



## Administrative Procedure

Title: <b>Safe Physical Interventions for Student Behaviours Causing a Risk of Injury</b>	Procedure #: <b>AP804-3</b>
Administrative Area: Student Services	
Policy Reference: Inclusion (PO804)	
Date Approved:	
Dates of Amendment:	

### 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide guidelines that support the safety of all students and staff when a student presents a risk of injury or is likely to present a risk of injury to self, students, staff or others. This administrative procedure assists principals/designates with meeting the safety and behavioural needs of all students, while supporting the safety of staff and students. Principals are expected to promote a safe school environment for all while responding to the student’s right to an appropriate education.

The procedures outlined in this Administrative Procedure apply to all students, including those with special education needs. Well-planned prevention and safety-intervention strategies and an ongoing review of programs will significantly reduce or eliminate the risk of injury to staff and students. This Administrative Procedure provides a consistent response to injurious, including self-injurious, student behaviour. It recognizes that when safety is an issue there may be situations where physical intervention may be necessary as a last resort in order to support the safety for all.

### 2.0 Definitions

**Acceptable Forms of Physical Intervention** – Notwithstanding s.43 of the Criminal Code of Canada, acceptable forms of physical intervention such as reaching for a child’s hand, holding a child’s hand, or blocking a student’s arm to prevent a fight, are common and usual methods used by parents/guardians, and teaching and support staff for maintaining order and preventing harm or misconduct. These mild forms of physical contact are not subject to this Administrative Procedure, and do not require consent or approval by the parent/guardian.

## 2.0 Definitions (Cont'd)

**Behaviour Management Systems (BMS)** – a training program developed by the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and is the only approved behaviour management system for educators in the DCDSB. BMS emphasizes the use of early intervention techniques of a non-physical nature focusing on prevention, rather than control of disruptive and/or unsafe behaviour. BMS teaches staff the importance of identifying early warning signs, and the effective use of calming and de-escalating techniques. BMS also includes a secondary emphasis on defensive techniques (e.g., avoidance, releases, blocks, etc.) combined with intervention methods to be used only as an absolute last resort.

**Emergency Physical Intervention** – the actions taken in a crisis situation in which a student poses an immediate risk to himself/herself, others, or property. Whenever possible, emergency physical Intervention should be implemented by staff trained in Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) in order to move the student out of danger, to remove objects from the student, or to hold/immobilize the student. In emergency situations, any employee of the Board may use physical intervention strategies in an attempt to prevent harm to any student, staff members, or property. Emergency physical intervention does not require prior approval of the parent/guardian.

**Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)** – an FBA is a valuable problem solving tool in addressing behaviour problems by looking at both the likely causes and at the characteristics or symptoms of behaviour. An FBA is used to determine the purpose of the behaviour (i.e., the function it serves), to identify contextual factors that may be triggering the behaviour, and to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP)** – a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations.

- For students with the possibility of unsafe behaviours, an IEP should include:
  - Program modifications and/or accommodations that support proactive strategies.
  - Alternative learning expectations outlining skills the student will learn which are more socially acceptable. The learning expectations will be found in one more of the areas of social skills, self-regulation and social communication.
  - Appropriate teaching strategies, behaviour management strategies and assessment/evaluation methods related to each behavioural learning expectation.

**Personal Protective Equipment** – the equipment/devices/clothing that is used to protect a staff member or student from injury during the course of daily activities (e.g., Kevlar, shin pads, etc.)

## 2.0 Definitions (Cont'd)

**Positive Behaviour Supports** – progressive discipline requires that positive behaviour supports be used as an approach to working with challenging behaviours. Educators using positive behaviour supports:

- understand and support students in their behaviour change process, as opposed to controlling or coercing them;
- apply a scientific approach of observation and data collection (e.g., Functional Behaviour Assessment);
- analyze the context in which the behaviour occurs;
- identify a relationship between the behaviour and the context to determine the motivation behind the behaviour;
- reduce potential triggers for the individual in the environment in certain settings and during certain events; and
- provide and model the use of alternative behaviours that are more socially acceptable.

**Safe Physical Intervention** – any procedure in which staff may use any part of their body (hands, trunk, or legs), or any item to restrict the movement of a student. This intervention must be reasonable in the given situation.

