



Niagara Catholic District School Board  
**SUPPORTING PHYSICAL INTERVENTION  
WITH STUDENTS**  
ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

300 – Schools/Students

No 301.8

Adopted Date: December 15, 2009

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: June 25, 2026

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are the Administrative Operational Procedures for Supporting Physical Intervention with Students.

## BACKGROUND

In accordance with Ministry of Education PPM 140: Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), school boards are permitted to use Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) instructional approaches to support students with special education needs. ABA is a widely used scientific therapy that focuses on understanding behaviour, how learning takes place, and how the environment influences actions.

ABA can be used with students of any age, applied in a variety of situations, and must be used to support students with ASD. In collaboration with parents/guardians this approach is also beneficial for a broader range of students to develop skills in key areas to address behaviours that impact participation and engagement.

Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools, are committed to:

- supporting a safe and inclusive Catholic learning environment for all students and staff.
- respecting and celebrating the uniqueness of each student.
- utilizing the least intrusive measures to promote/uphold a safe learning environment.
- providing training and certification for identified employee groups to assist with managing behaviours in the school environment.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### **Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)**

A behaviour support plan is a written plan created by a Behaviour Analyst designed to focus on the underlying functions of behaviour, and replace the unexpected behaviour with an expected behaviour that serves the same function, to reduce or eliminate the interfering behaviour.

### **Safety Plan**

A safety plan is a school-based document developed for a student whose behaviour is known to pose an ongoing risk to themselves, other students, staff, or others. It can serve as a crisis response plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the staff in dealing with specific interfering behaviours. The development of a safety plan should involve all staff who work on an ongoing basis with a student, parents/guardians, and representatives from any community agencies working with the student and family.

### **Behaviour Management Systems (BMS)**

Behaviour Management Systems is a program that emphasizes prevention rather than control of interfering behaviour. BMS training is linked to education policies and programs, supports special

education protocols, advocates a system/community of learners approach and enhances trainees' confidence and competence in the management of both every day and critical incident behaviour.

### **Student Support Resource Teacher (SSRT)**

A Student Support Resource Teacher is a certified teacher with additional specialist qualifications in Special Education. The SSRT acts as a bridge between the classroom teachers and administration and may provide strategies to support students and staff for tiers one and two levels of interfering behaviour, or until a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) can be developed.

### **Behaviour Analyst**

A Behaviour Analyst is a member of an interdisciplinary team. Responsibilities include: developing a service delivery model for prioritizing and responding to behaviours that interfere with learning and a student's independence; providing clinical supervision to the ABA Team members (additional Behaviour Analysts and ABA Facilitators); supporting system and school staff in conducting Functional Behaviour Assessments (FBAs), and developing Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) and Safety Plans. A Behaviour Analyst also creates professional development opportunities for staff to increase understanding of ABA, training individuals in BMS, and building capacity across the system.

### **Functional Behaviour Assessment**

A functional behaviour assessment is a structured process within ABA to identify the function of a behaviour. This process involves data collection, and analysis of the data to determine how to replace interfering behaviours with a more appropriate way to meet the function, to inform a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).

## **PREVENTION AND DE-ESCALATION**

Supporting positive behaviour requires preventative measures intended to reduce the need for physical intervention. These include anticipating, preventing, and reviewing the potentially interfering behaviour(s) and evaluating and reviewing the team's response and strategies.

Staff members are expected to resolve situations involving interfering behaviour by using the least intrusive means possible, which may include, but are not limited to:

- establishing a positive relationship with the student to develop rapport;
- establishing consistent, structured and positive school and classroom expectations and routines;
- ongoing assessment of student motivation and preferences;
- reinforcing behaviour that is consistent with school, classroom and behavioural expectations;
- identifying antecedents of interfering behaviour in an attempt to prevent the behaviour from occurring;
- teaching socially acceptable replacement behaviours that are alternatives to interfering behaviour;
- utilization of visual/verbal de-escalation measures to reduce potential contributing factors for the individual student;
- an understanding of a learner's profile including a child's exceptionality and/or diagnosis;
- an understanding of the need to support individuals in the replacement of disruptive/interfering behaviour as opposed to controlling or compelling them;
- applying an empirical approach with respect to data collection. At the conclusion of the de-escalation, ensure proper reporting through the use on the Online Reporting Tool.

## **BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN AND SAFETY PLAN**

### **BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN (BSP)**

A Behaviour Support Plan is a proactive and responsive plan created in collaboration with the Behaviour Analyst, members of the Student Support Department, school staff and parents/guardians.

#### A Behaviour Support Plan:

- requires direct and indirect data collection completed by or in consultation with school staff, SSRTs, and/or ABA Facilitators and is analyzed by the Behaviour Analyst.
- includes proactive and responsive measures that identify environmental, educational and/or instructional strategies that may eliminate or reduce the impact of antecedents/triggers.
- requires ongoing review, consultation and consistent daily implementation.
- may include a behaviour escalation continuum with corresponding strategies to assist staff in safely responding to various levels of behaviour.
- must be shared with the educational assistants working in the school either directly or indirectly (e.g., general supervision awareness) with the student.

#### A Behaviour Support Plan can be created for a student when:

- the principal has exhausted the problem-solving model at the school level supported by central Student Support staff.
- two school-based team meetings and a case conference have occurred. The case conference must involve consultation with central Student Support staff in the planning and execution of the meeting.
- the appropriate ABA consent has been obtained.
- behaviour data indicates a need for intervention.
- a behaviour is occurring at high rates and a high intensity.
- the student is engaging in self-injurious behaviour.

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE may be included in a Behaviour Support Plan if the Behaviour Analyst deems it necessary from a behaviour reduction perspective, with consideration for staff safety. The Behaviour Analyst will develop a plan to systematically fade the PPE.

If PPE is not part of the Behaviour Support Plan, but a safety concern exists that requires PPE, administrators should address the concerns as part of the Joint Health and Safety Meetings.

If determined that PPE is required as a precautionary measure, it may be directed by the school administrator to be included. If directed by the school administrator, the Behaviour Analyst will include this statement:

- Although the Behaviour Support Plan does not require the use of PPE, at the request of school administration out of an abundance of caution, PPE is being included as of (insert date). This addition to the Behaviour Support Plan comes with the full requirement for the school administration to monitor the use of the PPE and ensure that it is being worn and used properly at all times.

#### Modified Days

- When a student is attending school on a modified day, the Behaviour Analyst may develop a criterion within the Behaviour Support Plan BSP to systematically increase the student's duration at school.

#### **SAFETY PLAN**

A safety plan is a written emergency response plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the staff addressing specific interfering behaviours.

#### The Safety Plan:

- outlines a planned response to escalating behaviour and is not intended to correct behaviour.
- emphasizes prevention, de-escalation, and the use of non-verbal and verbal responses.
- can incorporate proactive/responsive strategies outlined in a Behaviour Support Plan.
- can incorporate a Behaviour Escalation Continuum if outlined in a Behaviour Support Plan.

A principal may develop a safety plan when:

- the student's behaviour poses a safety concern and/or imminent risk to self and others, or
- ABA intervention has not yet been provided.

A principal must develop a safety plan when:

- physical intervention to assist with student safety is being utilized.
- student or staff safety is a concern.
- PPE has been implemented as a precautionary measure.

The components of a safety plan shall include, but are not limited to:

- a description of the observable behaviour concerns (operationally defined for ease of interpretation).
- antecedents.
- prevention and intervention strategies to support student and staff safety.
- emergency communication procedures for all staff, including but not limited to teaching and non-teaching staff and permanent and/or occasional/casual staff.
- ongoing review regarding the efficacy of the safety plan as determined by the principal/designate.

### **UPDATES AND TEAM REVIEWS**

Behaviour Support Plans and Safety Plans must be reviewed on an annual basis to evaluate relevance and ongoing need.

Plans should also be reviewed when:

- a new Safety Plan is put in place.
- there is a change in behaviour that could increase the potential for a violent incident or risk of injury to self and/or others.
- there is an incident involving a student and/or others.

A principal must ensure that all staff who may interact with a student who has a Behaviour Support Plan and/or Safety Plan receive information regarding safety, while being mindful of privacy and confidentiality of the student.

