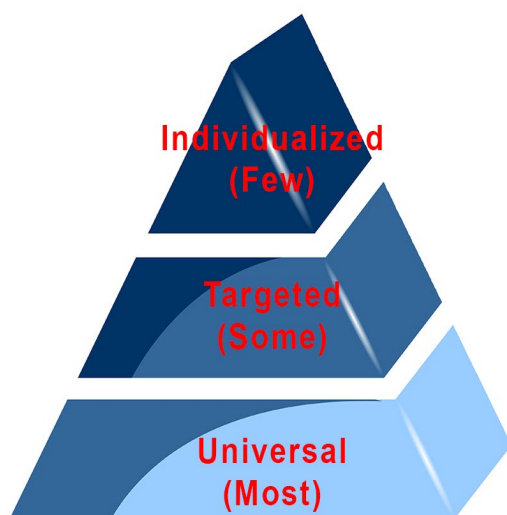


## Background

The division is committed to providing a safe, personally secure and respectful environment for students and employees. All students and employees are expected to contribute to and maintain this environment. Safety may be compromised when a student's behaviour is dangerous to self or others.

## Definitions:

*Positive Behaviour Supports* is a school-wide collaborative effort to design and implement strategies, practices, and interventions for promoting positive social and communication skills. It is also useful for teaching, coaching and reinforcing skills required for academic and social success. It involves universal, targeted, and intensive or individualized behaviour supports. EICS has developed a template itemizing supports ([Wellness & Student Engagement Continuum of Supports](#)) which is modified by individual schools to reference available supports in each school community.



A smaller number of children/students who may not respond to universal and targeted supports will benefit from **intensive individualized supports**.

Some children/students will benefit from **additional targeted supports** to help maintain positive behaviour.

All children/students benefit from **universal supports**, which are sufficient to maintain positive behaviour for most children/students.

*Physical Guidance* is the prompting of a student when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, or providing comfort. Physical guidance does not constitute a physical hold.

*Physical Escort* is the temporary touching or holding of a student's hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of accompanying and inducing a student who is slightly agitated to walk to a safe location. Such contact is often brief and directional and does not serve as immobilization or a means for reconstituting behavioural control. Physical escort does not constitute a physical hold.

*Disengagement* is the use of a physical intervention to gain a release from any holding situation while minimizing the risk of pain or injury in situations in which the behaviour has been assessed as a low, medium, or higher risk to self or others.

*Physical Restraint* is defined as any method of using physical contact for restricting or immobilizing another person's freedom of movement, physical activity, or normal access to their body. It is a personal restriction that serves as a means of controlling an individual's movement, reconstituting behavioural control, and establishing and maintaining safety for the individual and other individuals. Temporary physical contact for purposes such as moving a child/student away from danger or breaking up a fight is **not** considered a physical hold. Physical hold also does not include providing physical guidance or the prompting of a child/student when teaching a skill. Elk Island Catholic Schools uses the term 'Physical Holds' or 'Holding Skills' to align with practices taught during Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training.

*Seclusion* is the involuntary confinement or isolation of a person, alone in a room or area from which the person cannot freely exit or is physically prevented from leaving. This generally occurs in a room with a door that has a lock. The lock may be engaged, or if not engaged, the door is otherwise blocked or held shut. Seclusion and time-out are not synonymous with each other. A seclusion room is defined as a room, structure or enclosure where the primary purpose involves the involuntary confinement or isolation of a student where the student is prevented or incapable of evacuating from the room, structure or enclosure without the assistance of another person because security measures are not under the student's control. **EICS does not utilize seclusion rooms.**

*Time Out* is a shortened form of a behavioural management strategy known as time-out from positive reinforcement. It is a behavioural intervention that involves reducing or limiting the amount of reinforcement that is available to an individual for a brief period of time in order to decrease or stop a predefined challenging behaviour. The appropriate use of time-out as a behavioural intervention can be an effective method of reducing problem behaviours that negatively impact children/student learning and the classroom environment. However, time-out is not a go-to intervention for all challenging behaviour. Inappropriately used, time-out can be harmful and ineffective at reducing the problem that one is attempting to address.

Time-out is a behavioural intervention that needs to be strategically planned, implemented and linked to positive behavioural management. If positive approaches are unsuccessful, and/or the use of time-out from positive reinforcement is being considered, the following is expected:

1. Written procedures for the use of time-out must be identified in the student's Regulation Support Plan.
2. Positive and proactive behaviour management strategies are to be employed before the use of time-out in learning environments.
3. Time-out interventions are to be accompanied by positive behaviour approaches to reinforce and increase appropriate behaviour.

