

RESTRAINT AND/OR SECLUSION POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This *Restraint and/or Seclusion Policy* (the Policy) informs the way in which restraint and/or seclusion is addressed in schools operated by Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL). It establishes the responsibilities of staff when determining whether it is appropriate to use any form of restraint and/or seclusion.

It is the responsibility of the Principal of St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Heyfield (the School) to ensure that this Policy and associated guidance are complied with within their School. Principals and staff are encouraged to revisit this policy on an annual basis through discussion at staff meetings, professional development, or training sessions.

This Policy is guided by *Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises 2022* (Vic.), *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.), *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth), *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.), *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.), and *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.).

2.0 PURPOSE

The Policy supports the delivery of a sustainable and inclusive education that nurtures each student's potential, equips them to thrive in a dynamic world and is enriched by DOSCEL's flourishing Catholic culture. The Policy is underpinned by the DOSCEL values of Integrity, Excellence and Inclusion.

This Policy articulates how restraint and/or seclusion is defined and the circumstances for its acceptable use and actively promotes student and staff safety.

This Policy informs the *Restraint and Seclusion Procedures*.

3.0 CATHOLIC MISSION

DOSCEL brings to life the mission of the Catholic Church by engaging and aligning all efforts toward the achievement of DOSCEL's vision for education: *faith-inspired educational excellence for a hope filled future*.

4.0 COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

DOSCEL holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ.

5.0 SCOPE

This Policy fulfills the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority's Minimum Standard for School Registration obligations, requiring the School to have policies and procedures to provide students with a safe environment where the risk of harm is minimised, students feel safe and ensures all staff are aware of their legal obligations.

Restraint and/or seclusion in schools should only be used as a final recourse. This Policy establishes the responsibilities of staff when determining whether it is appropriate to use any form of restraint and/or seclusion.

The Policy applies to all DOSCEL schools, school staff, external practitioners and volunteers working closely with students. Schools must not develop local policies to replace this one.

The Policy is enacted within the following principles:

- 5.1 Every effort should be made to avoid the use of physical restraint or seclusion.
- 5.2 Every person has a right to be safe.
- 5.3 Staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students from risk of injuries or any harm that is reasonably foreseeable.
- 5.4 A whole school approach is adopted to support positive behaviour.
- 5.5 Staff must take reasonable care for their own health and safety when confronted with challenging student behaviours and should only physically intervene if they are confident that they can do so without placing their own health and safety at risk.
- 5.6 Staff will be provided with information, instruction and training on preventative measures and interventions controls.

6.0 POLICY OUTCOMES

- 6.1 DOSCEL will provide a safe learning and working environment for students and staff.
- 6.2 All staff will understand their duty of care in responding to escalated student behaviour.
- 6.3 All staff will understand and adhere to the 'Three Conditions for Restraint and Seclusion':
 - There is an imminent threat of physical harm.
 - The restraint or seclusion is reasonable in the circumstances.
 - There is no less restrictive means of responding.
- 6.4 Staff will promptly communicate with school leadership any instances of restraint or seclusion.
- 6.5 The School will follow outlined processes and promptly report any incident of restraint or seclusion to DOSCEL Office.

- 6.6 The School will follow outlined processes and promptly communicate with parents/carers.
- 6.7 Staff will clearly document any incidents of restraint or seclusion in a timely manner.

7.0 DEFINITIONS

- 7.1 **Restraint** is the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained. A plain English version of this definition is that physical restraint is when someone physically stops a student from moving.

Physical restraint does not include protective physical interventions which use physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage a student's grip, but from which a student can move freely away.

- 7.2 **Seclusion** refers to leaving a student alone in a room or area from which they are prevented from leaving by a barrier or another person. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held closed by another person. A plain English version of this definition is that seclusion is when a student is in a room or space on their own that they cannot get out of.

This definition of seclusion does not include supervised situations (where student activity is overseen or watched over by a staff member) such as:

- 7.2.1. where one or a few students are taught away from their peers.
- 7.2.2. exiting a student from their class for the purposes of supporting the student's ability to re-engage with the class at a later point.
- 7.2.3. the temporary removal of a student from their regular classroom activities because their behaviour significantly interferes with the learning of other students, the capacity of a teacher to teach all students, or creates a risk of harm to themselves or others.
- 7.2.4. a behaviour intervention strategy that directs a student away from an activity in one area to another to prevent an escalation of behaviour.
- 7.2.5. the suspension, detention or expulsion of a student.
- 7.2.6. exam and other situations where a student can freely exit an area.

8.0 COMMUNICATION

This Policy is available on the School Portal and provided to parents upon request.

This Policy is available through the staff portal and staff are annually upskilled on this Policy.

9.0 POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Owner	Catholic Identity Leadership Learning and Teaching
Approving Authority	DOSCEL Board
Assigned Board Committee	Finance, Audit and Risk
Board Approval	12 December 2025
Risk Rating	Low
Implementation	January 2026
Review Date	2029

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION

Supporting Documents

Behaviour Management Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Critical Incident Policy
Pastoral Care Policy
Guide to Reporting Conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme
Emergency Management Plan
DOSCEL Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines (Occupational Violence)
Guidelines for School Principals
DOSCEL Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support: Intensive