

I am Turk Turnbull. I am a 16 year old student.

Has anyone asked students what they think about kids being locked in seclusion?

I am a student. You can ask me.

Like my Mum and Dad, up until 2 years ago, I had never heard of seclusion rooms.

People being locked in solitary confinement.... apart from the very worse criminals in prison. People like Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik....or back in the old days, as torture for those held captive by enemy.

I had never heard of seclusion until my mum and dad discovered by chance this had been happening to my little brother and many other students at the special school he attended.

How can treating vulnerable kids with disabilities this way, possibly be acceptable?

How can some schools be doing this to students and consider it justifiable and necessary, when the majority do not?

This is a photo of me and my brother in 2011, setting off on our first day at our new schools in Southland.

Only a few weeks after this photo was taken, teachers at my brother's school started restraining him in a seclusion room.

No one told my parents about this – he went to that school for 4 years and no one told my parents.

Not even my brother.

My brother has autism and communicates differently to most people. Sometimes his actions are his words.

For 6 years restraint and seclusion has consumed my family. For 4 years, it tortured and hurt my brother. It changed my brother. For the past 2 years, my family has worked tirelessly to protect and advocate for vulnerable children, against this cruel treatment.

Seclusion is cruel, degrading and frightening.

Locking someone away is the opposite of including them.

I know my brother was trying to fit in at the specialist school he attended.

I think he could not tell us what was happening to him there because he knew it was bad. He knew it was wrong and hated being treated the degrading way. He thought he was bad. He said, "it's a bad kids place".

Teachers would never lock me in a seclusion room at school, even if I got into a fight or damaged property, because I would speak out. I have a voice. I would tell, and it would stop.

Although I have never been locked in a small dark grimy storeroom, alone, by teacher at school, I represent my brother, who has."

We support the amendment to ban enforced seclusion.