



SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT PREVENTION AND BEHAVIOR SUPPORT POLICY

Approved by School Committee December 13, 2012

Effective July 1, 2013

As Amended September 24, 2015 and Effective January 1, 2016

Further Amended 2023

I. Purpose of Policy

It is the policy of the Springfield Public Schools (“SPS”) to (a) promote an orderly, safe environment for its students and employees that is conducive to learning, (b) ensure that every SPS student is free from use of physical restraints that is inconsistent with this policy, and (c) ensure that physical restraints on SPS students are 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. The purpose of this policy is to comply with the Massachusetts regulations regarding physical restraints, 603 CMR 46.00.

II. Definitions

- A. “Physical Escort” shall mean a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.
- B. “Physical Restraint” shall mean direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s freedom of movement. Physical Restraint does not include providing: brief physical contact to promote student safety, physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.
- C. “Prone Restraint” shall mean a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student’s body to keep the student in the face-down position. **This type of restraint is prohibited on SPS students.**
- D. “Mechanical Restraint” shall mean the use of any physical device or equipment to restrict a student’s freedom of the movement. **This type of restraint is prohibited on SPS students.** The term does **not** include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student they have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, and are used for the specific and approved positioning or protective purposes for which such devices were designed. Examples of such devices include: adaptive devices or mechanical

supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports; vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle; restraints for medical immobilization; or orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

- E. “Medication Restraint” shall mean the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. Medication prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized by the parent for administration in the school setting is not medication restraint.
- F. “School Working Day” shall mean day or partial day that students are in attendance at the SPS for instructional purposes.
- G. “Seclusion” shall mean the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined herein. **Seclusion is prohibited with SPS students.**
- H. “Time-out” shall mean a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purposes of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

III. Physical Restraint Procedures

A. Use of Physical Restraint

Physical Restraint by SPS employees and agents on a SPS student are an emergency procedure of **last resort** and are prohibited except when a SPS student’s behavior poses a threat of assault, or an imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the SPS student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. SPS staff or agent shall review and consider any known medical or physiological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of Physical Restraints on an individual student.

B. Prohibitions on Use of Physical Restraint

Physical Restraints on SPS students shall not be used:

1. As a means of discipline or punishment;
2. When 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;

3. As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a SPS rule or staff directive or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or
4. 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.

C. Types of Restraints Prohibited

The use of mechanical restraint, medication restraint, prone restraint or seclusion restraint on SPS students is prohibited.

D. Proper Administration of Physical Restraints

1. Only trained SPS staff or agents shall administer Physical Restraints on SPS students. Trained school personnel are those individuals who have received the training described in Section VI, B, below. These training requirements shall not preclude a SPS teacher, employee or agent from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

2. Whenever possible, the administration of a Physical Restraint on a SPS student shall be witnessed by at least one (1) adult who does not participate in the Physical Restraint.

3. When administering a Physical Restraint on a SPS student, school personnel shall use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm.

4. School employees or agents administering a Physical Restraint on a student shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation in accordance with the safety requirements detailed below in subsection F, below.

5. All Physical Restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress, such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing.

E. School Based Crisis Intervention Procedures

Each SPS school shall develop school based crisis intervention procedures that is consistent with this policy. The procedures shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide, including individual crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of SPS students or with an individual student;
2. Methods for engaging SPS parents in discussion about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;

3. A description and explanation of SPS's alternatives to Physical Restraint and method of Physical Restraint in emergency situations;
4. A statement prohibiting medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint, seclusion, and the use of Physical Restraint inconsistent with this policy;
5. A description of the school's training requirements, reporting requirements, and follow-up procedures;
6. A procedure for receiving and investigating complaints regarding restraint practices;
7. A procedure for conducting periodic review of data and documentation on the use of Physical Restraints;
8. A procedure for implementing the reporting requirements;
9. A procedure for making reasonable efforts to orally notify parent or guardian of the use of Physical Restraint on a student by end of the school day, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours of the Physical Restraint, and for sending written notification no later than three (3) school working days following the use of Physical Restraint; and
10. A procedure for the use of time-out that includes a process for obtaining principal approval of time-out for more than thirty (30) minutes based on the individual student's continuing agitation.

