

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT

It is the policy of GEO Foundation that all students are to be treated with dignity and respect and to be free from abuse. The GEO Foundation supports the promotion and training of appropriate student behavior as part of the Corporation's curriculum. It is the policy of GEO Foundation to use prevention, positive behavior intervention and support, and conflict de-escalation to eliminate or minimize the need for the use of seclusion or restraint with students. This policy applies to all students, regardless of the existence of a disability.

Use of Seclusion

Although included as part of Indiana Code 20-20-40-13(a)(2), GEO Foundation does not endorse, condone nor allow the use of seclusion in any of its schools or facilities. Seclusion is defined as the confinement of a student alone or in a room or area from which the student physically is prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a supervised time out or scheduled break as described in a student's BIP and/or IEP in which an adult is continuously present in the room with the student and the student is free to leave the setting.

Use of Physical Restraints

Physical restraint is defined as physical contact between a school employee and a student in which the student unwillingly participates and that involves the use of a manual hold to restrict freedom of movement of all or a part of a student's body or to restrict normal access to the student's body. The term does not include: 1) briefly holding a student without undue force in order to calm and comfort the student or to prevent unsafe behavior, such as running into traffic or engaging in a physical altercation; 2) physical escort or 3) physical contact intended to gently assist or prompt a student in performing a task or to guide or assist a student from one area to another. The use of restraint with a student with a disability is subject to any conditions in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP).

It is important to maintain respect for the student and to protect his/her dignity and safety at all times. It is equally important to be aware that the difference between the use of any of these aforementioned exclusions and a "physically intrusive procedure" is defined in part by the student's reaction. If at any point the student physically resists being touched by staff, staff will allow time for the student to calm and rely on less intrusive prompts. At no time, does GEO Foundation support the use of physical punishment, sensory deprivation, mechanical or chemical restraints, denied access to meals, or seclusionary time out (time out with locked or closed door).

- Restraint may be used only when a student is displaying behavior that presents an imminent risk of injury to the student or others.
- Restraint may be used only as a last resort safety procedure after less restrictive procedures have been implemented without success.
- Restraint may be employed only by staff members who have received crisis intervention training in the use of restraint procedures with the following exception: other school personnel may employ restraint procedures in an emergency, as defined below when fully trained school personnel are not immediately available. Untrained staff must request assistance from trained staff as soon as possible. **The GEO Foundation's Special Education Department has endorsed the use of Pro-Act Professional Assault Crisis Training techniques in these incidents only by staff with current Pro-Act certification. Certification training is required every 2 years.**

- Restraint may last only as long as is necessary for the student to regain behavioral stability and the risk of injury has ended, usually a matter of minutes.
- The degree of restriction employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident, the size and condition of the student, and the potential risks for injury to the student.
- Prone (face down on a horizontal surface) physical restraints are not authorized and must be avoided.
- Restraint must never be used in a manner that restricts a student's breathing.
- Every instance in which restraint is used must be carefully, continuously and visually monitored to ensure the appropriateness of its use and safety of the student, other students, teachers, and other personnel.
- A verbal threat or verbally aggressive behavior does not itself constitute an imminent risk of injury and does not warrant the use of restraint.
- Destruction of or damage to property does not constitute an imminent risk of injury warranting the use of restraint unless in the course of such behavior a risk of injury to the student or others is created.
- Restraint may not be used when the student's known medical or physical condition would make the use of restraint dangerous for that student.
- Restraint must never be used as a means of punishment or to force compliance with staff commands.

Documentation and Recording Requirements:

The building administrator or designee verbally must notify the student's parent or guardian of the use of restraint as soon as possible following the incident but no later than the end of the school day in which the restraint occurred. A written report to the Director of Special Education is to be completed within 24 hours by EACH staff person involved in the incident. The building administrator or designee must send a copy of the incident report to the parent or guardian and place a copy of the report in the student's cumulative file.

Immediately after the student has regained emotional and behavioral control following the use of seclusion or restraint, a staff member (e.g. school nurse, social worker) not involved with the incident must ascertain if the student has sustained any injury during the restraint and document such injury or the lack thereof in the incident report. If the student has sustained an injury, the staff member must seek appropriate treatment of the student for the injury. The building administrator or designee must provide support to staff members involved by determining if any staff member has suffered an injury, seeking appropriate treatment for that staff member.

Staff will assist the student to process the event at the earliest appropriate time after the student has regained emotional and behavioral control to problem solve and to review strategies to make a plan for change.

Student handbooks must include a statement similar to the following: "a student will not be subject to seclusion or restraint unless the student's behavior poses an imminent risk of injury to the student or others. However, significant violations of the law, including assaults on students and staff, will be reported to the police. As soon as possible after any use of seclusion or restraint, the student's parent or guardian will be informed and provided with a detailed account of the incident, including the circumstances that led to the use of seclusion or restraint."