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 providing a safe environment for all students, it is necessary to have tiered supports, services, and interventions for all students. Opportunities for students and staff to increase their understanding of behaviour and to learn to manage/respond to behaviour in alternative ways is a priority. A whole-school positive behaviour approach that is tiered to meet students' needs is the foundation for teaching students the skills they need to engage in positive behaviour.

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 call for assistance from the principal 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 be moved 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.

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.

Seclusion can have a negative impact on school staff, students, parents/legal guardians, and the school climate and as a result 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.

If seclusion is used, it must be discontinued as soon as the immediate risk of serious physical harm to the student or others has been deemed as no longer imminent. School staff must have clear criteria for discontinuation of seclusion and this must be communicated to the student.

If seclusion is used, school staff must ensure the following:

- The student is safe.
- The student's freedom of movement is not restricted 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 are able to communicate effectively with the student at all times.
- 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 discouraged.
- Continuous visual and aural monitoring must be maintained for the entire period of seclusion; occasional checks are not acceptable.
- Health and safety policies and/or regulations related to The Workplace Health and Safety Act and Workplace Health and Safety Regulation (M.R. 217/2006) 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.

Reporting and Documentation

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),
- assistant superintendent of student services.

Each event of the use of seclusion must be documented on the **Seclusion Report Form** in the student information system preferably within 48 hours and a printed copy placed in the pupil file.

Debriefing

The event must be debriefed in order to review and reflect upon the circumstances and its impact.

It is expected that debriefing meetings will occur with parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the student, and school staff involved in the seclusion event. The student's parent(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 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.

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 documented on the **Seclusion Report Form** with a printed copy placed in the pupil file.

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

- examine what happened;
- conduct a function-based assessment 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-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.

Monitoring and Review

Data on use of seclusion will be monitored annually to evaluate and review data in order to understand the circumstances around the use of seclusion facilitating the implementation of more effective strategies to support educational and behavioural programming.

The review will include:

- incident reports to identify any patterns or trends to inform decision making;
- harm incurred by students and staff;
- repeated use of seclusion for an individual student, multiple uses within the same classroom, or multiple uses by the same individual that would trigger a review by the school and the school division and may indicate a need for additional training and/or support;
- adherence to seclusion policies and procedures;
- staff professional support and training needs;
- environmental considerations;
- the effectiveness of policies and procedures in decreasing seclusion using indicators established in consultation with the safety and health committee, parents/legal guardians, students, and community-based service providers;
- the need to update the content of seclusion policies and/or procedures to ensure consistency with any new developments/or new practices.

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