

# TIMEOUT

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Behaviour support plans are working documents that describe the specific steps the Learning Team will take to change targeted behaviours. They are linked to the assessment data, goals, objectives, transition plans and results documented in IPPs. One strategy within the student's IPP may be the use of timeout.

Effective, research based behavioural interventions are paramount in ensuring the well-being and dignity of students and staff. Timeout lies within a continuum of behavioural interventions. Exclusion and seclusion timeout must only be used when less restrictive interventions have not been successful. Timeout may not be effective for all children. Each child is unique and the use of timeout requires well-defined procedures, routines and interventions to prevent and modify problem behaviour before timeout is ever considered and must be part of the student's IPP. Alberta Education states that timeout rooms must provide for the safety and security of students and that they must be effective in reducing dangerous behaviours. Alberta Education Timeout Guidelines for seclusion timeout suggest that administration be informed of when students are in need of seclusion timeout and assist in providing support, if necessary.

For some behaviours, a progressive approach beginning with mild forms of timeout may be appropriate. For more severe behaviour, other forms of timeout may be indicated. The following are timeout definitions:

- 1. Contingent observation or non-exclusion timeout** – The student is removed from the reinforcing activity, but is still allowed to observe the activity. For example, a Grade 4 student continues to disrupt the class by poking a neighbour and talking during a class project, despite attempts from the teacher to encourage the student to stop and focus on the task at hand. The teacher directs the student to a timeout area in the classroom where the student is able to listen to the discussion, but not allowed to participate for a period of time.
- 2. Exclusion timeout** – The student is excluded from the reinforcing activity and is not allowed to participate or observe the activity. For example, the student continues to talk while in contingent observation timeout. The student yells, throws a pencil and disrupts the class activity. The teacher asks the student to leave the timeout area and go to another supervised area until the student demonstrates appropriate behaviour and is ready to return to class.
- 3. Seclusion timeout** – Alberta Education Timeout Guidelines suggest that parental permission be obtained before utilizing seclusion timeout as a strategy in the behaviour management for the student. The student is removed from the reinforcing activity area, placed in a separate room and is supervised during the entire seclusion timeout. For example, the student grabs a pair of scissors off the teacher's desk and runs around the room and then out of the class. The student threatens other students and is in danger of hurting self and/or others. The student is moved to a timeout room that is safe, where he or she is constantly supervised.

## **Supports:**

Board Policies and Regulations

[GBEA.AR - Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities](#)

There are many forms of timeout.  
For some behaviours, a progressive approach beginning with mild timeout may be appropriate.  
For more severe behaviour, other forms of timeout may be required.

**4. Suspension and expulsion** – These interventions are recognized as forms of timeout. School authorities are advised to abide by Sections 24 and 25 of the *School Act* when considering suspension or expulsion procedures.

Timeout rooms are only part of a complete behaviour support plan. Timeout rooms aid students to regain self-control over repeated misbehaviours or violent behaviours dangerous to themselves or others. School timeout rooms must:

- not be locked from either the outside or inside;
- be supervised at all times;
- not contain items or fixtures that may be harmful to students;
- be well ventilated;
- allow students to exit should there be an emergency; and
- provide the means whereby adults can visually monitor the student at all times.

Where timeout rooms are used as behavioural interventions, it is important to communicate with student, parent and administration citing specific behaviours and a behaviour plan. This is done through documenting specific strategies used with the student in the IPP.

When a student is placed in a seclusion timeout, documentation in a timeout room log should include:

- student's name;
- antecedent behaviour;
- time of entry and release;
- behaviour while in timeout;
- interventions; and
- additional consequences.

Timeout supports the student in making positive behaviour choices, with the goal to resume learning in the classroom. As each student's ability to regain self-control may be different, school staff will need to be flexible in their time lines of when they expect a student may be ready to resume learning in the classroom. If the student is unable to regain control, the parent, or in extreme cases the police, may be called to assist.

### **Supports:**

Alberta Education, Special Programs  
Branch

[Guidelines for Using Timeout  
in Schools](#)

Executive Services – 780-429-8030