

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

I. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

In conjunction with the increasing emphasis upon the use of behavioral techniques within the classroom setting, it has become increasingly apparent that the development of procedural guidelines is necessary to provide consistent programming throughout school settings. In response to the need and at the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Schools, guidelines for the use of physical restraints were developed.

These guidelines address the use of restraints (physical, mechanical, and therapeutic) and the use of "time out" practices. The guidelines apply to all teaching scenarios, to reduce inappropriate behavior, to make behavior occur under appropriate conditions and/or to maintain appropriate behavior. The guidelines serve to safeguard student rights in the process of delivering behavioral programming service.

The district recognizes that any effort to change the behavior of another individual represents a degree of intrusion into that individual's life. To justify that intrusion reasonable assurances must be given that, as a result of the intervention, the individual's behavior will change in a timely manner and that this change will benefit the individual. Therefore, all efforts to change behavior must be based on effective techniques and must be directed towards behaviors that will increase the individual's ability to interact effectively with the environment. At all times, the least intrusive produce likely to be effective will be used.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that every student participating in a Lafayette Parish education program is free to learn as well as free from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations (unless specifically identified in a student's IEP), after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

- A. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm; and
- B. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint. Nothing in the guidelines precludes any teacher, administrator, employee, or agent of the Lafayette Parish School System from using reasonable force to protect students, other students, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, or physical harm.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in these guidelines, the following terms have the following meanings:

- A. **Extended Restraint:** A physical restraint the duration of which is more than twenty (20) minutes. Extended restraints increase the risk of injury and, therefore, require additional written documentation.
- B. **Physical Escort:** Touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student.
- C. **Physical Restraint:** The use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement.
- D. **Restraint-Other:** Limiting the physical freedom of an individual student by mechanical means or seclusion in a limited space or location, or temporarily controlling the behavior of a student by chemical means. The use of chemical or mechanical restraint is prohibited unless explicit authorized by a physician and approved in writing by the parent or guardian. The use of seclusion restraint is prohibited.
 - 1. **Mechanical Restraint:** The use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement or normal function of a portion of his or her body including ropes or tape. A protective or stabilizing device ordered by a physician shall not be considered mechanical restraint.
 - 2. **Seclusion Restraint:** Physically confining a student alone in a room or limited space without access to school staff. The use of "time-out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint".
 - 3. **Chemical Restraint:** The administration of medication for the purpose of restraint.

III. USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

- A. **Use of Restraint.** Physical restraint may be used in the following circumstances:
 - 1. Non-physical interventions would not be effective; and
 - 2. The student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others.

- B. Limitations on Use of Restraint. Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
- C. Prohibitions. 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, disrespectful verbal comments that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm.
- D. Referral to Law Enforcement or Other State Agencies. Nothing in these guidelines prohibits:
 - 1. The right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; or
 - 2. Law enforcement, judicial authorities, or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk.

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

- A. Trained Personnel. Whenever possible, school personnel who have received training on the appropriate administration of physical restraint shall administer physical restraint on students. Additionally, when possible, the administration of a restraint shall be witnessed by at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint. These guidelines do not preclude a teacher, administrator, employee, or agent of the school district from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
- B. Use of Force. A person administering a physical restraint shall use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm.
- C. Safest Method. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation following the safety requirements set forth below in section (5). Floor or prone restraints shall be prohibited unless the staff member administering the restraint has received in-depth training and in the judgement of the trained

staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others present.

- D. **Duration of Restraint.** A person administering physical restraint shall discontinue such restraint as soon as possible. If, due to unusual circumstances, a restraint continues for more than twenty (20) minutes, it shall be considered an “extended restraint” for purposes of reporting.
- E. **Safety Requirements.** Additional requirements for the use of physical restraint:
1. No restraint shall be administered in such a way that the student is prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint, a staff member shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration. A restraint shall be released immediately upon a determination by the staff member administering the restraint that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to him or herself or others.
 2. Restraint shall be administered in such a way so as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during a physical restraint, the student demonstrates significant physical distress, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
 3. School staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
 4. Following the release of a student from a restraint, the school shall implement follow-up procedures. These procedures shall include reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint, reviewing the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for the student or any student who witnessed the incident.

V. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- A. School staff should report the use of physical restraints specified in (B below) after administration of a physical restraint that results in any injury to a student or staff member, or any physical restraint with a duration longer than five minutes.

- B. Informing School Administration. The school staff member who administers a restraint shall verbally inform the school principal of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report no later than the next school working day. If the school principal is out, the assistant principal shall be notified. The principal or his/her designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint.
- C. Informing Parents. The principal or his/her designee shall verbally inform the student's parents or guardian of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of restraint. If the school customarily provides the parent or guardian of a student with necessary school related information in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided to the parent or guardian in that language.
- D. Contents of the Report. The written report shall include:
1. The names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; the name of the student restrained; and the name of the administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint.
 2. A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the efforts made to de-escalate the situation; the alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
 3. A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff; if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
 4. For extended restraints the written report shall describe the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts and the justification for administering the extended restraint.
 5. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student.
 6. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents or guardians to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any

disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matters.

VI. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- A. Special Circumstances - Students with Disabilities. Restraint administered to a student with a disability pursuant to an Individualized Education Plan (“IEP”) or other written plan developed in accordance with state and federal law to which the district and the student’s parents or guardian have agreed shall be deemed to meet the requirements of these guidelines.
- B. Special Circumstances - Emergency Situation. An emergency situation exists when a student’s behavior poses an obvious threat or is resulting in serious self-injury, injury to others, substantial property damage, or significant disruption of the student’s environment and no behavioral program is in force that includes procedures appropriate to the situation. An emergency situation may be defined as one of the following:
 - 1. The sudden, generally unexpected occurrence of some action that requires an immediate response; or
 - 2. Some expected action that requires an immediate response but occurs at such a low frequency that formal behavioral programming is not warranted.

The following procedures may be used on an emergency basis:

- 1. Manual Restraint
- 2. Mechanical Restraint
- 3. Protective Restraint

VII. TIME-OUT ROOM

- A. Philosophy. The purpose of a time-out room shall provide consequences designed to modify severe behaviors of a disruptive nature that endangers the student, others, or may result in significant property damage. A time-out room is to be used only after all other less restrictive measures within the classroom have proven to be ineffective and shall never be used as a form of punishment or a consequence for failure to complete class work.
- B. Requirements. The following requirements are to be adhered to on each occasion that the time-out room is used:
 - 1. The student should be advised as to the reason he/she is being placed in the

time-out room and the criteria for returning to the class.

2. Prior to being placed in the time-out room, the student's shoes and belt should be removed and all pockets emptied.
3. Once placed in the time-out room, the student must be observed by a staff member at regular intervals. It is recommended that under ordinary circumstances this is to be done at least every five minutes.
4. Once the student is in control of his/her behavior and/or emotions, the student should be returned to the classroom. It is recommended that the student be removed from the time-out room following five minutes of appropriate behavior. In certain instances, this time period should be shortened and at times, it may be advisable to remove the student from the time-out room as soon as appropriate behavior is displayed.
5. Although fifteen minutes is the maximum period that is recommended for maintaining a student in the time-out room, it is not acceptable procedure to remove a student while he/she is continuing to exhibit unacceptable behavior. On such occasions, the recommended time limit may be reasonably extended at the teacher's discretion.
6. A written record must be maintained verifying each use of a time-out room, and shall include the following information:
 - a. Student name;
 - b. Specific times that the student entered and exited the time-out room;
 - c. The specific behavior(s) that required the use of the time-out room;
and
 - d. Teacher's signature.

If requested by the parents/guardian, they should be advised whenever their child's behaviors have required that he or she be placed in the time-out room.

It should be noted that a "time-out room" is defined as a specifically designated space used for seclusionary time-out. The door may be maintained in a closed position only by a mechanism requiring constant physical pressure by a staff member to keep it closed. There should be no other approved means of maintaining the door in a closed position. The student should be visible from a window or through the glass of a door at all times.

7. Due to the restrictive nature of seclusionary time-out, it is the responsibility

of classroom personnel to implement less restrictive and less aversive procedures prior to the use of the time-out room. Listed below is a recommended list of appropriate in-class consequences. The use of these procedures should be documented and kept on file within the classroom:

- a. Verbal warnings;
- b. Reinforcement of other students demonstrating appropriate behaviors;
- c. Loss of privileges; and
- d. Use of study carrel or other exclusionary placement within the classroom.

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