a student from behaviour that poses a threat to their own safety and/or to the safety of others (Regulation 15 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 and common law duty of care).

The policy also states that staff in Victorian government schools may only use physical restraint or seclusion when:

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

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN RESTRAINED OR SECLUDED?

If your child has been restrained or secluded the school will:

- ensure the wellbeing of everyone involved
- notify you as soon as possible after the incident
- Discuss with you available supports and to review and/or develop a behaviour support plan.

Schools have a duty of care to protect all staff and students which means schools cannot guarantee that they will never use physical restraint or seclusion to keep your child or others safe from harm. However you can work with your school in developing strategies to reduce the likelihood of a crisis arising.

### I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR

- You may wish to share your concerns with the school by contacting child's teacher, year level coordinator or a wellbeing staff member.
- You can ask your child's school about engaging Student Support Services and other appropriate professionals to help address behavioural problems.
- Your GP can eliminate any medical causes for the behaviour. They can also make referrals to psychologists and other professionals with expertise in mental health and behavioural issues.
- If your child has a disability, you may be eligible to receive support through the Department of Health and Human Services. Contact the Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783 for more information.
- If you are concerned about your child's mental health, you may also contact your local headspace centre by visiting <http://www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres>

### I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE SCHOOL RESPONSE TO MY CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR

- In the first instance, you should always raise your concerns with the teacher involved, and following this, with the school principal.
- If you are unhappy with the school's response, or would like to seek external advice, contact your local DET regional office and speak to a Community Liaison Officer.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/regionalns.aspx>

- Lodge a formal complaint with DET via:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaintslanding.aspx>