**Safety Plan** – an emergency response plan developed for students with risk of injury behaviour including students with special education needs whose behaviour presents a risk of injury to self, staff and/or students and/or is a flight risk. All students with a Safety Plan must have an IEP that identifies the goals and teaching strategies needed to reduce the ongoing risk-of-injury behaviours. While Safety Plans are unique for each student, they generally include the following information:

- a description of the observable behaviour concern(s)
- triggers or antecedents
- prevention and intervention strategies to support staff and student safety
- emergency communication procedures
- consequences (progressive discipline actions)
- documentation
- follow-up and re-evaluation

A Safety Plan should be created when a student requires multiple Emergency Physical Interventions, and/or when the intensity of the behaviour warrants further intervention. This type of intervention requires prior consultation with the parent/guardian.

### 3.0 Procedures

#### 3.1 General Procedures for Ensuring a Positive School Climate

3.1.1 The Education Act and Regulations, assign a “Duty of Care” to the Principal/Designate which confirms that the final decision with respect to safe, and physical intervention (subject to s.43 of the Criminal Code of Canada) rests with the Principal and/or the Vice Principal/Designate. It is expected that all staff members shall resolve situations involving unsafe behaviour by using the least intrusive means possible, and these measures may include, but are not limited to:

- 3.1.1.1 establishing consistent, positive school and classroom rules and routines;
- 3.1.1.2 reinforcing behaviour that is consistent with school and classroom rules and routines;
- 3.1.1.3 identifying antecedents of aggressive behaviour in order to prevent the behaviour from occurring; and
- 3.1.1.4 teaching appropriate replacement behaviours that are socially acceptable alternatives to aggression and verbal escalation.

3.1.2 The Board expects staff to use appropriate prevention and intervention strategies to prevent a student’s behaviour from escalating to the point where the student exhibits an unsafe, potentially injurious response. For some students with special education needs, these strategies will be part of the student’s IEP. The IEP describes the objectives and strategies to be used to help the student increase positive and appropriate behaviours, and decrease behaviours that interfere with learning, self-control, and social interaction.

#### 3.2 General Procedures for Safe Physical Interventions

3.2.1 Safe physical intervention may be necessary for some students as part of their Safety Plan. For other students, it may be the result of actions outside of their individual baselines.

3.2.2 In situations where prevention and intervention strategies have been unsuccessful in helping the student maintain self-control, and the student’s behaviour has escalated to the point where the student may injure another student or adult; may injure him/herself; may leave, or attempt to leave a supervised area, such that his/her personal safety is at imminent risk; or is causing significant property damage that may cause injury to self or others, staff will need to make a decision whether or not to physically intervene and to obtain assistance as soon as possible.

3.2.3 Safe Physical Intervention will not be used:

- 3.2.3.1 as a tool to manage uncooperative behaviour;
- 3.2.3.2 as a form of punishment;
- 3.2.3.3 as a means to inflict pain;
- 3.2.3.4 as a means to prevent the destruction of property unless the destruction poses a serious, imminent and acute risk of physical injury to students and/or others.

### 3.0 Procedures (Cont'd)

- 3.2.3.5 As a means to stop a student from trying to escape a situation, when the escape is not putting himself/herself or others at risk.
- 3.2.4 Staff should not regard behaviour that poses a risk of injury as a learning opportunity for teaching or addressing the behaviour with threats of discipline. The goal is to diffuse, not to trigger or escalate behaviour. Discipline and consequences should be addressed when the student is de-escalated and re-engaged in learning.
- 3.2.5 In making a decision regarding physical intervention, the following factors must be considered:
- 3.2.5.1 indicators that the student's behaviour presents an imminent safety risk to self or others;
  - 3.2.5.2 the safety of the other students (e.g., can staff move the other students to safety without physically intervening);
  - 3.2.5.3 the safety of the staff member (e.g., can staff move away from the student, rather than physically intervening);
  - 3.2.5.4 the student's previous history;
  - 3.2.5.5 the staff/student relationship;
  - 3.2.5.6 staff training and experience;
  - 3.2.5.7 the physical characteristics and/or abilities of the staff member/student (e.g., age, size, health factors);
  - 3.2.5.8 the availability of support;
  - 3.2.5.9 the nature of the physical environment; and
  - 3.2.5.10 whether or not the use of physical intervention techniques will escalate the level of risk.
- 3.2.6 Physical intervention should only be employed as a last resort when all other less restrictive measures have been exhausted and there is an imminent and acute risk of injury to self and others. The physical intervention used must be the least invasive level of specific containment strategies necessary. Physical intervention will be used to manage student behaviour only to the point where the student no longer creates/poses an imminent risk of serious injury to self or others. At this point, the physical intervention should no longer be utilized. If the student returns to an escalated state, the physical intervention should be employed again. Techniques where the student is restrained until calm shall not be used.
- 3.2.7 Physical interventions include a range of holding techniques, as outlined in BMS training used to restrict the student's ability to move freely, either by holding the student in place, or by escorting him or her to a safe place. Whenever possible, a first priority is to remove the target of a student who is striking, kicking, grabbing or biting to avoid injury. A safe physical intervention is an appropriate staff response to strikes, kicks, grabs or bites from a student (i.e., student initiated physical aggression), when the staff member is unable to avoid or get away from the student. It is important that the methods used do not result in pain or injury to the student.

