

## **Guidelines for Minimizing the Use of Seclusion for Students with Disabilities in Oklahoma**

Seclusion shall not be used for the purposes of discipline or as a punishment, to force compliance, or as a convenience for staff.

Seclusion should not be used to manage behavior. It may only be used under the following emergency circumstances and only if these elements exist:

- A student's actions pose an imminent risk of harm to him/herself or others.
- Positive behavior intervention strategies and less restrictive measures appropriate to the behavior exhibited by the student and specified in the student's IEP or BIP, are currently being implemented but are not currently de-escalating the risk of injury.
- The seclusion lasts only as long as necessary to resolve the risk of danger or harm or while waiting for the arrival of law enforcement or crisis intervention personnel such as when the student has possessed a weapon or committed a crime.

School personnel may only utilize seclusion procedures if they have training in conflict de-escalation, the crisis cycle and interventions at each stage, possible effects of seclusion, appropriate use of seclusion rooms, including escorting a student to a seclusion room, placing a student in a seclusion room, and supervising a student while in seclusion. The training should be recurrent with annual updates and result in some form of certification or credential, and shall be consistent with nationally recognized training programs.

Any student who is placed in seclusion based upon the previously established criteria must be:

- Continuously monitored visually and aurally by a school employee.
- The student must be allowed to go to the restroom upon request.
- The student must be permitted water to drink upon request.
- Immediate action must be taken if the student displays any signs of medical distress.

Parents must be informed immediately following each seclusion incident, and provided a copy of all documentation.

A building administrator should be informed immediately of any incident of seclusion and if unavailable, must be informed as soon as possible following each incident.

At least one witness who is not involved in the seclusion incident should be available.

Each incident of seclusion must be documented on OSDE Form #13 and include the following information:

- Name of the student.
- Name of the school personnel involved in the seclusion incident.
- Date of the incident and the time the seclusion started and ended.
- Location of the seclusion room.
- A description of the seclusion incident.
- A description of the student's behavior and activity immediately preceding the behavior that prompted the use of seclusion.

- A description of school personnel efforts to de-escalate the situation and alternatives to seclusion that were attempted.
- Information documenting parent and administrator notification and contact.

A copy of the documentation must be placed in the student's confidential file and provided to the parents.

A documented debriefing meeting shall occur within two school days after each seclusion incident and prior to any extended breaks from school. The debriefing meeting should include all individuals involved in the seclusion incident, a building administrator, the parents or guardians of the student, the student (if the student is able to participate), and the witness who was not involved in the seclusion procedure. The primary purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the use of seclusion is not used as an ongoing procedure for addressing a student's behavioral crisis. See Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, 2007 manual for information regarding means for parent participation.

- The debriefing should focus on alternatives to seclusion and how to avoid future use of seclusion, including discussion of antecedent events (what happened before the seclusion) that led to the use of seclusion.

Relevant Definitions:

*Imminent risk of harm:* an immediate and impending threat of a person causing serious bodily injury to self or others.

*Seclusion:* involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. This includes situations where a door is locked as well as where the door is blocked by other objects or held by staff. Any time a student is involuntarily alone in a room and prevented from leaving should be considered seclusion regardless of the intended purpose or the name applied to this procedure or the name of the place where the student is secluded.

*Seclusion room:* a room or other confined area in which a student with a disability is placed in isolation from other persons from which the student is prevented from leaving. A seclusion room must meet the following criteria:

- It must be of adequate size permitting the student to sit or lie down.
- It must have adequate lighting.
- It must be equipped with heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting systems that are comparable to those in other rooms throughout the building where the seclusion room is located.
- It must be free of any objects that pose a potential risk of harm to the student with a disability.
- It must be equipped with a door that locks, only if the lock is equipped with a device that automatically disengages the lock in case of an emergency, such as a fire or severe weather.
- It must allow continuous visual and auditory monitoring of the student with a disability.

References:

Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (2009). *Position Summary on the Use of Physical Restraint Procedures in School Settings*.

Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (2009). *Position Summary on the Use of Seclusion in School Settings*.

Kansas State Department of Education Special Education Services. (2008). *Functional Assessment Process*. Topeka, KS: Project STAY – Supporting Teachers and Youth.

School Association for Special Education in DuPage (SASED) Executive Committee (May 2002). *Procedures for Behavioral Interventions for Students with Disabilities*.