

# Key Definitions and Guidance for Restraint and Seclusion Documentation and Reporting

**Physical Restraint** is the use of physical contact in a way that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move his or her arms, legs, body, or head freely. Such term does not include a physical escort, mechanical restraint, or chemical restraint. Physical restraint does not include brief, but necessary, physical contact for the following or similar purposes:

- To break up a fight;
- To knock a weapon away from a student's possession;
- To calm or comfort;
- To assist a student in completing task/response if the student does not resist the contact; or
- To prevent imminent risk of injury to the student or others.
- The use of physical restraint must be used as a last resort and only when there is an immediate risk of physical harm to the student or others and no other safe or effective intervention is possible. See [Ohio Administrative Code](#) for full guidance and prohibited practices with restraint.

Guidance: A series of disruptive student actions that lead to restraint, seclusion, or a combination of restraint and seclusion should be considered one reported incident. This means if a student is restrained two times during an incident because the student was not fully calm at the time of an attempted release, it would be counted as one report. If there is a one-hour period of calm where the student returned to his or her typical functioning, but then becomes newly agitated and requires restraint, seclusion or a combination of restraint and seclusion, it would then generate a new (additional) reported incident.

**Physical Escort** is the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, waist, hip or back for the purpose of inducing the student to move to a safe location.

Guidance: Physical escort is not considered a form of restraint and is not counted in the number of restraints and/or seclusions.

**Seclusion** is the involuntary isolation of a student in a room, enclosure, or space from which the student is prevented from leaving by physical restraint or by a closed door or other physical barrier.

Guidance: Seclusion does not include incidents when the student voluntarily moves to a separate location to calm down or reduce sensory overload as part of a behavior plan or de-escalation plan. See the definition for timeout below.

**Timeout** is a behavior intervention in which a student, for a limited and specified time, is separated from the class within the classroom or in a non-locked setting for the purpose of self-regulating and controlling his or her own behavior. In a timeout, the student is not physically restrained or prevented from leaving the area by physical barriers.

Guidance: A timeout is not included in the reporting for seclusion.