### 3.0 Procedures (Cont'd)

- 3.2.8 Students may be escorted to a safe place, as predetermined by the student's Safety Plan. The student can be left alone in the safe place while de-escalating, as long as the educator can continue to observe the student (e.g., through a window, open door, etc.). Students should never be locked in a room, including holding the door shut. Appropriate blocking strategies should be utilized if a student has not de-escalated and is trying to leave the safe place.
- 3.2.9 When a student cannot be willingly escorted to a safe location, the current area should be made as safe as possible (e.g., remove students, objects, possible projectiles etc.).
- 3.2.10 Calling 9-1-1 for professional assistance by police and/or emergency medical services is always a viable option in an emergency situation, and can be given consideration where the behaviour(s) and physical attributes of the student present a significant risk of serious injury to self and/or others, such that physical interventions cannot be safely used.

#### 3.3 Procedures for Safe Physical Interventions as Outlined in a Safety Plan

- 3.3.1 Physical Intervention may be a necessary component of a Safety Plan for a student where known behaviours present a safety risk to the student or others. Physical intervention is the last resort within a hierarchy of prevention and intervention strategies outlined in the Safety Plan. The Safety Plan must clearly state the purpose of physical intervention and the conditions of its use. The plan is developed by school staff in consultation with, but not limited to, the following:
- 3.3.1.1 Student (if appropriate);
  - 3.3.1.2 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers (signature indicates awareness, not necessarily permission);
  - 3.3.1.3 Student Services personnel; and
  - 3.3.1.4 Community Agency personnel (as required).
- 3.3.2 The details involved in the use of physical intervention with a student are identified in the student's Safety Plan. A Safety Plan that includes physical intervention will outline the following details/procedures:
- 3.3.2.1 Indicators that student's behaviour presents an imminent safety risk and that physical intervention is required;
  - 3.3.2.2 Who will act as lead and who will assist in containing the student;
  - 3.3.2.3 A contingency plan for staff absences;
  - 3.3.2.4 Intervention techniques to be used
  - 3.3.2.5 Safety/protective equipment required;
  - 3.3.2.6 How the student's condition will be monitored;
  - 3.3.2.7 Monitoring of person(s) doing the intervention; and
  - 3.3.2.8 How it will be determined when to discontinue the physical intervention.

### 3.0 Procedures (Cont'd)

- 3.3.3 Wherever possible, only those staff members identified in the Safety Plan should participate in a physical intervention. If a physical intervention occurs, staff and principals are to document the intervention in the Safe Schools Incident Reporting tool on MyDCDSB.

#### 3.4 Unanticipated Emergency Physical Intervention

- 3.4.1 The decision to use physical intervention in an unanticipated emergency situation is a matter of professional judgment. In making the decision whether or not to use physical intervention, the following factors must be considered:
- 3.4.1.1 Imminent risk-of-injury to self or others;
  - 3.4.1.2 Options available other than a physical intervention to maintain safety;
  - 3.4.1.3 Student's Safety Plan;
  - 3.4.1.4 Availability of external support (e.g., parents, police);
  - 3.4.1.5 Characteristics of the staff member and the student (size, age, strength, gender);
  - 3.4.1.6 Previous history of the student (special education needs, patterns of behaviour, health, etc.);
  - 3.4.1.7 Staff training, confidence connection with the student and willingness to intervene; and,
  - 3.4.1.8 Physical setting.

