

## **SECTION E SUPPORT SERVICES**

**2 b. Time-Out Practices Inclusive of Physical Restraint:** (Voted 2/27/03, #03-12 and #03-13; 2/14/13, #13-12; 12/17/15, #15-84; 4/28/16, #16-24; 4/7/22, #22-23; 3/26/26, #26-38)  
(previously known as the Physical Restraint Policy)

### **I. Introduction**

It is the policy of the Brookline School Committee to promote a safe and productive workplace and educational environment for its employees and students, and to ensure that every student in the Brookline Public Schools is free from the use of physical restraint and seclusion that is consistent with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations, and that physical restraint and seclusion shall only be used with extreme caution as a last resort in emergency situations, supervised, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

We believe in preventive and positive approaches to discipline with interventions and consequences aimed at addressing the causes of misbehavior, resolving conflicts, meeting students' needs, and keeping students in school. We believe it is the responsibility of all school staff, students, families, and the community to contribute to a school community that promotes a safe, secure, and learning environment. Preventive and positive discipline is a shared responsibility for students, administrators, teachers, families, and the community. School personnel shall only administer a physical restraint as a last resort when it is needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm. When a physical restraint needs to be administered, school personnel shall seek to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of the physical restraint. School personnel shall further ensure that the physical restraint is supervised by another adult as quickly as practicable.

This policy shall not be construed to limit the protection afforded to publicly funded students under other federal and state laws, including those laws that provide for the rights of students who have been found eligible to receive special education services. Additionally, this policy shall not be construed to preclude any teacher, employee or agent of a public education program from using reasonable and necessary force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

The Superintendent will develop written procedures and guidelines related to this policy identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Alternative methods that should be used first when seeking to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student, including alternative methods in emergency situations that avoid resorting to physical restraint.
- Methods for engaging parents 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;
- A process for obtaining Principal/Head of School approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.
- A process for notifying families of any time out exceeding 30 minutes.

## **II. District's Physical Restraint Procedures**

### **A. Definitions**

"Consent" shall mean agreement by a parent/guardian/caregiver who has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which agreement is sought, in their native language or other mode of communication, that the parents/guardians/caregivers understand and agree in writing to the carrying out of the activity, and understand that the agreement is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. The agreement describes the activity and lists the records (if any) which will be released and to whom.

"Restraint" shall mean limitation on a student's physical movement using force against the student's resistance.

"Physical restraint" shall mean direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. The term physical restraint does not include prone restraint, mechanical restraint, or medication restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include: providing brief physical contact, without force, to promote student safety or limit self-injurious behavior, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

"Physical escort" shall mean a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

"Mechanical restraint" shall mean the use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement or normal function of a portion of their body. A protective or stabilizing device ordered by a physician shall not be considered a mechanical restraint. The use of a mechanical restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by the student's physician and consented to in writing by the parents/guardians/caregivers of the student.

**Seclusion** is defined as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area, with or without adult supervision, from which the student is not permitted to leave. "The term does not include: a classroom or school environment where, as a general rule, all students need permission to leave the room or area, such as to use the restroom; a behavior support technique that is part of the district's, school's or program's designated procedures for behavior support which involves the monitored separation of a student in an unlocked setting, from which the student is allowed to leave and it is implemented for the purpose of calming; or placing a student in a separate location within a classroom with others or with an instructor, so long as the student has the same opportunity to receive and engage in instruction."

The use of seclusion is expressly prohibited, except in an emergency situation in which the student poses an imminent threat of assault or serious physical harm, and only when all other less intrusive interventions have been deemed ineffective or inappropriate. The emergency use of seclusion may only be used with the required safeguards in place which include active monitoring- at all times during the emergency, a staff member is continuously and actively monitoring and observing the student and is immediately available to the student- timely parent and principal notification, and ongoing data review at the school level to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of seclusion in alignment with 603 CMR 46.00. All incidences of seclusion must be reported to DESE.

The Preconditions for Use of Emergency Seclusion are:

- It is used as a last resort on an individual student basis, where a student's behavior poses an imminent threat of assault or imminent risk of serious physical harm to self or others
- The student is not responsive to directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances
- Other interventions have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others
- The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff
- There are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed physician.
- There is psychological or behavioral justification and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, documented by a licensed mental health provider.
- The parent or guardian (and student, if appropriate) has provided consent for emergency use of seclusion.
- The principal has approved the use in writing.
- Staff implementing seclusion have documented participation in training in behavioral alternatives.
- All documentation demonstrating compliance with 603 CMR 46.07(2)(a) and (d)-(g) is maintained on file.

The emergency use of seclusion must cease as soon as the student's behavior no longer poses a threat of assault or immediate serious physical harm.

**Time-out** is defined as a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member in an unlocked setting from which the student is permitted to leave. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times.

A time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed. Staff supervising the student should support co-regulation and closely monitor the student's physical cues, tone of voice, and demeanor to determine whether the student has calmed. Students should not be required to complete a specific task to demonstrate that they have calmed if their physical body, tone, and demeanor demonstrate regulation.

Any room or area that is used for time-out must be of appropriate size for the age and the needs of the student; appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled, consistent with the remainder of the building; free of objects or fixtures that are inherently dangerous to the student; in compliance with any applicable local fire and building code requirements;

"Medication restraint" shall mean the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. The use of medication restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and consented to by the parents/guardians/caregivers of the student.

