

Restrictive Practices Policy

Inspiring Great Minds



Queensland Academy
for Science Mathematics
and Technology





RATIONALE

Queensland Academy for Science, Mathematics and Technology (QASMT) is an independent public school for highly capable students in Years 7 to 12. We continually challenge every student to reach their potential by setting high academic goals and behavioural expectations. QASMT is committed to providing a safe, respectful and disciplined learning environment for students and staff. The QASMT Student Code of Conduct, and the policies pertaining to the Student Code of Conduct, are designed to facilitate high standards of behaviour so that learning and teaching can be effective and students can participate positively within our community. The Restrictive Practices Policy outlines the process, conditions and responsibilities for school staff at QASMT when they need to respond to student behaviour that presents a risk of physical harm to the student or others. It is anticipated that most instances of risky behaviour can be de-escalated and resolved quickly. On some rare occasions, a student's behaviour may continue to escalate and staff may need to engage immediately with positive and proactive strategies aimed at supporting the student to manage their emotional arousal and behaviour.

Staff, students and parents/caregivers should read the QASMT Student Code of Conduct in conjunction with this QASMT Restrictive Practices Policy and the Department of Education's Restrictive Practices. In some very rare situations, where there is immediate risk of physical harm to the student or other people, and when all other alternative strategies have failed to reduce the risk, it may be necessary for staff to use restrictive practices. The use of restrictive practices will always be as a last resort, when there is no other available option for reducing immediate risk to the student, staff or other people. Restrictive practices are not used as punishment or as a disciplinary measure.

The Department of Education's Restrictive Practices prescribes:

- when restrictive practices are permitted to be used in state schools
- the reporting, notification and oversight obligations of state school staff, principals and the principal's supervisor or delegate
- the obligations of state school staff and principals to manage at risk behaviours of students with the aim of preventing the use of restrictive practices

Generally, restrictive practices permitted under the Department of Education Policy and Procedure for Restrictive Practices must only be used where:

- the restrictive practice is reasonable in the circumstances, and
- there is no lesser restrictive measure available to respond to the behaviour in the circumstances.

Restrictive practices are the use of interventions or strategies that have the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a student. Restrictive practices include:

- seclusion
- physical restraint
- containment
- mechanical restraint
- chemical restraint, and
- clinical holding

The department's Restrictive Practices is written with consideration for the protection of everyone's human rights, health, safety and welfare. There are six fundamental principles:

1. Regard to the human rights of those students
2. Safeguards students, staff and others from harm
3. Ensures transparency and accountability
4. Places importance on communication and consultation with parents and carers
5. Maximises the opportunity for positive outcomes, and
6. Aims to reduce or eliminate the use of restrictive practices.

Very rarely restrictive practices will be planned and staff will employ, when necessary, pre-arranged strategies and methods (of physical restraint/ mechanical restraint/ clinical holding) which are based upon behaviour risk assessment or clinical health need and are recorded in advance. The use of planned strategies will only be where there is foreseeable immediate risk consistent with the Department of Education's Restrictive Practices.

Seclusion will not be used as a planned response and will only be used in serious circumstances for managing an unforeseeable situation in an emergency. It will be used for the shortest time possible and in a safe area that presents no additional foreseeable risk to the student. In such emergencies, a staff member will observe the student at all times and seclusion will cease as soon as possible.

Following the use of any restrictive practice, a focused review will help staff to understand how they responded to the risk in any incident that involved the use of a restrictive practice. Staff will consider whether there are other options for managing a similar situation in the future.

All incidents of restrictive practices will be recorded and reported in line with Department of Education's procedures. As per the departmental guidelines, state school staff must not use seclusion and physical restraint as a behaviour management technique, for convenience or as retaliation, or to discipline or punish a student. Some examples where seclusion and physical restraint should not be used to respond to a student's refusal to comply with a direction, unless that refusal to comply creates an imminent risk to the safety of the student or another person, are but are not limited to:

- a student leaving the classroom/school without permission, unless the leaving of the classroom or school causes foreseeable risk to the safety of the student or another person.
- verbal threats of harm from a student, except where there is a reasonable belief that the threat will be carried out immediately or property destruction caused by the student unless the property destruction is placing any person at a risk of harm.

In the event that a parent or caregiver is not satisfied with the decisions associated with the use of a restrictive practice with their student, they may wish to use the customer complaints process. Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to use the following three-step approach:

Step 1. Early resolution: the best place to raise concerns is at the point where the problem or issue arose. Depending on the concern, parents/caregivers may make their complaint to the child's teacher or the principal.

Step 2. Internal review: if a parent/caregiver is dissatisfied with the outcome, or how the complaint was handled, a request can be made to the local Regional Office to conduct an internal review.



Step 3. External review: if a parent/caregiver is dissatisfied after the internal review, they may wish to contact a review authority such as the Queensland Ombudsman and request an independent, external review.

Information for parent/caregiver is available on the Department of Education's *Making a Customer Complaint Factsheet*. Visit the Queensland Ombudsman for more information about external review options.

For more information regarding the Department of Education's Restrictive Practices in Queensland state schools, refer to the fact sheets below:

- [Practice principles—restrictive practices \(PDF, 304KB\)](#)
- [Physical restraint, mechanical restraint and chemical restraint \(PDF, 300KB\)](#)
- [Seclusion, containment, time out and self-directed time \(PDF, 454KB\)](#)
- [Clinical holding \(PDF, 428KB\)](#)