F. Safety Requirements for the Use of Physical Restraints

The following are the safety requirements for the use of Physical Restraints:

1. No Physical Restraints on SPS students shall be administered in such a way that a student is prevented from breathing or speaking.
2. During the administration of a Physical Restraint on a SPS student, a SPS staff member or agent shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration.
3. A Physical Restraint on a SPS student shall be administered in such a way as to prevent or minimize physical harm.
4. If, at any time during a Physical Restraint, the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress, including, but not limited to difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the Physical Restraint immediately, and the SPS staff member or agent shall take steps to seek medical assistance for the student.

5. If any Physical Restraint lasts longer than ten (10) continuous minutes or if multiple restraints occur that total longer than ten (10) minutes within a thirty (30) minute period, SPS staff member or agent should consider calling the community's mobile crisis unit. Any Physical Restraint lasting longer than twenty (20) minutes must be approved by the principal or designee.

G. Follow-up Procedures Regarding the Use of Physical Restraints

At an appropriate time after a SPS student has been released from a Physical Restraint, the school shall implement the follow-up procedures set forth below:

1. Review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the Physical Restraint.
2. Review the incident with SPS staff or agent who administered the Physical Restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed.
3. Consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for the students who witnessed the incident.

IV. Reporting Requirements Regarding the Use of Physical Restraints

A. When a Report is Required

As required in this section, any Physical Restraint on a SPS student shall be reported verbally and documented in writing to the school principal and to the student's parents or guardians, and shall be reported in writing to the Superintendent's designee, and, if a SPS student is injured during a Physical Restraint, shall be reported in writing to The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE").

B. Report to Principal

The SPS staff member who administered a Physical Restraint on a SPS student shall verbally inform the principal or his/her designee of the Physical Restraint as soon as possible. No later than the next school working day after the Physical Restraint, the SPS staff or agent who administered the Physical Restraint shall complete a written report regarding the restraint. (See Sample Form Written Report A; See Sample Form Written Report B- if the restraint resulted in student injury). If the principal has administered the Physical Restraint, the principal shall prepare the report and submit it to an individual or team designated by the superintendent for review. The written report shall contain the following:

1. The name of the student, names and job titles of the SPS staff or agent who administered the restraint, and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; the name of the administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint; and, as applicable, the name of the principal or designee who

approved continuation of restraint beyond 20 minutes.

2. A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of Physical Restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating Physical Restraint.
3. A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
4. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any consequences that may be imposed on the student.
5. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents/guardians to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter. (See Forms A and B).

If a staff member is injured during a Physical Restraint, the employee must complete See Employee's Notice of a Work-related Injury and/or Occupations Disease, Form C).

The school principal shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of all Physical Restraints of a SPS student. (See sample Monthly Report of Physical Restraints – Form D). A principal shall notify the Superintendent of any request by DESE for its review of the school's on-going record of reported instances of Physical Restraint.

C. Report to Parents/Guardian

1. The principal or his/her designee shall make all reasonable attempts to verbally inform the student's parents or guardians of any Physical Restraint by the end of the school day, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the Physical Restraint.
2. The principal or his/her designee shall provide the student's parents or guardians with written notice in the language most spoken by the student's family and postmarked no later than three (3) school working days following the use of such Physical Restraint (see sample form letter Form E).
3. A copy of the written report regarding the Physical Restraint shall be sent to the student's parent or guardian by e-mail to an address provided by the parent for communications about the student or by regular mail. The report will be redacted to protect the privacy of any students identified in the report. The written notice and report shall be provided to the parent or guardian in the language most spoken by the family.

4. The principal shall provide the student and the parent an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of Physical Restraints and on information in the written report.

D. Report to Superintendent's Designee

When a Physical Restraint is administered on a SPS student, the SPS principal shall provide the Superintendent's designee with copies of the following documentation:

1. Written report of a Physical Restraint (Forms A or B);
2. The school's on-going record of all reported Physical Restraints (Form D).

This documentation must be provided to the Superintendent's designee no later than two (2) school working days from the administration of the Physical Restraint. If no Physical Restraints were administered in a school in a month, the principal must document that no Physical Restraints occurred. Superintendent's designee should review the monthly school-wide restraint data district-wide.

