

MODEL POLICY FOR USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS IN SCHOOLS

- ***Physical restraints to contain and/or control the behavior of students should only be used to ensure safety and protection.*** Except where otherwise specified as part of an approved individual crisis management plan or emergency intervention plan, ***physical restraints should only be employed as a safety response to acute physical behavior and their use is restricted to the following circumstance: The student, other students, staff members or others are at imminent risk of physical harm.***
- ***An informed consent process for the family or caretaker of the student should be in place prior to the use of any physical restraint with a student.***
- ***Physical intervention should never increase (or create more) risk than the behavior it is trying to contain.*** As any physical restraint involves some risk of injury to the student or staff, staff must weigh this risk against the risks involved in failing to physically intervene when it may be warranted.
- ***Physical restraints must never be used as (1) punishments, (2) consequences, (3) for “demonstrating who is in charge”, or (4) for classroom maintenance*** (such as enforcing compliance with directions or rules or for preventing the student from leaving the classroom). Additionally, restraints must not be used for the convenience of staff, as a substitute for an educational program, as a substitute for less restrictive alternatives, or as a substitute for adequate staffing patterns.
- ***Physical restraints should only be employed after other less intrusive approaches (such as behavior support techniques or verbal interventions) have been attempted unsuccessfully, or where there is no time to try such alternatives.***
- ***Physical restraints must only be employed for the minimum time necessary.*** They must cease when the student is judged to be safe and no longer at risk of self-injury or harming others.
- ***Physical restraints may only be undertaken by staff who have successfully completed a comprehensive crisis management course*** that covers: (1) crisis definition and theory, (2) the use of de-escalation techniques, (3) crisis communication, (4) anger management, (5) physical restraint techniques, (6) the legal, ethical, and policy aspects of their use, (7) decision-making related to physical restraints, (8) debriefing strategies, (9) signs of distress and effect on the student and how to monitor, (10) identification of events and environmental factors that may trigger an emergency safety situation, (11) instruction on the State Board of Education policy on physical restraints, (12) the effects of restraint on ALL students, and (13) the needs and behaviors of the population being served. They must also have demonstrated competency in performing the intervention techniques, which is measured and documented according to relevant professional and/or state regulatory guidelines and the guidelines of the crisis management course.
- ***All staff involved in an incident of physical restraint must have successfully completed the same training program which has been fully endorsed and implemented in the School District, been assessed as competent in the use of physical restraints, and have successfully completed a skills review within the previous six months.*** Although all staff will not be trained in physical restraints, all staff should be trained in safety concerns and documentation during orientation training. The school policy on physical restraint should be reviewed with all staff during orientation at the beginning of each school year and immediately with any newly hired staff. Untrained staff may not restrain children and must refer to the School District’s policy about options available to untrained staff.

- **Only physical restraint skills and decision-making processes that are taught in the comprehensive crisis management course and approved by the School District (and any relevant statutory authority) may be used.** All techniques (including decision-making processes) must be applied according to the guidelines provided in the training and in this policy.
 - **Where possible, staff members must consult with peers and supervisors prior to initiating any physical restraint.**
 - **Two or more staff members should be involved in any physical restraint** to help ensure safety and accountability. A nurse or medically trained person should be in attendance during any physical restraint to observe and monitor the student and staff for physical indicators of distress.
 - **Students may not be permitted to restrain or to assist in the restraint of other students.**
 - **Following any incident involving physical restraint, the school must ensure that post-incident medical and follow-up evaluation,** debriefing and support is offered to the student, the staff members, and any other people involved in or witnesses of the episode. Staff members should provide the student with an explanation for the intervention and offer the student an opportunity to express his or her views on what transpired.
 - **The school must have a human rights committee review process for concerns that arise regarding humaneness or social acceptability.** Further school must have a formal grievance procedure in place for students (or their advocates), that is easy to understand, assures confidentiality, and is readily accessible. The grievance procedure should include how to contact the school human rights committee and relevant external authorities.
 - **Any initial use of physical restraint should be reported to the appropriate statutory authority or school governing authority and an agreed individual crisis management plan or emergency intervention plan should be developed and implemented** by the concerned parties, including making informed decision-making with parents and/or guardian. Use of restraint should be discussed with the student and under what circumstances restraint would be used and what kind. The plan should cover the use of positive and less intrusive intervention techniques and specify the circumstances under which physical restraint may or may not be an appropriate response in the future.
 - **All incidents of physical intervention must be recorded on incident report forms** that reflect the stated policy and include (at least) details of the incident, the people involved, the preventive strategies that were employed, actual techniques used, any injuries sustained by the student or staff, and debriefing that was provided for the student. School administrators should review all such reports and appropriate action should be taken (for example, counseling for the student and/or staff members, critical incident review, skills update, notification to external authorities, notification of the family). The data collection system should be used for a data-driven decision making process that concentrates on adjusting the system to support the student.
- If any injuries to students result from the use of physical restraints, the details must be reported to the appropriate statutory authority or school governing authority.** A formal review of the incident and the individual crisis management plan or emergency intervention plan should be implemented and/or adjusted.