

SCHOOLS — RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES

905. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the use of restrictive practices in Western Australian schools and the relevant national principles, and I ask:

- (a) what benchmarks are in place for the use of restrictive practices in Western Australian schools;
- (b) how is the use of restrictive practices reported on;
- (c) is there a timeframe for ceasing the use of restrictive practices in Western Australian schools;
- (d) if yes to (3) when will their use be eliminated; and
- (e) are the impacts of restrictive practices on students assessed and, if so, how?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (a) The Department of Education's Requirements related to the Student Behaviour in Public Schools policy (the Requirements) are provided to support schools to meet their obligations under the Student Behaviour in Public Schools policy and procedures.

Under the Requirements, principals will only authorise a plan to apply physical restraint as an ongoing strategy for a student when the documented plan is developed and reviewed in regular consultation with appropriate student support services, such as the School Psychology Service and Schools of Special Educational Needs, as well as any participating external agencies or practitioners, and has been developed in consultation with, and agreed, by the student's parent.

All schools have access to training in de-escalation and positive handling techniques, including restraint. This training provides school staff with skills to defuse a situation and apply appropriate intervention in incidents where physical contact may be necessary to protect students, staff or others from harm.

The Department takes a proactive approach to ensure its policy on the use of protective isolation facilities is adhered to. This is done through a rigorous process for the approval and use of a protective isolation room or facility. The relevant Director of Education must approve the implementation of protective isolation, and every student behaviour support plan that includes the potential use of protective isolation must be viewed and approved by the Director of Education each term. A record of all such active plans is held centrally.

- (b) Principals are required to keep a record of each instance of physical restraint or protective isolation. All instances of physical restraint and protective isolation must be reported through the Online Incident Notification System.
- (c) Under the State Disability Strategy 2020–2030, the Department of Education has an ongoing commitment to further build the capacity of schools to create safe and supportive learning environments that focus on student learning, wellbeing and positive behaviour support in order to minimise, or eliminate, restrictive practices. This work is ongoing and there is currently no timeframe for the cessation of physical restraint or protective isolation in public schools.
- (d) Not applicable.
- (e) The principal is required to monitor and assess the use of any restrictive practice for a student and determine whether adjustments to the student's personalised plan are required. Review occurs in consultation with student support services, relevant external agencies involved with the student and the student's parent. Adjustments to the student's personalised plan are made in agreement with the student's parent.