



# DEHCHO DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

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## Guidelines on physical restraint of a student in a school setting.

**The ultimate goal of physical restraint is to remove the student from potentially unsafe situations while at the same time, ensuring that the least amount of force/harm is applied.**

The Dehcho Divisional Education staff may be facing situations of unexpected and/or uncontrollable behaviors.

This directive on how to address them is in line with Board policy # 3.13 on the physical restraint of students.

It must be understood that physical restraint must be seen as a last resort, when all de-escalation strategies have failed.

When a student displays agitated behaviors that are a risk to himself/herself/themselves and/or others, the staff is asked to embrace the following steps:

- **De-escalation:** *Please note that the de-escalation measures can only be by-passed if there is an immediate danger to the student and/or to others.*

De-escalation strategies may include but are not limited to:

- Try to maintain a relaxed and non confrontational posture/demeanor.
  - Keep a calm tone of voice.
  - Give the student a way out of the situation. Make them understand that the said behaviour is not helping.
    - i. Verbally encourage the student to remove themselves from the environment/audience (ie. Classroom, playground ..).
    - ii. If student does not cooperate as per i. then remove the peer audience so they are out of harm's way and to reduce potential triggers.
  - Establish contact with the student using simple, concise and non-threatening language.
  - Help them clarify the issue, and make sure that they feel heard. Paraphrase if need be.
  - If possible, try to have another adult witness the interactions (*but not too close so that the student doesn't feel threatened*). If no adult is around, try to send a student to get some help.
- **Restraint:** If the de-escalation strategies didn't work, you may have to physically restrain the student. *Do not ever put yourself at risk. Physical restraint MUST NOT override your own safety.*
    - Where possible, refer to the student's behavior and/or safety plan, and make sure that you follow it.
    - Try to control the hands and the feet of the student.

- Keep your face away from the student's head to avoid getting bumped.
  - Apply the most minimal force possible, and keep talking in a calm voice.
  - Remind the student that you are going to release them, as soon as the unwanted behavior stops.
  - Never restrict the student's breathing, never hold their neck.
  - Do not restrain students with physical object(s) (ie. rope).
  - Do not put the student on a lying position (face up or down) to avoid breathing issues, in case she/he/they is/are dealing with a seizure.
  - Release the pressure and containment as quickly as you can, (ie. As soon as the student starts to calm down).
  - Encourage the student and praise them for controlling their own behaviour(s).  
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- **Documentation:** Try to document the incident as quickly as possible, when the incident is over.
- If another adult witnessed the incident, get a statement;
  - Note the time, the location, and names of all witnesses;
  - Provide a written statement that leads to and describes the incident and the resolution:
    - i. Provide quotes of what was said by the student and by yourself, as precisely as possible;
  - Be factual and avoid interpretations of emotions/feelings.
  - Notify the principal of the incident as soon as possible;
  - The school principal will forward to appropriate authorities (The Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinator, the Supervisor of Schools and/or the Superintendent).
  - Immediately escalate to the central office if the principal is not available.
  - Principal will inform the parent(s) of the student, and other parents if multiple students were involved as quickly as possible.

**Ensure you address your own mental wellness as well as that of all staff and students who were involved and/or witnessed the incident. Seek additional supports as needed.**

- **Debriefing:** Once the incident is over, the School Based Support Team must review the incident and:
- Assess the need for support of staff and students.
  - Assess the handling of the incident and make recommendation for future reference.
  - Look if there is a need to review the behavior plan, or if there is a need to create one.
  - Apply appropriate measures and supports as warranted.
  - Analyse the root cause of the issue and address the cause of the outburst (if there is one).
  - Record everything in the student's Principal Red folder.
  - Provide staff training if needed.
  - Review the school safety plan if needed.