

# Restraint and Seclusion Policy - Y Community School

## 1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that restraint and seclusion are only used when absolutely necessary and to outline the circumstances in which restraint and seclusion can be used and the limits to their use.

## 2. Scope:

All members of the Y Community School staff and any Y Whittlesea staff or volunteers working at the school or whilst attending the school as part of their duties.

**Please note:** This policy does not apply to Y Whittlesea staff working in the inclusion services or other areas of Y Whittlesea services outside the school.

## 3. Definitions:

- **'The Y' or 'Y' or 'Y Whittlesea':** refer to YMCA Whittlesea Inc and YMCA Whittlesea Youth and Community Services Ltd
- **School:** Refers to the Y Community School noting that the legal entity through which the school is registered is YMCA Whittlesea Youth and Community Services Ltd.
- **Staff:** Any person performing duties on behalf of the Y Community School be they an employee, volunteer, trainee or contractor.
- **Restraint:** Preventing the free movement of a person or their ability to leave a situation, room or area.
- **Physical restraint:** is the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained. Physical restraint does not include protective physical interventions which use physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage a student's grip, but from which a student can move freely away.
- **Chemical restraint:** Use of medications whether prescribed, 'natural' or other chemicals to restrain a student.
- **Mechanical restraint:** Use of a physical material to tie down, block or in any other way restrain a student. Mechanical restraint does not include use of a physical barrier to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, but from which a student can move freely away.
- **Seclusion:** Seclusion refers to leaving a student alone in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving by a barrier or another person. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held closed by another person. Seclusion does not include supervised situations such as time-out, in-school suspensions, detentions, or exam situations; other situations where the student can freely exit an area, or suspension and expulsion from school.
- **Pro Re Nata (PRN) medication:** Medication given "as necessary" or "as required". Medication given at a set time or series of times according to a schedule as part of a prescription is not PRN medication.

## 4. Policy:

The use of physical restraint and seclusion are options of last resort when no other immediate action can be used to ensure the safety of a student or others. All instances of restraint and seclusion will be reported to the principal and a debrief and investigation as to the circumstances will occur.

The decision to use restraint or seclusion should always seek to be sensitive to the history of a student and recognise that past trauma, social disengagement, and a range of other factors may make students at the school especially sensitive to this type of intervention. Every effort will be made to avoid these situations through planning with students to identify behavioural triggers and developing strategies for avoiding these and for de-escalation. This will occur as part of the individual learning plan process at intake and during regular reviews. Any instance of restraint or seclusion will prompt a review of the individual learning plan and may require development of a specific behaviour support plan.

Chemical or mechanical restraint are not appropriate or permitted.

### 4.1 Authorisation to use physical restraint and seclusion:

Staff at the school are only authorised to use physical restraint and seclusion when:

- there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to a student or others and

- the physical restraint and seclusion are reasonable in all the circumstances and
- there is no less restrictive measure available in the circumstances.

During physical restraint and seclusion incidents, the student/s must be visually monitored for signs of distress and pain to ensure the student's physical health is not jeopardised and that the student, other students, and staff are safe. Staff must ensure that the use of physical restraint and seclusion is time limited and that it stops as soon as the immediate threat of harm or danger to the student or others has passed.

Children cannot consent to being physically restrained or secluded.

Parents/carers cannot consent to the use of physical restraint or seclusion.

Clinicians or practitioners cannot authorise, consent to, or approve the use of physical restraint or seclusion as part of the student's management at the school.

## **4.2 PRN Medications**

PRN medications may at times be provided by parents to the school under the medications policy. Oral medications do not take immediate effect and hence are not appropriate to ensure the immediate safety of a student or others in line with this policy.

School staff can only administer PRN medications in line with the detailed instructions provided by parents and authorised by a medical practitioner. These instructions must have clear guidance as to the conditions which will prompt a staff member to administer these medications. This must not be initiated by a staff member in response to a student's behaviour and these medications are only to be administered for the purposes and in response to the symptoms described in the instructions.

PRN medications will be stored and administered as described in the school's medications policy and only administered by the First Aid Officer.

Where a student is able to self-manage their PRN medications this will be supported and facilitated taking due regard to the types of medication, safe storage and possible risks to the student or other students.

## **4.3 Prohibited actions.**

School staff must never use physical restraint and seclusion as behaviour management techniques, for convenience, as retaliation, or to discipline or punish a student.

Physical restraint must never be used where it has the effect of:

- covering a student's mouth or nose, or in any way interfering with breathing
- taking a student to the ground into the prone or supine position
- putting stress on a student's joints
- applying pressure to the neck, back, chest or joints
- deliberately applying pain to gain compliance
- intentionally causing a student to fall
- having a person sitting, lying, or kneeling on a student.

The following behaviours are prohibited:

- headlocks, choke holds, basket holds, bear hugs, 'therapeutic holding' or wrestling holds (including 'full or half nelsons')
- using a hog-tied position
- straddling any part of a student's body
- dragging a student along the ground.

Physical restraint and seclusion must never be included in a student plan including behaviour support and student safety plans.

Designated seclusion rooms and areas that are primarily used for the purpose of seclusion are prohibited.

Preventing a student from leaving an area normally used by students with a locking mechanism is prohibited.

Doors and door handles installed in such a manner as to prevent a student from leaving the room unassisted are prohibited.

Schools should never use mechanical restraints or a drug / medication that restricts a student's freedom of movement or to control behaviour.

Physical restraint is not permitted to be used to vaccinate a student.

#### 4.4 Follow up after instances of physical restraint and seclusion.

All instances of physical restraint and seclusion must be reported to the principal as soon as possible. The principal will ensure all reporting obligations as part of the Y Whittlesea safeguarding policy and procedure are taken.

The principal will ensure that:

- The incident is properly document with sufficient detail to enable debrief, investigation and review.
- Parents are contacted and advised of the use of physical restraint or seclusion and the circumstances as soon as is practicable after the incident.
- Appropriate follow up and support are provided to all students, staff and others involved or who witnessed the incident.

The principal will ensure a thorough debrief and investigation occurs to identify:

- The circumstances leading up to or contributing to the use of physical restraint and seclusion.
- Whether the use of restraint or seclusion was necessary and appropriate.
- What improvements in policy, procedure or practice, if any, might be possible to prevent further instances of restraint or seclusion.
- Whether any training, development or other action is required in relation to staff involved, or other staff at the school.

#### 5. Related policies:

- YCS Medication Policy

#### 6. Related procedures and supporting documents:

#### 7. Legislative and Industry Requirements:

- [Link](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

#### 8. Consequences of breaching this policy:

All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

#### 9. Variations:

Y Whittlesea reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

#### 10. Policy owner:

The Executive Manager - Schools is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.

#### 11. Document Control:

Review of this policy will be undertaken every 2 years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Policy available on Y-MAC>Communication>Manuals and Files>Policies and Procedures

This document is due for review on 1/05/2026.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Approver and date	Release Date
1.0	Policy created	Paul van Breugel	Executive Management Team 19/6/2023	1/11/2023