

## **BEHAVIOR SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### Background

The Mt. Lebanon School District adheres to the Pennsylvania Board of Education and Department of Education regulation (22 Pa. Code Section 14.133) regarding the behavior support of students with disabilities by school personnel. Such regulations require school districts to develop a written policy on the use of behavior support techniques and obtaining parent consent prior to the use of highly restraining or intrusive procedures.

### Objective

It is the objective of this policy to ensure that behavior support programs must include research-based practices and techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance an individual student's or eligible young child's opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment.

### Definitions

*Behavior Support* - The development, change and maintenance of selected behaviors through the systematic application of behavior change techniques.

*Positive Behavior Support Plan* - A plan for students with disabilities who require specific intervention to address behavior that interferes with learning.

A Positive Behavior Support Plan shall be developed by the IEP team, be based on a functional behavioral assessment, and become part of the individual student's IEP. These plans must include methods that use positive reinforcement and other positive techniques to shape the behavior of the child with disabilities, ranging from the use of positive verbal statements as a reward for good behavior to specific tangible rewards.

*Restraints* - The application of physical force, with or without the use of any device, for the purpose of restraining the free movement of a student's body, excluding the following:

1. Briefly holding a student, without force, to calm or comfort him/her.
2. Guiding a student to an appropriate activity.
3. Holding a student's hand to escort him/her safely from one area to another.
4. Hand-over-hand assistance with feeding or task completion.
5. Techniques prescribed by a qualified medical professional for reasons of safety or for therapeutic or medical treatment, as agreed to by the student's parents/guardians and specified in the IEP.

6. Mechanical restraints, which are used to control involuntary movement or lack of muscular control of students when due to organic causes or conditions, may be employed only when specified by an IEP and as determined by a medical professional qualified to make the determination, and as agreed to by the student's parents. Mechanical restraints shall prevent a student from injuring him/herself or others or promote normative body positioning and physical functioning.

*Aversive Techniques* - Deliberate activities designed to establish a negative association with a specific behavior.

Aversive techniques of handling behavior currently declared as considered inappropriate by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, which are not to be used in educational programs, include the following:

1. Corporal punishment.
2. Punishment for a manifestation of a student's disability.
3. Locked rooms, locked boxes, other locked structures or spaces from which the student cannot readily exit.
4. Noxious substances.
5. Deprivation of basic human rights, such as withholding meals, water or fresh air.
6. Suspensions constituting a pattern (more than 15 cumulative school days in a school year).
7. Treatment of a demeaning nature.
8. Electric shock.

### Policy

It is the policy of the Board of School Directors that:

1. The School District shall develop programs for the behavior support of students based on positive rather than negative measures to ensure that all students shall be free from demeaning treatment, the use of aversive techniques and the unreasonable use of restraints. Behavior support programs and plans must be based on a functional assessment of behavior and use positive behavior techniques. This includes a variety of research-based practices and techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance an individual student's or young child's opportunity for learning.

2. Positive techniques for the development, change, and maintenance of selected behaviors shall be attempted prior to the use of more intrusive or restraining measures, and types of intervention chosen for a particular student or young child shall be the least intrusive necessary.
3. Parent permission shall be obtained prior to the use of highly restraining or intrusive procedures except in emergency situations. The use of restraints may only be included in a student's or eligible young child's IEP when the restraint is utilized with specific component elements of positive behavior support and used in conjunction with the teaching of socially acceptable alternative skills to replace the problem behavior. Furthermore, there must be a plan in place for eliminating the use of restraint through the application of positive behavior support. Staff implementing the restraint must be authorized to use the procedure and have received the required staff training.
4. Restraints to control acute or episodic aggressive behavior may be used only when the student is acting in a manner as to be a clear and present danger to him/herself, to other students, or to employees, and only when less restrictive measures and techniques have proven to be or are less effective. The use of restraints to control the aggressive behavior of an individual student shall cause a meeting of the IEP team within 10 school days of the inappropriate behavior causing the use of restraints, unless the parent, after written notice, agrees in writing to waive the meeting. At this meeting, the IEP team shall review the current IEP and Positive Behavior Support Plan for appropriateness and effectiveness. The team shall consider whether the student or eligible young child needs a functional behavioral assessment, reevaluation, a new or revised positive behavior support plan, or a change of placement to address the inappropriate behavior.
5. The use of prone restraints is prohibited in educational programs. Prone restraints are those in which a student or eligible young child is held face down on the floor. The use of restraints may not be included in the IEP for the convenience of staff, as a substitute for an educational program, or employed as punishment.
6. Aversive techniques, considered inappropriate by the Pennsylvania Department of Education shall not be used by the District.
7. The District shall maintain and report data on the use of restraints as directed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The report shall be reviewed during cyclical compliance monitoring conducted by the Department. The District may convene human rights committees to oversee the use of restraints or restraining or intrusive procedures.
8. Subsequent to a referral to law enforcement, for students with disabilities who have positive behavior support plans, an updated functional behavior assessment and positive behavior support plan shall be required.

Administration Responsibility

It shall be the responsibility of the administration to:

1. Establish any procedures and guidelines determined to be necessary to implement this policy as it pertains to behavior support of students,
2. Provide for appropriate training of personnel for the use of specific procedures, methods and techniques,
3. Monitor and enforce this policy.

Communication

This policy shall be communicated to:

1. All personnel concerned with implementing these procedures.
2. All parents or guardians of students where applicable.

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