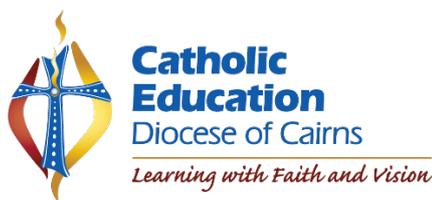


Guideline/Procedure



Directive No:

Approval Date: 2019 (SLT 10/19)

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Next Review Date: 2024

Author: MG&E. This reflects the Education Queensland guidelines for student physical restraint – acknowledged with thanks

Student physical restraint

Purpose

It is important that all staff have a consistent understanding of how to respond to emergency situations or critical incidents involving severe problem behaviour. This consistency ensures that appropriate actions are taken to ensure that both students and staff are kept safe, consistent with both lawful compliance and the context of pastoral care in Catholic school communities.

An **emergency situation or critical incident** is defined as an occurrence that is sudden, urgent, and usually unexpected, or an occasion requiring immediate action. **Severe problem behaviour** is defined as behaviour of such intensity, frequency, or duration that the physical safety of the student or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy.

Application

This guideline will be used by CES and all schools in the Diocese of Cairns.

Guideline or Procedure

The context of pastoral care

In addition to the legal context of appropriate physical constraint, actions should also reflect pastoral care as the distinctive feature of a Catholic school. From this orientation we would expect our actions will be:

- Cooperatively formulated, positive in orientation and purposeful;
- Just and reasonable;
- Respectful and contribute to the development of justice in the school;
- Reflective of our shared commitment for our schools to be safe places for all.

Physical Intervention

Staff may make legitimate use of physical intervention if all non-physical interventions have been exhausted and a student is:

- physically assaulting another student or staff member; or
- posing an immediate danger to him/herself or to others.

It is acknowledged that the immediacy of some events and the urgent need for action will often prevent opportunities to apply non-physical interventions.

Physical intervention may also be legitimately used as part of a student's individual plan, including the prevention of self-harming behaviours, but not as any form of punishment. Appropriate staff should be identified and trained in this role. The type of intervention should be identified in the plan, following appropriate consultation.

Appropriate physical intervention may be used to ensure that a school's duty of care to protect students and staff from foreseeable risks of injury is met. The use of physical intervention is only considered appropriate where the immediate safety of others is threatened and the strategy is used to prevent injury. Any action must be reasonable under the circumstances, after considering the welfare of the student, staff and other students.

Physical intervention can involve coming between students, blocking a student's path, leading a student by the hand/arm, shepherding a student by placing a hand in the centre of the upper back, removing potentially dangerous objects and, in extreme situations, using more forceful restraint.

Staff must also be mindful of their own safety and seek assistance when required.

It is important that all staff understand:

- physical intervention cannot be used as a form of punishment and cannot in any way be part of a school's behaviour support procedures;
- physical intervention must not be used when a less severe response can effectively resolve the situation and the underlying function of the behaviour. For example this might involve allowing a student to withdraw or move away from a situation or moving other people from a situation.

Unless student or staff safety is clearly threatened, physical intervention is not to be used as a response to:

- property destruction;
- school disruption;
- refusal to comply;
- verbal threats; and
- leaving a classroom or the school,.

These matters should be dealt with through the application of the detention, suspension and exclusion guidelines and other processes incorporated in the school's behaviour support procedures.

Any physical intervention made must:

- be reasonable in the particular circumstances;
- be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident;
- always be the minimum force needed to achieve the desired result; and
- take into account the age, stature, disability, understanding and gender of the student.

Basic defusing strategies

Where possible basic defusement approaches include:

1. Avoid escalating the problem behaviour: Avoid shouting, cornering the student, moving into the student's space, touching or grabbing the student, sudden responses, sarcasm, becoming defensive, communicating anger and frustration through body language.
2. Maintain calmness, respect and detachment: Model the behaviour you want students to adopt, stay calm and controlled, use a serious measured tone, choose your language carefully, avoid humiliating the student, be matter of fact and avoid responding emotionally.
3. Approach the student in a non-threatening manner: Move slowly and deliberately toward the problem situation, speak privately to the student/s where possible, speak calmly and respectfully, minimise body language, keep a reasonable distance, establish eye level position, be brief, stay with the agenda, acknowledge cooperation, withdraw if the situation escalates.
4. Follow through: If the student starts displaying the appropriate behaviour briefly acknowledge their choice and re-direct other students' attention towards their usual work/activity. If the student continues with the problem behaviour then remind them of the expected school behaviour and identify consequences of continued unacceptable behaviour).
5. Debrief: Help the student to identify the sequence of events that led to the unacceptable behaviour, pinpoint decision moments during the sequence of events, evaluate decisions made, and identify acceptable decision options for future situations.

Record keeping

All use of physical intervention must be formally documented on the Engage tool.

Training

Schools should seek regular access to training in alternatives to physical intervention and appropriate physical intervention techniques.

Enquiries

Directors School Effectiveness, Director Student Wellbeing and Diversity

Reflection

The Queensland Criminal Code Act 1899 s31: Justification and Excuse – Compulsion. This provides the legal understanding of physical intervention.

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

Code of Conduct – staff

Policy and guidelines – Student Protection

Guideline: Responding to unacceptable student behaviour

Guideline: Student Positive Behaviour Support – Guiding Principles