

Fact sheet

Seclusion, containment, time out and self-directed time

This fact sheet supports principals and state school staff to understand seclusion, containment, time out and self-directed time. This document should be read in conjunction with the [Restrictive practices procedure](#). Generally, the restrictive practices permitted under the department's *Restrictive practices procedure* must only be used where:

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

Seclusion

Seclusion is the solitary confinement of a student in a room or area from which their exit is prevented (by a barrier or another person). Seclusion may also include situations where a student is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes they cannot leave that room or area, even if it is physically possible.

Seclusion can only be used in an emergency and must be discontinued as soon as the risk abates. Schools will not have designated seclusion rooms or areas.

Seclusion occurs:

- when the student is taken and put in a room or area that they are unable to leave, or believe they cannot leave

This factsheet must be read in conjunction with the full procedure text.

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- if there is no adult in the room or area with the student who is secluded
- when staff are observing the student from outside of the room or area
- if the student is only able to leave the room or area when staff permit them to do so.

Note: if a student is placed in a tent or other similar piece of equipment and they are unable to leave that tent, the practice may meet the definition of seclusion.

Containment

Containment is a planned restrictive practice that involves a single student being in a room or area for the purpose of engaging in learning. The room is secured by a fob, or similar system, and the student's free exit is impeded. The student is always accompanied in the room, by at least one adult and the student is not left alone in that room or area at any time.

Containment occurs in a room that is designated for that purpose and has been assessed as providing a safe and secure environment, for the student and staff, in line with workplace health and safety legislation.

Containment occurs:

- as a planned approach for supporting an individual student
- when the student spends all or some of their school day in the room as outlined in their Individual Student Safety Plan (ISSP) which parent/s have signed
- when there is a staff member in the room with the student at all times
- when staff who are with the student have access to a fob or similar system which enables everyone to exit the room in an emergency
- when the student is only able to leave the room if staff enable them to do so.

Time out

Time out does not meet the threshold definition of being a restrictive practice in the *Restrictive practices* procedure. Time out is a planned behaviour intervention that is implemented as part of an Individual Behaviour Support

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Plan (IBSP) on the basis of a functional behaviour assessment. It is a behaviour strategy in which a student is taken from an activity and placed in a different, less-rewarding situation or setting whenever they engage in undesirable or inappropriate behaviour(s). The student is accompanied throughout the application of time out.

Time out occurs:

- as a planned behaviour intervention strategy
- in the classroom or another area where the student is unable to engage in the reinforcement that is causing their behaviour
- at the direction of the teacher
- when the student is under the supervision of the teacher and is never left alone throughout the implementation of the strategy
- for the shortest possible time.

Self-directed time

Self-directed time is sometimes called time away, chill out time or a cooling off period. It is an informal behaviour support strategy that may be used as part of a planned behaviour support response. Self-directed time enables students to leave a stressful situation for supervised time alone and is often used to prevent escalation of behaviour. Self-directed time is not a restrictive practice, it is an informal behaviour support strategy.

Self-directed time occurs when the student:

- recognises a situation may increase stress to them or lead to an escalation in their behaviour
- requests permission to use self-directed time away from the classroom
- leaves the classroom or educational activity without prompting or support
- goes to a prearranged room or area, for example a garden, quiet space, lounge room
- is monitored at all times while they are having self-directed time
- chooses to return to the classroom or educational activity as soon as they feel able to do so.

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