

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

The Cohasset Public Schools complies with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (hereinafter "MA DESE") regulations governing the use of physical restraint, seclusion and time-out, which can be found at 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. (hereinafter "the Regulations"). According to their terms, the Regulations apply at school and also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property. Additional information, including a copy of the Regulations, may be obtained from the Student Services Office or at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html?section=all>.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every student attending the Cohasset Public Schools is free from the use of physical restraint, seclusion or time-out that is inconsistent with the Regulations. Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members and students of the school district. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution.

Consistent with the Regulations, nothing in this policy shall preclude a teacher, employee, or agent of the Cohasset Public Schools from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm or to implement school-based discipline (such as in school suspension) in accordance with due process and state laws/regulations. In addition, nothing in this Policy or the Regulations prohibits law enforcement or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including physical detainment of an individual alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk.

DEFINITIONS.

The definitions of forms of restraint, seclusion, and time-out shall be as defined in 603 CMR 46.02.

Mechanical restraint, medication restraint, prone restraint, seclusion unless permitted pursuant to 603 CMR 46.07(2) and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00 are strictly prohibited in the Cohasset Public Schools.

Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and 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.

RESTRAINT PREVENTION & BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROCEDURES

The Superintendent will develop procedures that shall include, but not be limited to:

- 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 and procedures for using physical restraint in emergency situations consistent with the Regulations;
- Descriptions of the school's training requirements, reporting requirements, and follow-up procedures, including, but not limited to reporting requirements for physical restraint and emergency seclusion (e.g., making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent/guardian of the use of restraint or emergency seclusion within 24 hours of its imposition);
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Procedures for conducting periodic review of data and documentation on the use of physical restraints and emergency seclusion;
- 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, seclusion unless permitted pursuant to 603 CMR 46.07(2), and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR [46.00](#).
- Conditions required by the Regulations to use seclusion in an emergency situation as well as the proper administration of emergency seclusion including, but not limited to, requiring the principal's approval if an emergency seclusion is used for more than 30 minutes.
- Procedures for using time-out as a behavioral support strategy consistent with the Regulations, including a process for obtaining the principal's approval for a time-out exceeding 30 minutes.
- Safeguards that the school district has put in place for areas used for time-out or emergency seclusion.

STAFF TRAINING

Each building Principal will identify staff members to 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 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.

PROHIBITIONS REGARDING PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of discipline or punishment, or as a response to 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 assault, or imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

Physical restraint is prohibited the student cannot be safely restrained because 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.

Physical restraint also shall not be used as a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior.

DISSEMINATION OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY & PROCEDURES

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

Updates to Reflect MA DESE regulation updates effective 8/17/2026

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37G](#); 603 CMR [46.00](#)

ADOPTED: August 2015

Updated: July 2026