

Fact sheet

Physical restraint, mechanical restraint and chemical restraint

This fact sheet supports principals and state school staff to understand restrictive practices defined in the [Restrictive practices procedure](#), and should be read in conjunction with the procedure.

Generally, the restrictive practices permitted under the *Restrictive practices* procedure must only be used where:

- a) the restrictive practice is reasonable in all circumstances; and
- b) where there is no less restrictive measure available to respond to the behaviour in the circumstances.

Physical restraint

Physical restraint means the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of a student's body or part of their body. Physical restraint is implemented to prevent the risk of foreseeable harm to the student themselves and other people.

Physical restraint will usually be implemented in a dynamic situation when, despite attempts by school staff to respond to and de-escalate the behaviour, there continues to be foreseeable risk of harm to the student themselves or others.

There are some students who have a pattern of behaviour that presents foreseeable harm to themselves or others. In circumstances where there is foreseeable risk presented by a particular behaviour of a student, the principal and school staff might plan for the use of physical restraint. In situations where there is a known risk it is safer for students and staff to plan a response to

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manage that risk in advance. The Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) will detail positive approaches for preventing and responding to the behaviour and describe de-escalation strategies. The school will involve the student's parents when planning to use physical restraint and the planned use of physical restraint will be detailed in the student's Individual Student Safety Plan (ISSP). The ISSP will detail how the planned use of physical restraint with the student will be reduced. Parent/s will be asked to sign the ISSP.

Mechanical restraint

Mechanical restraint is the restraint of a student by application of a device to the student's body or limb of the student to restrict the student's movement. Mechanical restraint is implemented to respond to serious repetitive behaviours of self-injury, that causes foreseeable harm to the student. Self-injury occurs as the result of a phenotype behaviour associated with a known condition, for example Rett Syndrome. Mechanical restraint will always be planned in advance and detailed in the student's ISSP. The device used will be prescribed to respond to a specific behaviour and parents will be consulted as part of the plan. The ISSP will detail how the planned use of mechanical restraint will be reduced.

Chemical restraint

Chemical restraint is the use of medication to control or subdue a student's behaviour. **Chemical restraint is prohibited in all state schools**, including special schools. Refer to the department's [Administration of medication in schools procedure](#).

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