JKAA

Pittsfield School District

USE OF RESTRAINTS AND SECLUSION

Definitions,

1. “Restraint” means bodily physical restriction, mechanical devices, or any device that immobilizes a person or restricts the freedom of movement of the torso, head, arms, or legs. It includes mechanical restraint, physical restraint, and medication restraint used to control behavior in an emergency or any involuntary medication. It is limited to actions taken by persons who are school or facility staff members, contractors, or otherwise under the control or direction of a school or facility.

“Restraint” shall not include:

   a. Brief touching or holding to calm, comfort, encourage, or guide a child, so long as limitation of freedom of movement of the child does not occur.

   b. The temporary holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a child to stand, if necessary, and then walk to a safe location, so long as the child is in an upright position and moving toward a safe location.

   c. Physical devices, such as orthopedically prescribed appliances, surgical dressings and bandages, and supportive body bands, or other physical holding when necessary for routine physical examinations and tests or for orthopedic, surgical, and other similar medical treatment purposes, or when used to provide support for the achievement of functional body position or proper balance or to protect a person from falling out of bed, or to permit a child to participate in activities without the risk of physical harm.

   d. The use of seat belts, safety belts, or similar passenger restraints during the transportation of a child in a motor vehicle.

   e. The use of force by a person to defend himself/herself or a third person from what the actor reasonably believes to be the imminent use of unlawful force by a child, when the actor uses a degree of such force which he/she reasonably believes to be necessary for such purpose and the actor does not immobilize a child or restrict the freedom of movement of the torso, head, arms, or legs of any child.
2. “Medication restraint” occurs when a child is given medication involuntarily for the purpose of immediate control of the child’s behavior.

3. “Mechanical restraint” occurs when a physical device or devices are used to restrict the movement of a child or the movement or normal function of a portion of his/her body.

4. “Physical restraint” occurs when a manual method is used to restrict a child’s freedom of movement or normal access to his/her body.

5. “Seclusion” means the involuntary placement of a child alone in a place where no other person is present and from which the particular child is unable to exit, either due to physical manipulation by a person, a lock, or other mechanical device or barrier. The term shall not include voluntary separation of a child from a stressful environment for the purpose of allowing the child to regain self-control, when such separation is to an area which a child is able to leave. Seclusion does not include circumstances in which there is no physical barrier between the child and any other person or the child is physically able to leave the place. A circumstance may be considered seclusion even if a window or other device for visual observation is present, if the other elements of this definition are satisfied.

Procedures for Managing the Behavior of Students. The superintendent or his / her designee is authorized to establish procedures for managing the behavior of students. Such procedures shall be consistent with this policy and all applicable laws. The superintendent or his / her designee is further authorized to establish any other procedures necessary to implement this policy and/or any other legal requirements.

Circumstances in Which Restraint May Be Used. Restraint will only be used to ensure the immediate physical safety of any person when there is a substantial and imminent risk of serious bodily harm to the student or others. Restraint will only be used by trained school staff. Restraint will not be used as punishment for the behavior of a student.

Restraint will not be imposed for longer than is necessary to protect the student or others from the substantial and imminent risk of serious bodily harm. No period of restraint of a student may exceed fifteen minutes without the approval of a supervisory employee designated by the director of student services to provide such approval. No period of restraint of a student may exceed thirty minutes unless an assessment of the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of the student is conducted by a trained and authorized employee.

Circumstances in Which Seclusion May Be Used. The Board recognizes the statutorily imposed conditions of seclusions and hereby adopts those conditions as defined by RSA 126-:&:5-b. Seclusion may only be used when a student’s behavior poses a substantial and imminent risk of physical harm to the student or others. Seclusion will only be used
Prohibition of Dangerous Restraint Techniques. The Board recognizes and hereby prohibits the use of “dangerous restraint techniques” as defined in RSA 126-U:4.

Reporting Requirements and Parental Notification. In the event restraint or seclusion is used on a student, the director of student services (for identified students) or dean of operations (for non-identified students) will, no later than the end of the school day, verbally notify the student’s parent / guardian of the occurrence.

The director of student services or dean of operations will, within five business days after the occurrence, submit a written notification / report to the superintendent. The notification shall contain all the requirements and information as mandated by RSA 126-U:7, 11. The superintendent may develop a reporting form or other documents necessary to satisfy these reporting requirements.

Unless prohibited by court order, the superintendent or his / her designee will, within two business days of the receipt of the notification required in the above paragraph, send by first class mail to the child’s parent / guardian the information contained in the notification / report. Each notification / report prepared under this section shall be retained by the school for review in accordance with the State Board of Education rules and the Department of Health and Human Services rules.

If a school employee has intentional physical contact with a student in response to a student’s aggressive misconduct or disruptive behavior, director of student services or the dean of operations will make reasonable efforts to inform the student’s parent / guardian as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day. The director of student services or dean of operations will also prepare a written report of the incident within two business days of the incident. The report will include information required under RSA 126-U:7, V.

Transportation. The district will not use mechanical restraints during the transportation of children unless case-specific circumstances dictate that such methods are necessary.

Whenever a student is transported to a location outside the school, the superintendent or his / her designee will ensure that all reasonable and appropriate measure consistent with public safety are made to transport or escort the student in a manner which prevents physical and psychological trauma, respects the privacy of the student, and represents the least restrictive means necessary for the safety of the student.

Whenever a student is transported using mechanical restraints, the superintendent of his / her designee will document in writing the reasons for the use of mechanical restraints.