

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the school district. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only in emergency situations as a last resort and with extreme caution after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate. Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement.

When an emergency situation arises, and physical restraint is the only option deemed appropriate to prevent a student from injuring himself or herself, another student or school community member, a teacher or employee or agent of the school district who has received the necessary training may use such reasonable force needed to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

Physical restraint shall be administered in a manner to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint and must take into consideration any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

Any use of physical restraint shall end as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to him/herself and/or others. During the restraint a staff member must continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration. If at any time during a physical restraint the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress such as difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and steps shall be taken to seek medical assistance.

If a student is restrained for a period longer than twenty (20) minutes, program staff shall obtain the approval of the principal or his/her designee in the principal's absence. Principal approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.

The definitions of forms of restraint shall be as defined in 603 CMR [46.02](#).

The use of mechanical restraint, medical restraint, and seclusion is prohibited.

Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted under 603 CMR [46.03](#), shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to themselves and/or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions are deemed inappropriate.

The Superintendent will develop procedures identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Methods of preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide including crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behaviors among groups of students or individuals;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint as well as the school's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the school's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements including, but not limited to, making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent of the use of restraint within 24 hours of its imposition, and sending a report to parent/guardians within three (3) school days;
- Procedures for the student and parents/guardians to respond to the use of physical restraint, as well as the content of the report in writing and/or verbally.
- Procedures ensuring that the parents/guardians receive information concerning the physical restraint in a language other than English if the parents/guardians receive other school-related information in a language other than English.
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Methods for engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;
- A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted by 603 CMR [46.03](#)(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR [46.00](#);
- A process for obtaining Principal approval for a time out exceeding thirty (30) minutes.
- A procedure for reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior preceding the use of the restraint and an analysis of the circumstances leading up to the administration of the restraint.

Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

Physical restraint is prohibited when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting.

Physical restraint may not be used as a standard response. No written behavioral or individualized educational program (IEP) may include the use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior.

The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member continually observes the student and remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint."

Each building Principal will identify staff members to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These staff members will participate in an in-depth training program in the use of physical restraint.

In addition, each staff member will be trained regarding the school's physical restraint policy and accompanying procedures. The Principal will arrange training to occur in the first month of each school year, or for staff hired after the beginning of the school year, within a month of their employment.

The Principal shall perform weekly and monthly reviews of the use of physical restraints and take appropriate action based upon such reviews.

All injury reports and annual data concerning the use of physical restraint shall be submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in a manner and form directed by the Department.

This policy and its accompanying procedures shall be reviewed and disseminated to staff annually and made available to parents of enrolled students. The Superintendent shall provide a copy of the Physical Restraint regulations to each Principal, who shall sign a form acknowledging receipt thereof.

ADOPTED: December 1, 2015

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37G](#); 603 CMR [46.00](#)