*Prevention* is the best method of maintaining a safe, secure and respectful environment. Preventative and positive behaviour/regulation supports are expected to be in place to help prevent the use of physical holds. Physical holds are not substitutes for comprehensive, proactive and positive behaviour supports. Physical holds are measures of last resort in crisis situations. Appropriate educational supports and behavioural interventions are to be provided to children/students who need them in a safe and least restrictive environment and are clearly documented in a student's Regulation Support Plan (RSP).

Division employees routinely use a variety of progressive interventions to respond to a range of disruptive student behaviours and every effort is made by employees to use preventative actions that preclude the need to use a physical hold. 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 the imminent danger of serious physical harm, it may be necessary for employees to use reasonable and proportionate physical holds.

A hold is never used as a punishment, discipline, or to force compliance with respect to educational learning outcomes.

The decision to use a reasonable physical hold is guided by the professional judgment of division employees. Any employee engaging in physical holds must be trained and have up-to-date certification in CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention.

Employees will have the full support of the division in their efforts to maintain a safe environment to the extent that their actions comply with relevant legislation and division policy and procedures governing the physical hold of students.

## **Procedures**

### **1. Division Responsibilities**

The division shall:

- 1.1. Provide opportunities for division and school staff to acquire the training necessary to implement Regulation Support Plans, positive regulation support forms, etc.
- 1.2. Provide opportunities for division and school staff to acquire the training necessary to work with students in situations where there is a potential for behaviour that presents a danger to self or others. The Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Nonviolent Crisis Management Interventions program is utilized by the division for staff training.
- 1.3. Have procedures in place to notify the Central Learning Services team when a physical hold has been used by a school employee in response to an incident in order to provide the school team with additional division support.

1.4. Have a process and schedule for regular review of the physical hold procedures to ensure alignment with current research/practice. Individuals trained in NVCI procedures must renew their certification every 3 years.

## 2. School Responsibilities

The school-based Collaborative Response Coordinator and classroom teacher(s) together with other members of the school team, support staff, and members of the Inclusive Learning Services team will:

2.1. If school teams are using NVCI supports and holding skills, these strategies must be included in the student's RSP with parental endorsement.

2.2. Investigate underlying causes of behavioural incidents (e.g., review Behaviour Support Forms, look for patterns of behaviour, interview parents, student, and/or other community partners involved with the child/student, etc.).

2.3. Develop an appropriate plan of intervention and prevention (e.g., Individual Support Plans (ISP), RSP, Crisis Management Plan); this may also involve a Multi-disciplinary Case Meeting.

2.4. Monitor the plan of intervention on an ongoing basis and revise as necessary.

2.5. Notify a member of the Central Learning Services Team (i.e., Behaviour Specialist, Inclusive Learning Consultant, and/or School Psychologist) as soon as possible after the physical hold has been used by a school employee

2.6 School Leadership Team to ensure the **division minimum standards** regarding Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (CPI) are met each school year:

2.5.1 All Educational Assistants should hold current training

2.5.2 All Leadership Team members should hold current training (including Principals, Assistant Principals, Collaborative Response Coordinators, and Family Wellness Workers)

2.5.3. The leadership team within each school should ensure an adequate number of staff members are trained to meet the needs of students in their school buildings.

2.5.4. Training must be renewed prior to the 3rd year of certification.

2.7. Any school team currently documenting the use of holds in a student's RSP are required to contact the Behaviour Specialist and/or Inclusive Consultant on a yearly basis for a NVCI refreshers where individual strategies are modeled in small groups.

2.8. Inform the parent(s) as soon as possible after a hold has occurred.

2.9 School staff are expected to be aware of provincial standards regarding *Seclusion and Physical Restraints in Alberta Schools*.

## 3. Guiding Principles

3.1. Staff members are expected to speak and act towards students with respect and dignity. There is a continuum of progressive dysregulation interventions through the crisis development model, which may include:

- 3.1.1. Verbal and non-verbal direction to support, stop or alter behaviour
  - 3.1.2. Verbal de-escalation strategies
  - 3.1.3. Re-stating expectations
  - 3.1.4. Redirection
  - 3.1.5. Changing group composition and dynamics
  - 3.1.6. Providing choices
  - 3.1.7. Setting limits and providing consequences
  - 3.1.8. Allowing the individual time to de-escalate (e.g. vent verbally, movement break)
  - 3.1.9. Transitioning the student to an alternate location
  - 3.1.10. Utilizing physical escort
  - 3.1.11. Removing others, thereby reducing attention by removing the audience
  - 3.1.12. Calling for assistance from other employees (NVCI support buttons are available to school by request)
- 3.2. Prevention and de-escalation are the first steps in developing and implementing proactive strategies to minimize physical aggression or threats of a physical nature. The decision to use reasonable physical holds is guided by the professional judgment of division employees.
- 3.2.1. Physical Holds are to be applied in the spirit of *in loco parentis*; that is in a fair, judicious, and kind manner. Physical holds may only occur when the behaviour of the student poses an imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including school personnel, and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending the imminent danger of serious physical harm.
  - 3.2.2. A physical hold may never be used as a punishment, discipline, or to force compliance in an educational learning setting.
  - 3.2.3. All school members involved in implementing physical hold protocols are to be trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training (CPI), to ensure that positive behaviour interventions, supports, and de-escalation techniques are used.
  - 3.2.4. The physical hold must be discontinued once imminent danger or serious self-harm or harm to others has dissipated and the student is self-regulated.
  - 3.2.5. Where the use of a physical hold may be a potential part of the educational program of a student with diverse needs, procedures will be clearly laid out in that student's ISP and/or RSP, and all other procedures stated in this Administrative Procedure shall be followed.
  - 3.2.6. In cases where a student's behaviour could potentially cause harm to self or others, the student's educational planning includes the development of a formal Regulation Support Plan, and an employee safety plan detailing any physical hold procedures. This information will be shared with the parent(s) and any staff working with the child/student.
  - 3.2.7. In cases of repeated use of physical holds for an individual student, a review of prevention/intervention strategies will be conducted. When staff determines that the use of physical hold is not a safe option, emergency services may need to be accessed by contacting 911 and informing the student's family.

## 4. Hold Skills Process

With the exception of disengagement and personal safety situations, all interventions are based on the concept that a team approach maximizes the care, welfare, safety, and security of everyone when physical intervention or holding skills are used. A minimum of two staff should be involved in the use of physical interventions in order to capitalize on staff knowledge, skills, experiences, and communication skills. A team approach also ensures that vulnerable children/students are safeguarded from the potential misuse or abuse of such approaches (NVCI Instructor Guide, 2018).

### 4.1. Physical hold

A Physical hold must be conducted in accordance with CPI principles, and:

4.1.1. With calm, reassuring verbal and non-verbal communication.

4.1.2. With brief neutral and reassuring statements that give reasons for the hold and describe the necessary behaviour for ending the hold.

4.1.3. With the least amount of physical force to protect the student and the staff members engaged in the hold.

4.1.4. With the least amount of physical, emotional or psychological impact on others.

4.1.5. Engaging in a physical hold requires two NVCI trained staff members and a third staff member as a bystander to support both the student and staff engaging in the hold. There must be continual visual and aural monitoring of any child/student throughout the period of the physical hold.

Physical Holds are not used:

4.1.6 as punishment, discipline or to force compliance

4.1.7 to stop a child/student who is engaged in destructive behaviour such as damaging property, unless there is a risk to the safety of the child/student or others

4.1.8 as substitutes for appropriate educational support

4.1.9 when a known medical, physical, psychological or other condition would make the use of a physical hold dangerous for a child/student

### 4.2. Notification

Notification of the hold should be made as soon as possible (normally before the end of classes on the school day on which the incident has occurred) to the Principal and the parents. The Principal will also contact the Behaviour Specialist, Inclusive Consultant or the School Psychologist to review documentation of the incident in the RSP.

### 4.3. Debriefing

A debriefing process is to occur for the student who was held, the staff involved and students who witnessed the hold. The purpose of the debriefing process is to re-establish and maintain a safe learning environment and supportive relationships as well as determine the cause of the behaviour and what preventative actions might be implemented in the future to avoid the use of

extreme dysregulation and physical holds. When possible, appropriate expertise should be involved in the debriefing session. Utilize the CPI COPING model to document the debriefing process ([Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Debriefing Form](#)).

#### 4.4. Documentation follow-up

An incident of a physical hold must be documented appropriately and is to include the following:

4.4.1. Documenting the incident on the student's Positive Behaviour Support form.

4.4.2 If an *accident* to an employee has occurred, where an injury requires immediate medical care beyond basic first aid for minor conditions, staff should fill out the Public Schools Works Employee Safe Form within 24 hours. If the student is injured, staff are required to fill out a non-staff accident report in PowerSchool.

4.4.3. A meeting with concerned parties, including parents of the student, and where possible with the student, to discuss the hold incident and strategies for preventing a reoccurrence. The meeting should be documented as a review in the RSP.

4.4.4. A review of the RSP, where one has been previously created, occurs and the plan is updated to prevent and reduce recurrence.

5. EICS does not support the use of seclusion or the involuntary confinement of the student alone in a room, enclosure, or space which the student is physically prevented from leaving.

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