

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the North Middlesex Regional School District. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only of last resort after other lawful, and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution.

Nothing in this policy or 603 CMR 46.00 prohibits a teacher, 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.

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. It 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.

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;
- Descriptions of the school's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements, including, but not limited to: making reasonable efforts to orally notify the parent/guardian of the use of restraint within 24 hours of its imposition; and sending written notification to the parent/guardian by e-mail or regular mail within three (3) school working days of the restraint;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Methods for engaging parents/guardians in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;
- 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;
- Procedures for conducting periodic reviews of physical restraint as required by 603 CMR 46.06 (5) and (6); and

- A process for obtaining principal approval for a time-out exceeding 30 minutes.

Each building principal will identify staff members who will 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, in accordance with 603 CMR 46.04 (2), 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 the 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 "exclusionary time out" procedures, during which a staff member continuously observes and remains accessible to the student in an unlocked area, shall not be considered seclusion.

This policy and its accompanying procedures shall be reviewed and disseminated to staff annually and made available to parents/guardians 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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603 CMR 46.00