

## PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

January 2017

### I. Procedures for use of Physical Restraint in Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools

#### Training:

- A. All staff/faculty will receive training regarding the school's restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment.
- B. Required training for all staff will include review of the following:
  - a. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
  - b. The District's restraint policy;
  - c. Staff is expected to make every effort to prevent the need for the use of restraint and only use restraint as an emergency procedure of last resort;
  - d. Interventions which may preclude the need of restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
  - e. When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration;
  - f. The following are prohibited practices: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, and prone restraint are prohibited 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;
  - g. Physical escort shall mean a temporary touching or holding without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location. Physical escort is not physical restraint.
  - h. Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student;
  - i. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section C) in the use of physical restraint.
- C. Designated Safety Care Intervention Staff shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.

- a. At the beginning of the school year, the principal will identify those staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

In-depth training will include:

- a. Appropriate procedures for preventing the use of physical restraint, including the de-escalation of dangerous behavior, relationship building, and the use of alternatives to restraint;
- b. A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of a student that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
- c. The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
- d. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;
- e. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and
- f. Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects.

D. Staff/faculty and the Student Services department will review any behavior plans pertaining to special techniques for identified students. School counselors or psychologist will provide copies of Behavior Plans to building principals and the Special Education Liaison. Plans should be reviewed and updated monthly.

## 2. Proper Administration of Physical Restraint

A. Physical restraint may only be used as a last resort, in the following circumstances:

The student's actions pose a threat of imminent, serious, harm to self and/or others.

B. Physical restraint is **prohibited** in the following circumstances:

(1) As a means of punishment; or

(2) As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm. However, if the property destruction or the refusal to

comply with a school rule or staff directive could escalate into, or could itself lead to serious, imminent harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.

C. Only school staff who have received required training or in-depth training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, whenever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements, however, shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

D. Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

E. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation.

F. Physical restraint shall be discontinued when it is determined that the student is no longer at risk or causing imminent physical harm to self or others.

G. Additional safety requirements:

(1) A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration, during the restraint.

(2) If at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

(3) Program staff shall review and consider 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.

H. At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, the principal or other appropriate school staff shall:

(1) review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;

(2) review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and

(3) consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident

(4) review the incident and student behavior with the Special Education Coordinator

3. Reporting requirements:

A. Program staff shall report the use of all physical restraints,

B. The staff member who administered such a restraint shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible and by written report no later than the next school working day.

(1) The written report shall be provided to the Principal for review of the use of the restraint. If the principal has administered the restraint, the principal shall prepare the report and submit it to an individual or team designated by the superintendent or board of trustees for review.

(2) The principal shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department or the student's parent, upon request.

(3) Copies of all restraint reports will be forwarded to Superintendent's Office and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

C. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint within 24 hours of the event and shall notify the parent by written report sent either within three school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the restraint. The principal or designee shall also engage parents in a discussion about restraint use solely as an emergency procedure, as well as the team's efforts to prevent restraint.

NOTE: If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language.

The written report required by both sections B and C above shall include:

(1) Names and job title of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any;

(2) Date of restraint and time restraint began and ended;

- (2) Name of administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint,
- (3) Date and time student's parent(s)/guardian(s) was verbally contacted and informed of the use of physical restraint;
- (4) Description of the activity the student, other students, and staff in the area were engaged in immediately preceding the use of physical restraint;
- (5) Student's behavior/actions that prompted the restraint;
- (6) Efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted;
- (7) Justification for initiating physical restraint;
  
- (8) Description of administration of restraint including:
  - a. the holds used and reasons such hold were necessary
  - b. the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint
  - c. how the restraint ended and
  - d. documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided;
  
- (9) Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including consequences that may be imposed on the student; and
- (10) Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student and other related matters.

D. The District will, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide to the Department of Education a copy of the written report as describe above and a copy of the record of all physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty-day period to the date of the reported.

4. Individual student review. The principal shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify who have been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene the Child Study or evaluation team as the principal deems appropriate to assess each student's progress and needs. The assessment shall include as least the following:

- (a) review and discussion of the written reports submitted in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06 an any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
- (b) an analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;

- (c) consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
- (d) an agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

If the principal directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the Superintendent or School Committee shall lead the review team's discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by the Department or the parent, upon request.

5. Administrative review. The principal shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data (see attached form). This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention/management activities, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction or prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

6. A report of all restraint-related injuries must be sent to the Department of Education. When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or program staff member, the program shall send a copy of the written report required to the Department postmarked no later than three school working days of the administration of the restraint. The Department shall determine if additional action by the program is warranted and, if so, shall notify the program of any required actions within 30 calendar days of receipt of the required written report(s).

7. Reports of all physical restraints must be sent to the Department as well. Each school shall collect and annually report data to the Department regarding the use of physical restraints. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.

#### 8. Grievance Procedures

- a. Parents will notify principal or designee of any concerns regarding restraint practices and procedure. If a designee receives the complaint or a concern that designee shall notify principal within the school day. Principal shall notify Superintendent within twenty-four hours of receiving a concern. The Superintendent of School Committee shall at his/her or its discretion order an investigation.

#### 9. Interventions and alternatives to the use of physical restraint.

There are a variety of appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention. These alternative methods should be used first when seeking to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring

among groups of students or with an individual student. Physical restraints only should be used as a last resort in emergency situations after these other less intrusive alternative have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

Examples of interventions and less intrusive methods that may preclude the need for the use of physical restraint include but are not limited to, the following:

1. Active listening
2. Use of a low non-threatening voice
3. Limiting the number of adults providing direction to the student
4. Offering the student a choice
5. Not blocking the student's access to an escape route
6. Suggesting possible resolutions to the student
7. Avoiding dramatic gestures (waving arms, pointing, blocking motions, etc.)
8. Verbal prompt - A verbal prompt is communicating what is expected behavior by clearly stating instructions and expectations.
9. Full or partial physical cue - A full or partial physical cue is anytime an adult needs to temporarily place their hands on a student or physically redirects a student without force. These are used at increasing levels as needed to return a student safely back to task. See Physical Redirection and Physical Escort below.
10. Physical Escort - A physical escort is a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back, for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.
11. Physical Redirection –A physical redirection is done by temporarily placing one hand on each of the student's shoulders, without force, and redirecting the student to the learning activity, classroom or safe location.
12. Time-Out – A time-out is a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary and appropriate for the purpose of calming, Time-out shall cease as soon as the student is calmed.

### **C. General De-Escalation Guidelines**

General guidelines for de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student include the following:

1. Remain calm –To possibly help prevent the likelihood of a student experiencing distress from escalating his/her behavior use a neutral and even tone of voice, control one's facial expressions and use a supportive non-threatening body language.

2. Obtain Assistance - Whenever possible, school personnel should immediately take steps to notify school administrators, the school's administrative response team and/or other school personnel of a potentially dangerous situation and to obtain additional assistance.
3. One Person Speaks - In order to minimize the likelihood of confusion and/or the likelihood of a student experiencing distress from escalating behavior, have one person provide overall direction.
4. Remove Other Students - If it is not feasible to have a student experiencing distress move to a more private and safe area in order to de-escalate, consider the feasibility of having other staff assist and monitor the removal of other students to another area within the school until the student be considered.