#### 3.5 Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) – Staff Training and Responsibilities

- 3.5.1 Behaviour Management Systems Training program is the only recognized program used for safe physical interventions in the DCDSB. Behaviour Management Systems was developed by the Ontario Educational Services Corporation (OESC) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education as a response to the need expressed by educators throughout the province for a behavioural intervention program that was effective and tailored to the requirements and realities of school settings.
- 3.5.2 Staff who intervene with a student who poses a physical risk-of-injury are potentially vulnerable to personal injury themselves. To reduce the chance of injury to staff, the board trains staff on the use of BMS in both prevention and intervention strategies that are most likely to support a student who poses a risk of injury.
- 3.5.3 BMS Training will be offered to educators and administrators working directly and regularly with students who pose a significant risk-of-injury. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that staff who are most likely to work with students who pose a risk of injury receive BMS training or updated recertification.
- 3.5.4 In addition, the principal will make personal protective equipment (PPE) available for staff as necessary and appropriate. Principals considering the use of PPE to reduce risk of injury should contact their Student Services Coordinator or Facilitator of Educational Assistants.

### 3.0 Procedures (Cont'd)

#### 3.6 Documentation of Safe Physical Interventions

- 3.6.1 All physical interventions must be reported verbally to the principal/designate on the day they occur.
- 3.6.2 In any situation in which a physical interventions is used, staff must indicate it on the Safe Schools Incident Reporting tool on My DCDSB. In these situations, an automatic debrief of the situation is required with the principal/vice-principal. This will also trigger a review of the Safety Plan and consultation with the student, parent and staff directly involved with the student.

#### 3.7 Debriefing and Follow-up

- 3.7.1 All physical interventions place stress on staff and students. Each individual responds to these incidents in a way that is unique to that individual. Review and debriefing strategies will vary with the nature of the school, program and staff allocations. The incident response procedures are to inform both the immediate response and also be a component in reviewing and revising prevention/intervention strategies.
- 3.7.2 Should a physical intervention be used, the following must also be considered:
  - 3.7.1.1 Assessment of any injuries and appropriate action
  - 3.7.1.2 Designation of who will follow up and support the student
  - 3.7.1.3 Communication with school administration
  - 3.7.1.4 Communication with parents/guardians
  - 3.7.1.5 The debrief process for staff involved and students who witnessed the incident
  - 3.7.1.6 Forms to be completed (as required)
    - 3.7.1.6.1 Safe Schools Incident Application
    - 3.7.1.6.2 Workplace Injury Form (Parklane)
    - 3.7.1.6.3 OSBIE Report of Accident (for student injury)
  - 3.7.1.7 Evaluation/review procedures for:
    - 3.7.1.7.1 Staff response to the situation
    - 3.7.1.7.2 Effectiveness of the Safety Plan
    - 3.7.1.7.3 Further planning/IEP modification, as appropriate and necessary
- 3.7.3 In addition to informing parents/guardians there are three (3) types of debriefing that should occur following a physical intervention.
  - 3.7.3.1 Student Debriefing – There must be readiness on the part of the student to participate in the debriefing. This debriefing must be facilitated in order to accommodate the needs of the student. The parent or guardian of the student must be invited to attend during this process. The purpose of this debriefing is to:
    - 3.7.3.1.1 Gain an understanding of the incident from the student's perspective;

### 3.0 Procedures (Cont'd)

- 3.7.3.1.2 Validate and empathize with the student's feelings;
- 3.7.3.1.3 Discuss any unresolved emotional distress about the incident;
- 3.7.3.1.4 Negotiate alternative responses for similar situations that might occur in the future; and
- 3.7.3.1.5 Consider how to repair and restore any relationships harmed by the incident.

- 3.7.2.2 Staff Debriefing – The staff debriefing must be led by the principal or designate and preferably occur on the same day as the incident. The purpose of the staff debriefing is to:
  - 3.7.2.2.1 Assess the staff's ability to support the student in a positive manner;
  - 3.7.2.2.2 Gain an understanding of the incident from the staff member's perspective;
  - 3.7.2.2.3 Validate the staff member's feelings;
  - 3.7.2.2.4 Discuss any unresolved emotional distress about the incident;
  - 3.7.2.2.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of the response; and
  - 3.7.2.2.6 Discuss alternative responses for similar situations that might occur in the future.This debriefing is to be recorded in the Safe Schools Incident Application by the Principal or designate.

