

Restraint of Students Policy



Source of Obligation

The Victorian Registration Standards (sch 4 cl 12) (CECV Guidelines ref 4.1) require that the College must ensure that the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the College is in accordance with any applicable State and Commonwealth laws, and that all staff are advised of their obligations under those laws.

This includes having policies and procedures for when it is necessary to use restrictive interventions to protect the safety of a student and members of the College community.

Definition of Restraint

The Department of Education defines restraint to mean the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a student's body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being restrained.

While the VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration requires policies and procedures for "restrictive interventions", this policy uses the term "restraint" as "restrictive interventions" and practices is a term used in the disability context and only registered disability service providers that have the approval of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services can use restrictive interventions.

In some limited circumstances, restraint may also include restraining a student from imminent dangerous behaviours by secluding them in an area when such action is immediately required to protect the safety of the student or any other person.

Seclusion is the solitary confinement of a student in a room or area (e.g. a garden) from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person. When used by a staff member in immediate response to behaviours of concern, seclusion may also include situations where a student is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes they cannot leave that room or area even if they would physically be able to i.e. it is not locked. The College will ensure that any student in seclusion confinement will be able to respond to an evacuation alarm.

Prone restraint involves holding a student face down and is not permitted at the College.

Supine restraint involves holding a student face up and is not permitted at the College.

Lavalla Catholic College's Policy

It is the College's policy that:

- restraint and seclusion must only be used as a last resort in an emergency where there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others
- every instance of restraint or seclusion is reported and recorded through our Safety Incident Form
- in every instance of restraint, the breathing of the student should be visually monitored
- in every instance of seclusion the student must be visually monitored throughout the incident by a staff member to ensure that the seclusion is justified, time limited and that the student, and other students and staff are safe
- restraint or seclusion is not 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 would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances
- where there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances
- Restraint or seclusion should be discontinued as soon as the imminent danger has dissipated.

When Restraint Should Not Be Used

Restraint and seclusion should not be used as part of a behaviour support plan for a student, or used as a routine behaviour management technique, to punish or discipline a student or 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 / 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.

When Restraint May Be Used

Staff may only use restraint or seclusion of students in an emergency when there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to the student or others, and where such action would be considered reasonable in all the circumstances and there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

It should only be used as a last resort and the decision about whether to use restraint or seclusion should be made in accordance with the staff member's own professional judgement.

When applying restraint, staff:

- must use the minimum force required to avoid the dangerous behaviour or risk of harm to others and only restrain the student for the minimum duration required and stop restraining the student once the danger has passed
- should continue to engage with the student in a calm and measured way and explain why the restraint is being applied and that it will cease once the student is no longer a danger to themselves or others.

The type of restraint used must be consistent with a student's individual needs and circumstances including their age, size, gender, anticipated response and any physical, mental or psychological conditions or impairments.

Additional Guidance

The **CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines** provide additional guidance for schools for the use of restraint in schools.

Documentation

All instances of restraint or seclusion are recorded using the Safety Incident Form in CompliSpace Assurance.

Implementation

The Principal and Leadership Team are responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.