"Prone restraint" shall mean a restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the prone position. The use of prone restraint is expressly prohibited.

"Principal/Head of School" shall mean the instructional leader of a public education school program or designee.

## **B. Use of Restraint**

Any physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary, for the least time necessary, to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. A physical restraint may only be administered by school personnel who have been properly trained in the use of physical restraint.

## **C. Other Limitations on Use of Restraint**

The following practices are expressly prohibited: (i) use of restraint inconsistent with the provisions set forth Section II (B) above (ii) use of physical restraint as a means of discipline or punishment, as a response to the destruction of property or disruption of school order, as a response to a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or as a response to verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm;(iii) use of prone restraint; (iv) use of mechanical restraint; (v) use of medication restraint that has not been approved by a physician or consented to by the student's parents/guardians/caregivers; (vi) use of restraint when a student cannot be safely restrained; and (vii) continued use of restraint when students indicate that they cannot breathe, or appear to be in severe distress (including but not limited to: difficulty breathing, sustained or prolonged crying and coughing).

## **D. Proper Administration of a Physical Restraint**

Only trained school personnel shall administer physical restraints. Trained school personnel are those individuals who have received either the in-depth training detailed below, or who have received the required basic training detailed below.

The administration of the physical restraint shall be witnessed by at least one adult, as quickly as practicable, who does not participate in the physical restraint. When administering a physical restraint, school personnel shall use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or

others from physical injury. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

During the administration of a restraint, school personnel shall monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color, temperature and respiration. Any and all restraint shall be immediately released upon a determination by the school personnel administering the restraint that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to themselves or others. Additionally, restraints shall be administered in such a way as to prevent or minimize physical harm.

At any time during and after the administration of a physical restraint, school personnel shall seek to contact the Office of Student Services board-certified behavioral analysts, or the Crisis Intervention Team, or take other steps to seek medical and/or social emotional assistance if it appears that the student is demonstrating or articulating physical and/or mental distress. This may include contacting counselors.

Recognizing that the administration of a physical restraint can impact more than the student against whom the restraint is administered, school personnel shall offer social-emotional supports to any students and/or staff who witness the administration of a physical restraint. This may include contacting the Office of Student Services, board-certified behavioral analysts and counselors.

#### **E. Reporting Requirements**

At an appropriate time after a student has been released from a restraint, the restraining staff member shall:

- a. review the restraint with the restrained student and relevant staff to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;
- b. review the incident with a supervisor to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed;
- c. notify the Office of Student Services and principal/head of school as soon as practicable and no later than within 24 hours;
- d. notify the parents/caregivers/guardians as soon as practicable. An initial notification must be made prior to the student leaving school or a school-sponsored activity. Initial reporting of a restraint to parents/caregivers/guardians shall be made verbally. If there is no response to verbal outreach, notification shall be made via electronic correspondence. A subsequent written report shall be generated within 5 business days and provided to parents/caregivers/guardians. The written record for parents/caregivers/guardians shall at minimum include a description of what precipitated the use of physical restraint, what transpired during the use of physical restraint, and what happened in the aftermath of the physical restraint.

#### **F. Records Maintenance**

a. Every use of physical restraint shall be documented in writing, maintained electronically by the school and reported electronically to the Office of Student Services, the superintendent or designee, and the principal/head of school, including a basic description of what transpired, the name of the student restrained, the name of the staff member who restrained the student, the name(s) of any other staff member(s) who observed the restraint, and the name(s) of any other witnesses.

b. The principal/head of school shall maintain ongoing records electronically on a school-based secure drive of all reported instances of physical restraint. In order to ensure equitable implementation of this policy, both the principal/head of school and the Office of Student Services shall keep records of all uses of restraint, including relevant demographic data on students involved in any action reported under this policy. These records will be maintained electronically on an Office of Student Services secure drive. This data shall be regularly reviewed by the Superintendent to provide constructive feedback on the policy and PSB practice, and a summary shall be made available to the School Committee at least once per year by the penultimate School Committee meeting in June.

### **III. District's Training Requirements**

#### **A. For All Program Staff**

Staff shall receive annual training, within the first month of the school year or their employment, consisting of the following: (a) this policy and related procedures and guidelines developed by the Superintendent or designee; (b) interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances, including use of time-out as a behavior support strategy distinct from seclusion; (c) when behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration; (d) administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student, including known or suspected trauma history; (e) the role of the student, staff and family in preventing use of restraint; and (f) identification of program staff who have received in-depth training pursuant to 603 C.M.R. 46.03(3) in the use of physical restraint. See 603 C.M.R. 46.03(2).

Adherence to these procedures ensures the safety of both students and educators. Staff are encouraged to act decisively in accordance with this policy during emergencies, and the District will provide the necessary training and post-incident support to ensure all interventions are handled safely and appropriately. Actions inconsistent with these procedures or the provided training will be addressed in accordance with District personnel policies

#### **B. For Staff Authorized to Serve As A School-Wide Resource on the Proper Administration of Physical Restraints**

At the beginning of each school year, the principal/head of school of each school shall identify program staff that is authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper

administration of physical restraint. The content of the in-depth training shall be thorough and competency-based. *See* 603 C.M.R. 46.03(3) and 46.03(4).