

# **Guidelines for Use of Designated Time-Out Rooms in Nova Scotia Schools**

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## *Preamble*

Time-out is used when a student needs to be temporarily separated or removed from the environment where he or she is behaving inappropriately until he or she can demonstrate appropriate behaviour. Time-out lies within a continuum of behavioural interventions to assist students to self regulate and/or control their behaviour. Time-out can range from quiet time in the regular classroom to, at the most restrictive end of the continuum, a designated time-out room (a room specifically established for this purpose) in the school. It is a proactive strategy to support self-monitoring, student self-reflection, and self-calming. All behavioural interventions consider the well being and dignity of students and staff.

Time-out should not be used as a punishment, to threaten students, to humiliate them, or make them feel afraid. The practice of using time-out as a behavioural intervention is decided through the Program Planning Process outlined in the Special Education Policy (Policy 2.2).

## *Procedural and Practice Considerations When Using a Designated Time-Out Room*

1. A designated time-out room shall be used only after less intrusive interventions have failed to bring the student's behaviour under control.
2. Use of a designated time-out room requires strict adherence to the student's rights (privacy and safety) and should be educationally beneficial to the student.
3. If a designated time-out room is used, it must be systematically planned, through the Program Planning Process, documented, delivered, supervised, and evaluated to determine its effectiveness with individual students.

4. The use of a designated time-out room should be continually documented, evaluated, and reviewed by the Program Planning Team (see attached sample form). This involves keeping accurate records of
  - > frequency of use
  - > antecedent events leading up to the behaviour
  - > the behaviour itself that led to use of a designated time-out room
  - > behaviour observed in the time-out room
  - > duration of time that the student was placed in time-out
  - > level of supportive physical assistance that was used
5. A student should remain in the designated time-out room only for the time necessary for the student to compose himself or herself sufficiently to return to the classroom. The time should normally not exceed 30 minutes.
6. When it is decided through the program planning process to use a time-out room as a behavioural intervention, it should be clearly articulated in the planning what will be done if the student refuses to comply with the request to move to a time-out room or if the use of this strategy is not successful in managing the student's behaviour. Should staff be required to physically remove the student to the time-out room, it is important that non-violent crisis techniques be used. It may be necessary to contact other staff members, board personnel, parents/guardians, or, if necessary, external emergency personnel.
7. If a student is going to time-out frequently, the school board's student services staff should be consulted.
8. Other techniques or strategies for teaching appropriate behaviours must be available and used prior, and in addition, to using a time-out room. The use of these strategies should be documented.

### *Questions to Consider*

- > Does the student have the ability, as well as an opportunity, to stop the misbehaviour and demonstrate appropriate behaviour?
- > Does the student have an opportunity to demonstrate responsibility for his/her own behaviour and have opportunities to practice self control?
- > Does the student understand what expectations are for a successful return to the classroom or classroom activities?
- > Is the length of time in time-out reasonable and appropriate for the students age and/or ability?
- > Is the time-out space reasonable, safe, and respectful of the needs of all students?
- > Is data routinely collected and reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of time-out?

## *Physical Considerations*

Designated time-out rooms must provide for the safety and security of the student. The school principal shall be familiar with these guidelines and shall ensure staff are also familiar with the guidelines.

A designated time-out room must

- > have prior approval of the Superintendent or designate
- > be of a minimum of 2.2 square meters, or 56 square feet, of floor space with the least dimension not being less than 6 feet
- > not be locked, latched, or secured in any way that would, in the case of an emergency, prevent the student from exiting the room
- > be supervised at all times
- > not contain items or fixtures that may be harmful to students
- > have adequate ventilation, light, and heat
- > be conducive to self quieting behaviours and not overly stimulating or busy
- > have an unbreakable observation window
- > have a door that swings out

Spaces established for use as time-out rooms prior to the adoption of these guidelines on August 1, 2009, must have prior approval, before use, of the fire marshal.

## *Note of Caution*

Time-out may not be effective for all children. Each child is unique and may require alternate strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviours.

# Sample Designated Time-Out Room Data Collection Form

Name of student:
Date of designated time-out room use:
Time of designated time-out room use:
Duration of designated time-out room use:
Name of professional staff supervising student while in designated time-out room:

Describe:
a) Antecedent events leading up to use of designated time-out room
b) Behaviour that resulted in use of designated time-out room
c) Behaviour observed in the designated time-out room

If used, describe the physical assistance required:

On this occasion, was the student able to self-regulate and/or control behaviour in order to return to the classroom or were further interventions required? Specify.

*NOTE: This data must be placed in the student's confidential record.*