Staff include:

- educational assistants – permanent and casual staff coming in for a daily assignment.
- occasional staff in an elementary or secondary setting where students move from classroom to classroom.
- board staff reporting to the school in the course of their duties
- school staff who may not work directly with the student but who may come in contact with the student in the course of their regular school day, such as during recess, transitions etc. (e.g., custodians, other teachers etc.).

## **RESPONSE TO ESCALATING/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) Physical Intervention Techniques may be warranted due to behaviours characterized by, but not limited to:

- the misuse of any object which may be used as a weapon, endangering self, students or staff member,
- physical aggression towards another individual,
- self-injurious behaviour,
- students attempting to leave a supervised area where their personal safety is at imminent risk, and,
- damaging property which may result in imminent risk of injury to self or others.

Prior to responding to behaviour with a Behaviour Management Systems Physical Containment, the following must be considered:

- Least Intrusive Methods: all other proactive strategies have been attempted.
- Level of Risk: there is an imminent risk of injury to student or others present (imminent risk is present, containing the student presents less risk than not containing).
- Physical Environment: whether the current environment poses potential for more harm (examples may include proximity of other students/staff, proximity of objects that could be harmful to student/others, etc.) Whether the physical environment be changed in the moment to mitigate risk (e.g., class evacuation).
- Staff Training: staff with BMS certification are available if physical intervention is required.
- Student History: physical intervention procedures have been successful in the past, and whether all proactive strategies that have been successful in the past have been attempted.

### **BMS PHYSICAL CONTAINMENT**

BMS Physical Containment may never be used to respond to non-compliance or behaviour perceived to be defiant that does not meet the above criteria, or as a consequence, as a programmed or planned response.

## **EMERGENCY PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

Emergency Physical Intervention refers to the actions taken by staff in a crisis situation in which a student poses an immediate risk to themselves or others. Any trained or untrained employee may use emergency BMS physical intervention techniques or containments in response to escalating/aggressive behaviour in an attempt to prevent imminent risk of injury to any student, staff member or others. Emergency Physical Intervention does not require prior approval of the parents/guardians.

A staff response to behaviour that includes the use of an emergency physical intervention must be reported to the Niagara Catholic Student Support Services Department using the Online Reporting Tool – eBASE. If a BMS containment was employed during the incident the principal must complete section A & B of the Physical Response Debrief Form (PRDF) on the Online Reporting Tool-eBASE, with follow-up to be completed by one of the BMS trainers.

## **INCIDENT REPORTING**

Any incident involving physical intervention, violence, and/or workplace injury must be immediately reported to the principal/vice-principal or designate. A detailed report must be completed by the individual(s) involved in the incident within 24 hours of the occurrence through the Niagara Catholic Online Reporting Tool-eBASE.

A copy of the Physical Response Form is to be printed, filed and stored in a locked drawer or filing cabinet in a secure location at the school.

### **NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

The parents/guardians must be notified of a physical intervention on the same day the incident occurred.

## **DEBRIEFING A PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

When an Online Incident Report has been submitted and a Physical Response Form has been completed, a BMS Trainer will be notified and will contact the school to schedule a debriefing session with identified staff within 24 hours of receipt.

**References:**

- [\*Accepting Schools Act\*](#)
- [\*Ministry of Education PPM 140: Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis \(ABA\) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders \(ASD\)\*](#)
- [\*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act\*](#)
- [\*Ontario Human Rights Code\*](#)
- **Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures/Documents**
  - [\*Code of Conduct Policy \(302.6.2\)\*](#)
  - [\*Privacy Policy \(600.6\)\*](#)
  - [\*Progressive Student Discipline \(302.6.9\) AOP\*](#)
  - [\*Safe and Accepting Schools Policy \(302.6\)\*](#)
  - [\*Student Expulsion Policy \(302.6.5\)\*](#)
  - [\*Student Suspension \(302.6.4\) AOP\*](#)

<b>Adopted Date:</b>	<b>December 15, 2009</b>
<b>Revision History:</b>	<b>June 16, 2015 April 19, 2021 June 25, 2026</b>