

### **502.1.11 Use of Time-out in Schools**

Lethbridge School Division is committed to ensuring welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for all students and staff. Staff use preventative and proactive strategies, supports and services to promote and maintain behaviour that is appropriate for the learning environment. However, to effectively support students who display challenging behaviour and to help them develop new and more positive behaviour, it is sometimes necessary to adopt responsive strategies such as time-out.

#### **Definition**

The term “time-out” is a shortened form of a behavioural management strategy known as time-out from positive reinforcement. It is a behavioural intervention that involves reducing or limiting the amount of reinforcement that is available to a student for a brief period of time in order to decrease or stop a predefined challenging behaviour. Time-out should only be used when positive and proactive behaviour management strategies prove ineffective.

There are two types of time-outs used within the school setting:

- non-exclusion time-out – a time-out within the classroom or other instructional setting, and
- exclusion time-out – a time-out in a separate space outside of the classroom or instructional setting.

When utilized, time-out interventions are to use the least restrictive but most effective forms first. They should be used in a reasonable manner and be appropriate for the child’s/student’s age and/or other characteristics.

When a child/student displays challenging behaviours on an ongoing basis, a functional behaviour assessment (FBA) should be conducted with the support of the school psychologist who is trained in function-based approaches to managing problem behaviours and can provide recommendations on the range of potential interventions available.

When implementing exclusion time-out, it is expected that:

1. Parents/guardians are provided with opportunities for meaningful involvement in discussions and decision-making regarding the use of such time-out intervention;
2. A behaviour support plan is developed which outlines the use of time-out as a strategy and includes a plan should the student refuse to go to the designated time-out space. The plan should demonstrate informed written parental/guardian consent and be regularly evaluated to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the time-out intervention for the student;

3. Prior to the implementation of time-out, rules, expectations and how the time-out process is to occur are to be explained in a way that the student will understand;
4. Separate dedicated spaces or time-out rooms are only used when less intrusive interventions have been unsuccessful in managing the targeted behaviour. When used, it is expected that:
  - 4.1 the safety and security of the student is paramount
  - 4.2 the student is visible and supervised at all times
  - 4.3 the space is large enough for an adult to freely move around, is well-lit, well-ventilated and adequately heated
  - 4.4 the space is unlocked and allows for exit in the event of an emergency
  - 4.5 the space does not contain items that may be harmful to the student
  - 4.6 prior approval of the school and Director of Inclusive Education is obtained for use of the space. (Multi-use spaces within the school, such as a Learning Commons or principal's office, do not require prior approval.)
5. Exclusion time-outs must be documented, and documented information should include:
  - 5.1 positive, pro-active or alternative strategies attempted prior to the use of time-out
  - 5.2 behaviour resulting in the use of time-out
  - 5.3 duration of time-out
  - 5.4 frequency of time-outs
  - 5.5 objectively reported behaviours observed while in time-out.
6. Documented information on exclusion time-outs is to be shared with the principal and Director of Inclusive Education for the purpose of reviewing frequency of use, planning and oversight.

### References

Division Policies:

Other: