

Sedgwick County Area Educational Services Interlocal Cooperative #618

Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Physical Restraint in Special Education Programs

Physical Restraint is used as a last resort to neutralize a dangerous situation and protect the student and others from injury. For some students, in clearly defined circumstances, physical restraint may be employed to ensure a safe, supportive, and productive learning environment.

Definitions:

Physical Restraint is the use of physical contact to substantially restrict or limit a student's movement when the risk of harm to self and/or others is present and should only be used as a last resort to preserve the safety of all involved.

- Physical restraint should not be used for discipline, punishment, or for convenience of the staff.
- Physical Restraint should not be used to coerce a student into complying with a command/directive when no immediate danger is evident.
- Physical Restraint should only be used when it is determined by the staff involved that the student's behavior is more dangerous than the inherent risk in any restraint technique.

Mechanical Restraint is not appropriate for use in schools without medical and/or psychosocial authorization and oversight. Mechanical Restraints should never be used to involuntarily limit a student's movement in a non-preferred location or activity or to ensure compliance with a time-bound activity. This does not include seatbelts, transportation harnesses, support straps, or postural supports that are deemed necessary for the student by the IEP team, and are employed for the intended use outlined in the associated protocol (i.e. wheel chair straps).

The Use of Physical Restraint May be Considered When:

- Non physical de-escalation techniques have not effectively reduced the risk of danger;
- The threat of harm to self and/or others is imminent (an immediate and impending threat of a student causing physical injury);
- The risk of danger is presented spontaneously and the physical space, that is the opportunity for egress, is substantially limited;
- Individuals trained in the use of physical restraint are available;
- The risk of substantial damage to physical property is imminent and can logically be linked to potential danger for others in the area (i.e. smashing a window where students are seated on the other side);
- A student attempts to leave the classroom, facility or school premises and the safety of the student is likely to be compromised;
- The intent is to reduce danger or prevent harm and not to create undue physical or emotional discomfort; and,

- It can be provided with dignity and respect for the student in a safe and appropriate manner.

Procedures for the Use of Physical Restraint:

- Physical restraint should only be used for the period of time necessary to accomplish its purpose, and release should not be contingent on additional compliance requests. The expectation for the Cooperative is that an episode of restraint will not exceed three minutes. Attempts to release must be made within this time frame;
- When physical restraint is employed, procedures are in place to monitor the use of the restraint and the well being of the student and staff involved;
- Whenever possible, move other students from the immediate danger rather than attempting to move a student in crisis. Resist using restraint while other students are in the area;
- Physical restraint should be employed by those trained in a nationally recognized program to ensure that alternative de-escalation strategies are attempted first and that proper physical techniques are used;
- Trained individuals will be assigned to serve and/or consult with providers in each of the Cooperative's participating schools so that procedures will be consistently implemented, and evaluated following the use of restraint;
- Training for the use of physical restraint should be recurrent with annual updates and should be appropriate to the school setting, age, developmental level, and support the needs of the students;
- Someone trained in CPR/First Aid is available when the individuals involved in the use of restraint need assistance;
- Because physical restraint should only be used as a last resort for safety, in most instances stating its use on the IEP is not required. However, in some circumstances that are clearly defined (chronic need to use physical restraint), the IEP team may determine that stating the use of physical restraint is appropriate for the student's IEP;
- When physical restraint is used the parent will be personally notified that day unless otherwise specified in the IEP;
- By the end of the following school day, after physical restraint is used, staff involved will document in writing (form attached) the event and will provide a copy of that documentation to the parent/s and building administration; and,
- Building administrators are responsible for ensuring that oversight, documentation, and reporting are in place for the use of physical restraint in their assigned schools.

It is Recommended That:

- A core team of personnel at each school campus be trained in the use of restraint, and that the team should include a campus administrator or designee and any general or special education staff who are likely to use restraint; and,
- In order to reduce the need for physical restraint, all general and special education providers be trained in the use of proactive, positive behavioral support and de-escalation strategies for addressing student behavior.

Physical Restraint does not include:

- Briefly holding a student in order to calm or comfort the student. This should only occur if the student allows calming and comforting. If the student resists, it is restraint;
- Holding a student's hand or arm to escort the student safely from one area to another when the student is complying with the request to move;
- Separating students when a physical confrontation is underway. Students fighting calls for a response, even if staff are not trained to employ a nationally recognized program for the use of physical restraint; and,
- Using protective or stabilizing devices, including adaptive equipment prescribed by medical care professionals, such as medical doctors, physical therapists and occupational therapists.

Bibliography

The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (A Division of the Council for Exceptional Children) (2009). *Position Summary on The Use of Physical Restraint Procedures in School Settings*.

Kansas State Department of Education (2008). *Kansas Seclusion and Restraint Guidelines Guidance Document*.

Ryan, Joseph B., Robbins, Katherine, Peterson, Reece, and Rozalski, Michael (2009). Review of State Policies Concerning the Use of Physical Restraint Procedures in Schools, *Education and Treatment of Children Vol. 32, No3, 487 – 504*.

Texas Education Agency (2007), *Regulation 89.1053. Procedures for the Use of Restraint and Time-Out*.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2009), *WDPI Directives for the Appropriate Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint in Special Education Programs*.

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Written Summary of Restraint Use

Restraint Form:

- Complete student information, using the student's full name, grade, and teacher's name. The date of report will not necessarily be the same date of the restraint, however should be written not later than the end of the next school day after restraint has been utilized.
- Description of preceding behaviors/activities, risks and de-escalation techniques will be filled out within the area provided. There are not to be any attachments included. Simply state the information using the facts. It should not be a lot of information, for example, "The student used inappropriate language", is preferred versus including a complete list of obscenities used. The information should protect the respect and dignity of all involved. Each de-escalation strategy should be listed (*i.e. offering choices; diversion or distraction; using preference tools; cuing positive replacement behavior; assist in problem solving; using empathy; and changing the environment*).
- In the area "*description of physical restraint*," check all that apply. There may be more than one item in each area. If a hold is used that is not listed, please include a brief description. Evaluation of the student being restrained should be documented and time marked until the restraint ends. Specific start and end times must be recorded.
- Mark how/why the restraint ended and if appropriate, give a short description of any injury, no matter how slight, incurred during the restraint to students or staff.
- "*What actions will be taken by the school?*" should reflect items that will decrease the likelihood that restraint is required in the future. There may be more than one item marked.
- Parents and building administration will be provided a copy of the completed Restraint Reporting Form no later than the end of the next school day after a restraint is used.