

Guidelines for Minimizing the Use of Physical Restraint for Students with Disabilities in Oklahoma

Physical restraint shall not be used for the purposes of discipline or as a punishment, to force compliance, as a convenience for staff or to prevent property damage.

The use of chemical and/or mechanical restraint is prohibited.

Physical restraint to manage behavior must only be used under the following emergency circumstances and only if these elements exist:

- The student's actions pose an imminent risk of harm to him/herself or others.
- Less restrictive measures appropriate to the behavior exhibited by the child have not effectively de-escalated the risk of injury.
- The physical restraint lasts only as long as necessary to resolve the risk of danger or harm.
- The degree of limitation or restriction of another person's freedom of movement that is applied may not exceed what is necessary to protect the student or other persons from imminent bodily injury.

School personnel who use physical restraint must have training in:

- Conflict de-escalation.
- The crisis cycle and interventions at each stage.
- Possible effects of physical restraint.
- First Aid.
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

The trainings shall result in some form of certification or credential, be recurrent with annual updates, and be consistent with nationally recognized training programs. The training must also include methods for monitoring a student's well being during and following a restraint.

Prone restraints (restraints that position a student face down on his or her stomach or face up on the back) or any maneuver that places pressure or weight on the chest, sternum, lungs, diaphragm, neck, throat, or back must not be used. No restraint that prevents a student from speaking or breathing is allowed.

At least one witness who is not involved in the physical restraint should be present.

Parents must be notified immediately following each incident of a physical restraint, and be provided a copy of all documentation.

A building administrator should be informed immediately of any incident of a physical restraint and if unavailable, must be informed as soon as possible following each incident.

Each incident of physical restraint must be documented on OSDE Form #12 and include the following information:

- Name of the student.
- Name of the school personnel involved in the incident.
- Date of the incident and the time the physical restraint started and ended.
- Location of the restraint.
- A description of the physical restraint.
- A description of the student's activity and behavior immediately preceding the behavior that prompted the use of physical restraint.
- A description of school personnel efforts to de-escalate the situation and alternatives to physical restraint that were attempted.
- Information documenting parent and administrator notification and contact.

A copy of the documentation must be placed in the student's confidential file and provided to the parents.

A documented debriefing meeting shall occur within two school days following each physical restraint incident, and prior to any extended breaks from school. The debriefing meeting should include all individuals involved in the incident, a building administrator, the parents or guardians of the child with a disability, the child (if the child is able to participate), and the witness who was not involved in the physical restraint. See Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, 2007 manual for information regarding means for parent participation.

The debriefing should focus on alternatives to physical restraint and how to avoid future use of physical restraint, including antecedent events that led to the use of the physical restraint.

Relevant Definitions:

Chemical Restraint is defined as a drug or medication used to control behavior or restrict freedom of movement that is not prescribed by a licensed physician for standard treatment of the student's medical condition and administered for that purpose as prescribed (Public Health Service Act).

Imminent risk of harm is defined as the immediate and impending threat of a person causing serious bodily injury to self or others.

Mechanical Restraint is defined as the use of devices as a means of restricting a student's freedom of movement (Public Health Service Act).

Physical restraint is defined as any method of one or more persons limiting or restricting another person's freedom of movement, physical activity, or normal access to his/her body (International Society of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurses, 1999). It is a means for managing that person's movement, reconstituting behavioral management, and establishing and maintaining safety for the student, other students, and staff.

References:

Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (2009). *Position Summary on the Use of Physical Restraint Procedures in School Settings*.

Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (2009). *Position Summary on the Use of Seclusion in School Settings*.

Kansas State Department of Education Special Education Services. (2008). *Functional Assessment Process*. Topeka, KS: Project STAY – Supporting Teachers and Youth.

School Association for Special Education in DuPage (SASED) Executive Committee (May 2002). *Procedures for Behavioral Interventions for Students with Disabilities*.