

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the Auburn School District. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint.

Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations after other less-intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

1. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the School community from immediate, serious, physical harm; and
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student.

The following definitions appear at 603CMR 46.02: (Code of Massachusetts Regulations)

1. Extended Restraint: A physical restraint the duration of which is longer than twenty (20) minutes.
2. Physical escort: Touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student.
3. Physical restraint: The use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement.

The use of mechanical or chemical restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and approved in writing by the parent/guardian. The use of seclusion restraint is prohibited in public education programs. Prone restraint is prohibited in Auburn programs except on an individual student basis.

Mechanical restraint – The use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement or normal function of a portion of his or her body. A protective or stabilizing device ordered by a physician shall not be considered a mechanical restraint. Seclusion restraint – Physically confining a student alone in a room or limited space without access to school staff. The use of “Time Out” procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered “seclusion restraint”. Chemical restraint – The administration of medication for the purpose of restraint.

The Superintendent will develop written procedures identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior, that may require immediate intervention;
- Methods of preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide;
- Descriptions and explanations of the school's method of physical restraint;
- Descriptions of the school's training and reporting requirements
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints.

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 which the Department of Education recommends be at least 16 hours in length, with refresher training occurring annually thereafter.

Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603CMR 46.00 shall administer physical restraint on students. Whenever possible the administration of physical restraint shall be administered in the presence of at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint. A person administering physical restraint shall only use the amount of force necessary to protect the student from injury or harm.

In addition, each staff member will be trained regarding the school's physical restraint policy. 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 in response to destruction of property, or disruption of school order, or as a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) will include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.

A member of the School Committee or any teacher or any employee or agent of the School Committee shall not be precluded from using such reasonable force as is necessary to protect students, other persons or themselves from an assault by a student.

Staff shall report all incidences of the use of physical restraint to the Principal. The staff member shall inform the administration of the physical restraint as soon as possible, and by written report no later than the next school day. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which, upon request, shall be made available to the Department of Education.

When a restraint has resulted in serious injury to a student or staff member the school district shall provide a copy of the required report to the Department of Education postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the administration of the restraint. The Principal will also send the Department a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the Principal for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint.

If it appears that a student may need to be restrained for more than 20 minutes, staff must obtain the approval of the Principal before continuing the restraint beyond the 20 minutes.

After any restraint the Principal will make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parents as soon as possible of the restraint, and no more than 24 hours following the event, and will also notify the parent by written report sent either within three school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three school working days of the restraint. If the parent of a student receives report cards and other necessary school-related information in a language other than English, the written restraint report will be provided to the parent or guardian in that language. The principal will provide the student and the parent an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of the restraint and on information in the written report.

The Principal of the program will conduct a weekly review of restraint data in order to identify students who have been restrained multiple times during the week.

The Principal will conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data.

Every school will collect and annually report data to the Department regarding use of physical restraints in a manner and form directed by the Department.

The above procedures and guidelines will be reviewed annually with school personnel and shared with students and parents. A copy of the regulations can be obtained from the Director of Special Education/Pupil Personnel Services, who can be reached at (508)832-7755.

A copy of the regulations of Department of Education may also be obtained at the following websites:

www.doe.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html

Adopted May 2015

Amended: September 2, 2015