

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.

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 may use such reasonable force needed to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

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.

Holbrook Public School staff shall report the use of any physical restraint as required by the Regulations. The staff member who administered the restraint shall notify the principal verbally as soon as possible and in writing no later than the next school working day. The report shall be maintained by the school and made available for review by the parent or DESE. The principal or their designee shall make reasonable efforts to inform the parent(s) of the restraint within 24 hours of the event, and shall notify the parent(s) by written report within three school working days of the restraint, such report to be provided in the language in which report cards and other necessary school-related inform are customarily provided. The report shall contain all information required by the Regulations. The principal shall review restraint data periodically as required by the Regulations, but not less than monthly, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the school where appropriate. The principal or designee shall also review restraint data weekly to determine whether one or more students has been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified the principal shall, if deemed appropriate, convene appropriate personnel to assess the students' progress and needs, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the need for restraint. All use of physical restraint that results in injury must be reported to DESE. The district will also comply with other data reporting requirements promulgated by DESE.

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 that will include:
 - If a student is showing signs of escalating behaviors, staff should consider the environment and make some quick adjustments if needed to ensure the safety of the student and others. These may include:
 - Removing potential weapons from the immediate area (e.g. scissors, sharp pencils, materials that could be used as a projectile, etc.)
 - Attempting to redirect the student to another safer area, if possible
 - Removing other students from the immediate area
 - Offering choices of activities
- 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;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints that will include:
 - Complaints regarding restraint practices should be directed to the building principal or the Superintendent. All investigations regarding restraint practices shall be conducted in accordance with the Regulations and procedures set forth by the Holbrook Public Schools' Superintendent.
 - This grievance procedure is established to ensure procedures are in place for receiving and investigating complaints regarding physical restraint practices. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint of a student may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may file a complaint by utilizing this procedure:
 - The complaint must be submitted in writing or on audiotape to the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel.
 - The Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel will meet with the complainant within ten (10) school days of receipt of the complaint.
 - A thorough investigation will be conducted which may include interviewing witnesses, staff involved and/or the student; reviewing all written documentation leading up to and pertaining to the incident and all reports filed with the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
 - A written report will be developed by the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel and provided to the complainant.

- Methods for engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure that will include:
 - In accordance with the Regulations, the Holbrook Public Schools shall engage parents and youth in discussions about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure.
 - Information will be shared at the first parent meeting of the school year and in homerooms at the secondary level during the first week that school is in session.
- 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 30 minutes.

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.

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.

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

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.

SOURCE: MASC
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