



# Policy

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## Restrictive Practices

### Purpose

This policy provides direction to Catholic schools aimed at reducing reliance on the use of restrictive practices and whenever possible eliminating their use.

### Policy

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Cairns has a strong commitment to ensuring that schools are nurturing environments that promote the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and visitors. It is paramount that our schools adopt approaches that are consistent with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, as well as Catholic Church teachings.

The use of restrictive practices has an effect on limiting the rights and freedoms of students, therefore it is important that:

- Principals and staff understand their obligations to reduce and manage risk with the aim of preventing the use of restrictive practices.
- They are only used when there is imminent risk of harm.
- Any use is the least restrictive option and only used as a last resort.
- Principals and staff understand their reporting obligations related to the use of any restrictive practice.

Restrictive practices include:

- Mechanical restraint
- Chemical restraint
- Physical restraint
- Seclusion
- Containment

### Rationale

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Restrictive Practices Guideline/ Procedure. Catholic Education is committed to 'The Wellbeing and Learning of ALL students', therefore it is expected that the use of restrictive practices are only implemented when:

- reasonable in the circumstances;
- there is no less restrictive option available that will reduce the presenting or foreseeable risk behaviour;
- the use does not present more risk than the behaviour it is responding to; and
- there is imminent risk of harm to the student or other people.

Principals and school staff have a non-delegable duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone within our schools. Principals and school staff have a responsibility to ensure that schools have appropriate policies, procedures and promote an organisational culture that respects the human rights of students.

# Definitions

**Mechanical restraint:** The application of a device that is used to restrict a student's movement.

**Chemical restraint:** The administration of medication to subdue or control a student's behaviour.

**Physical restraint:** The use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body.

**Seclusion:** The confinement of a student in a room or area from which their exit is prevented by a lock, barrier or other person. Seclusion includes situations where a student is placed in a room or area alone when they reasonably believe they are unable to leave OR they do not understand how to leave the room, even if they are physically able to do so.

**Containment:** The confinement of a student in a room or area who is accompanied by at least one member of staff.

**Best interest:** To consider all the elements necessary to make a decision related to a specific student, or group of students in order to safeguard their safety, rights and wellbeing.

**Least restrictive alternative:** The implementation of a restrictive practice, in response to foreseeable risk, there being no less restrictive alternative that will result in managing or eliminating the presenting risk.

## Consequences

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Cairns expect that schools establish appropriate procedures and practices that:

- Adhere to Diocesan policy and procedure.
- Comply with legal and moral imperatives, including the principles of protecting the human rights of the child, whilst ensuring the safety of others.
- Promote environments that are respectful, safe and welcoming to students, visitors and staff.
- Commit to meeting the best interest of all students, visitors and staff in a context of responding and managing risk.
- Develop cultures that reflect ongoing improvement in practice and promote wellbeing.
- Promote staff development and understanding, contextual to the environment in which they work.
- Promote the best interests of students, staff and visitors.
- Ensure the use of restrictive practices will be a last resort, with there being no other alternative option available for reducing or managing the presenting or foreseeable risk of harm.
- Are transparent and open regarding the management of behavioural risk as a last resort.
- Reduce the use of restrictive practices as far as is reasonably practicable, through the adoption of evidence based proactive approaches for responding to behaviour such as positive behaviour support and behavioural risk assessment.

## See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

- Student Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Inclusive Practices Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Enrolment Application Support Procedure
- Student Bullying: Prevention and Responses in Schools Guideline
- Student Physical Restraint Guideline