

## **DE-ESCALATION/PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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The use of de-escalation/physical restraint as a behavior management technique will be utilized only with extreme caution in emergency situations, after other less intrusive alternatives have either failed or been deemed inappropriate. In the event that physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members, South Shore Regional School District has enacted the following policy and procedures to ensure the proper use of restraint to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint.

#### **A. When Restraint May Be Used**

1. The use of physical restraint is proper **only** in the following circumstances:
  - a. The student's behavior poses an imminent, serious physical harm to a student and/or member of the school community.
  - b. All less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.
2. Physical restraint is **prohibited** in the following circumstances:
  - a. As a means of punishment, or
  - b. As a response to property destruction, 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 imminent, serious physical harm.

#### **B. Staff Training**

1. All school staff/faculty will receive training regarding the school's restraint policy.
2. All new staff/faculty will receive training regarding the school's restraint policy within the first months of their employment.
3. Training shall include information on the following:
  - a. Knowledge of the client population
  - b. De-escalation techniques
  - c. The dangers of physical restraint
  - d. Steps on how to monitor a restraint and watch for signs of distress
  - e. How to file proper restraint and incident reports
  - f. Practice of physical techniques, and
  - g. Role play for both de-escalation and physical techniques.
4. **Experienced staff/faculty** will attend six (6) hours of training annually to review de-escalation techniques, physical techniques, and role play of the application of restraints and the effect(s) on the person restrained.
5. Staff/faculty will review any behavior plans pertaining to special techniques for identified students.

#### **C. Administration of Physical Restraint**

1. When dealing with a potentially volatile student, faculty/staff will use a gradient system of de-escalation to attempt to defuse the situation before resorting to physical restraint. All staff will be properly trained in de-escalation and physical interventions and will follow the least restrictive method for controlling the behavior. Staff will not physically intervene unless the student is at risk and/or is hurting self or others.

2. De-escalation system includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. observation and communication
  3. Non-verbal skills
  4. Verbal skills
  5. Separation, and
  6. Time out.

3. De-escalation techniques may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Time-out

Time out is the separation of a student from the mainstream environment to a controlled supervised setting, not to be secluded but monitored by faculty for no longer than five (5) minutes with an opportunity to proceed and return to the mainstream.

Sometimes student behavior may be so inappropriate that time away from the group is necessary. Using staff supervision in a controlled setting is an effective way to avoid more serious behavior while the student gains control. The goal is to be able to make better choices by thinking before acting. Safety for the student and other students is vital, while rejoining the group is the intended outcome.

- b. Self time-out

This is a time when a student who is aware that he/she is having a difficult time and needs to "cool off" may ask for a time out. The student and staff person will go to a designated area for 10 minutes of quiet controlled time. The student can process with the staff member by discussing what happened and what plan can be put in place to manage the behavior in the future. Rejoining the class will follow.

- c. Staff time-out

Sometimes a student may lose control of his/her temper and his/her anger may escalate to present a safety threat to self or others. If this occurs, staff members will intervene and, if necessary, physically escort the student to a designated area for no more than five (5) minutes. During that time the student is expected to regain control in a reasonably calm manner so he/she may return to the instructional setting.

- d. Physical Escort

Students will be escorted from one area to another if they are noncompliant, disruptive to the school, and have been asked to take a time out and have refused to do so. They will also be escorted from a potentially aggressive or unsafe situation if unable to follow verbal directives.

Two staff people will provide the escort with each staff member holding an arm. The student will face the opposite direction of the staff with his/her arms by his/her sides. The student will never be escorted up or down stairs. If, alternatively, it is safer for the rest of the students to be moved from the area, staff will do so to avoid the escort.

**A physical escort is not a physical restraint.**

If a student's behavior continues to escalate and the potential for danger increases or if the student presents a danger to self or others and the danger is unlikely or has been unable to be averted by alternatives to restraint, then a staff/faculty person may physically intervene using the least amount of force necessary to stop the aggression and to keep the student and/or others safe.

The administrator in charge will be notified as soon as possible if a restraint is imminent.

4. If the physical restraint last longer than 20 minutes, approval of the administrator or his/her designee shall be obtained. Such approval will be based on the continued behavior justifying the need for continued restraint.

5. If a student is being restrained, staff/faculty will monitor the restrained student for any signs of distress.
6. If the student exhibits any signs of distress, the student will be released immediately and medical attention will be provided.
7. To the extent that the student is able to communicate, he/she should be offered the opportunity to have a restraint removed at any time that he/she agrees to cease the dangerous or violent behavior. Such offer should be made periodically throughout the restraint.
8. The restrained student will be released at the first sign that it is safe to do.
9. Types of physical restraint may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Basket Hold-Standing

One person stands behind the student with student's arms wrapped in front of him/her.

- b. Basket Hold-Floor

Two staff: the student sits with his/her legs out in front. One staff is behind the student holding his/her arms, which are wrapped in front, while the other staff person stabilizes the student's legs.

- c. Two Person Take Down

This restraint begins with two staff but requires three or more to complete. With one person per arm (as in the escort), the student is lowered to the floor, with the student's backside touching the floor first and with care being taken to proceed slowly. The student's arms are placed beside his/her body. Each staff person holds the student's wrist with one hand and places their other hand on the student's shoulder. The third person holds the student's legs by wrapping them with the staff person's arms.

Where the student is spitting or is too difficult to maintain safely in this position, the student is rolled onto his/her stomach. The placement is as follows:

Two staff assigned to the upper body sit with the backs against each other forming a tent over the student's back. This is done without putting pressure on the student's body. The student's arms are held across the waist of the staff. The other staff stabilizes the legs by wrapping them. Student's shoes are generally taken off to avoid injury to staff.

**D. Following the release of the student from restraint, the program shall implement its follow-up and processing procedures.**

1. Staff/faculty involved will complete full documentation of the incident and restraint.
  - a. The administrator of the program will review and approve this report.
  - b. Copies of the report will be placed in the student's file and sent to the student's home school district.
2. Documentation shall include:
  - a. Name of the student.
  - b. Names and positions of all staff involved.
  - c. Date and time of restraint.
  - d. Behavior of the student that prompted the restraint.
  - e. Description of the activities and environment at the time of the restraint.
  - f. Efforts of the staff to de-escalate the situation and alternatives used to avoid the restraint.

- g. Detailed description of the restraint including start and finish times.
  - h. Required monitoring of the student.
  - i. Approval for continuation of restraint longer than 20 minutes. J. Any injuries to staff or student.
  - j. Signature of administrator.
3. Parent/guardian will be verbally informed of the restraint as soon as possible and by writing, postmarked no later than the next school working day following the use of restraint. Notice will include information on any action(s) that will be taken by the school district and recourse available to the student or student's family.
  4. This policy will be included in all student handbooks.

Adopted by South Shore Regional School Committee July 17, 2002