- 3.7.2.3 Observers Debriefing – Debriefing of observers may include other students, staff, volunteers and/or members of the public that witness the intervention. The principal or designate should consider providing observers the opportunity for debriefing. Students who witness a physical intervention may not understand the situation and/or may require a special debriefing with a focused message regarding maintaining safety at school. The principal should consider the age of the student(s) involved in the debriefing and ensure the message is age-appropriate. The principal should be careful to not disclose private information in order to respect the privacy of student involved in the intervention.

### 3.8 Use of Time Out Rooms/Calm Room and Isolation

- 3.8.1 Considerable caution must be exercised in the use of time-out rooms/isolation rooms as a method of managing inappropriate behaviour on an ongoing basis;
- 3.8.2 In a situation where extreme behaviour occurs and there is an imminent safety risk, it may be necessary to escort a student to a time-out room until the parent or guardian can come to the school to take the student home;

### 3.0 Procedures (Cont'd)

- 3.8.3 If a time-out/calm room/isolation room is used:
- 3.8.3.1 The student must be under continuous supervision by an adult who is either in the room or who has instant access to the room;
  - 3.8.3.2 The student must be removed from the room as soon as there is an indication that the imminent risk of safety has subsided; and
  - 3.8.3.3 It must not contain any objects that could be used by the student to injure him/herself.
  - 3.8.3.4 It must not be locked, which includes holding the door shut.
- 3.8.4 A time-out/calm room/isolation room is not the same as a safe place that the student may choose to go to calm him/herself.
- 3.8.5 A safe place does not need to be a designated calm room or sensory room. Any place that helps an individual student de-escalate and does not present a safety risk to self or others can be considered a student's safe place (e.g., space in the classroom, behind a door, on a bench outside the office, in the corner of the library on a bean bag chair, etc.); and
- 3.8.6 If a student cannot be escorted to a safe place or a time-out room under his/her own volition, then the student should be left where he/she is and the place made safe by removing the other students, objects, projectiles etc. It may be safer to leave the student where he/she is with one or two adults than try to escort the student to another room.

### 3.9 Transporting versus Escorting Students

- 3.9.1 It is important that staff who are engaged in safe physical interventions understand and can differentiate between escorting and transporting because the Durham Catholic District School Board supports the use of escorting a student, but not transporting a student. Transporting students increases the safety risk to both staff and students.
- 3.9.2 Escort: To escort a student means to accompany the student from one location to another without the use of force or without restricting a student's movements. The student may be reluctant to move, but is not forcibly moved against his/her will. This may include:
- 3.9.2.1 Walking beside the student;
  - 3.9.2.2 Holding the student's hand or with a hand on the student's arm or shoulder; or
  - 3.9.2.3 Providing gentle guidance, but not force.
- 3.9.3 Transport: To transport a student means moving a student from one location to another by means of a physical intervention because the student is actively resisting being moved. This may include:
- 3.9.3.1 Staff using their hands or arms to control or restrict the student's freedom of movement; or
  - 3.9.3.2 Physically moving a student against his/her will.

### 3.0 **Procedures (Cont'd)**

3.9.3.3 Carrying a student from one location to another against his/her will.

3.9.4. Since transporting a student is a physical intervention where staff restrict and/or control student movement, it is considered a form of restraint and should not be used.

#### 3.10 Confidentiality

3.10.1 Due to the sensitive nature of situations that involve physical intervention, it is imperative that the confidentiality of the situation is maintained. The privacy rights of the students, staff and parents/guardians involved must be respected. A breach of confidentiality by a staff member could be subject to disciplinary action.

### 4.0 **Sources**

- *Child Youth and Family Services Act*
- *Education Act*
- *Criminal Code of Canada*

### 5.0 **References**

- Behaviour Management Systems Practitioner Workbook
- Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 140, Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

### 6.0 **Related Policies and Administrative Procedures**

- Inclusion Policy (PO804)
- Workplace Violence Prevention – Students (AP324-2)