



NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUSINESS COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: May 11, 2022
TO: Business Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary Treasurer & Kerri Steel, Director of Instruction – Inclusive Education
SUBJECT: Administrative Procedure 331 – Physical Restraint and Seclusion

Background

As the Board is aware, District staff have been diligently reviewing and revising our Administrative Procedures to ensure their currency and alignment with best educational, operational and risk management practices. This memo outlines changes to AP 331 – Physical Restraint and Seclusion. It highlights the reason for the changes as well as the specific changes themselves. We note this particular revision has been subject to significant consultation with various parties and that process is also laid out.

Discussion

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for students and employees. It is essential to maintain an environment which respects each student's right to an educational program and ensures that each and every intervention is carried out in a manner that maintains the student's dignity and the safety of all involved.

Board employees routinely use a variety of educative, preventative and restorative interventions to respond to a range of complex student behaviours and this Administrative Procedure (the AP) is intended to ensure that employees clearly understand the continuum of supports that are available to support students, to preclude the need to use physical restraint.

In exceptional circumstances when student behaviour presents an imminent danger to self or others, including school employees, and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending imminent danger of serious physical harm, it may be necessary for employees to use reasonable physical restraint. Restraint is never to be used as punishment, discipline, or to force compliance with respect to educational learning outcomes.

In order to ensure that these revisions reflected both Ministry expectations, and the needs of our school teams and students, a number of structured opportunities for consultation were held. Consultation meetings included: both unions, DPAC, a team of Inclusion Support Teachers and Counsellors, principals and vice principals, parents, the Senior Manager, Occupational Safety and Wellness, and a Director from the Inclusive Education division at the Ministry of Education. Additionally, two school teams have piloted aspects of this revision, to ensure that it was practically applicable in the school setting.

There were a number of specific points of tension with the previous version of this AP which the revisions attempt to address. These include:

- Staff belief that we are a “hands-off” district, even where gentle guidance or assistance were appropriate and necessary. There are times when holding a child’s hand while walking through the hall or providing hand-over-hand support for learning are required for the student to experience success. Staff also felt they were unable to provide appropriate comfort and/or reassurance to children. The updated AP includes a new section which clearly defines “Physical Escort/Assistance.”
- By not providing these interventions, school teams are also feeling that they are unable to use interventions which family and community support people (e.g., Behavioural Consultants) are finding successful in other settings. This leads to a lack of consistency for the student, and difficulty in implementing interventions that are consistent across settings.
- The definition of “imminent danger” is not being interpreted consistently across the system. It is imperative that staff understand when an escalation is requiring physical intervention, and when it is more appropriate for staff to observe from a distance. This will prevent unnecessary restraint, and also keep staff and students safe. The definition in the updated AP defines it as “situations with a high likelihood of **immediate and substantial** physical or bodily injury to self or others”
- Finally, the curriculum for Non-violent Crisis Intervention has been updated in the last year. The language in this AP has been updated to reflect the current language and guidance from that training.

Appendix A: AP 331 – Physical Restraint and Seclusion