E. Report to DESE Restraint Related Injury

If a Physical Restraint on a SPS student results in an injury to a SPS student or SPS staff member, the principal shall send to DESE within three (3) school working days of the administration of the Physical Restraint copies of the Physical Restraint Report (Form B) and a written log of all Physical Restraints administered in the school within thirty (30) days previous to the reported restraint (Form E).

V. Review of Physical Restraint Data

A. Weekly Individual Student Review

The principal of each school shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify students who have been restrained multiple times (two (2) or more) during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene one or more review teams as the principal deems appropriate to review each student's progress and needs. The principal shall determine the members of the review team. The review team's review shall include at least the following:

1. Review and discussion of the written reports required by paragraphs B and C in Section IV, above;
2. An analysis of the circumstances leading up to each Physical Restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
3. Consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to Physical Restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions, as appropriate, with

the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of Physical Restraints in the future; and

4. Agreement on a written plan of action.

If the principal directly participated in the Physical Restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the superintendent shall lead the review team's discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by DESE, upon request.

B. Monthly Administrative Review

The principal of each school shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider the following:

1. Patterns of use of Physical Restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved;
2. The number and duration of Physical Restraints school-wide and for individual students;
3. The duration of Physical Restraints; and
4. The number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of Physical Restraint.

The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction/prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate Physical Restraints. Documentation of the monthly review of school-wide restraint data must be provided to the Superintendent's designee and the applicable Chief Schools Officer.

C. Annual Report to DESE

In a manner and form directed by DESE, SPS shall collect and annually report data to DESE regarding use of Physical Restraints.

VI. SPS Training Requirements

A. For All SPS Staff

Within the first (1st) month of each school year starting in the school year after the effective date of this revised policy, the principal of each SPS school shall provide all SPS staff with training on this policy. Additionally, for all new SPS employees that are hired after the start of the school year, the principal shall within the first month of their employment provide the new SPS employees with training on this policy. The training shall consist of the following:

1. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
 2. This policy and related procedures, including use of time-out as a behavior support strategy distinct from seclusion;
 3. Interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
 4. When behavior presents an emergency that requires Physical Restraint, the types of permitted Physical Restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration;
 5. Administering Physical Restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavior intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
 6. Identification of SPS staff in the school who have received in-depth training, as referenced in Subsection B, below.
- B. For SPS Staff Authorized to Serve as a School-Wide Resource on the Proper Administration of Physical Restraints

At the beginning of each school year, the principal of each SPS school shall identify SPS staff that are authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of Physical Restraint. The identified SPS staff shall participate in in-depth training in the use of Physical Restraint. The initial training shall be competency-based and at least sixteen (16) hours in length with refresher training occurring annually thereafter. The content of the in-depth training shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Appropriate procedures for preventing use of Physical Restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint;
2. Description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of students that may lead to the use of Physical Restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
3. The simulated experience of administering and receiving Physical Restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
4. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;

5. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering Physical Restraint; and
6. Instruction regarding the impact of Physical Restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological and social-emotional effects.

VII. Complaints Regarding SPS's Restraint Practices

A. Informal Resolution of Concerns

A SPS student or his or her parent or guardian who has any concerns regarding the use of Physical Restraints on SPS students may discuss the concern with the SPS principal. The principal shall attempt, within his or her authority, to work with the student or his or her parent or guardian to address the concerns regarding the Physical Restraint.

B. Complaint to Chief Schools Officer

A SPS student or his or her parent or guardian who has a complaint regarding a specific use of a Physical Restraint on a SPS student or regarding SPS's practices relating to Physical Restraints may submit a written complaint to the Chief Schools Officer for the zone in which the school is located. If the complaint is related to a specific incident regarding the use of Physical Restraints, the written complaint should be sent within twenty (20) school working days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the written report referenced in Section IV, C, above, and should contain (a) the name of the student; (b) the name of the school where the Physical Restraint occurred; (c) the name of the individuals involved in the Physical Restraint (if known); (d) the basis of the complaint; and (e) the corrective action being sought.

The Chief Schools Officer or his or her designee shall conduct an investigation into the complaint within ten (10) school working days of receipt of the complaint. The principal of the school and the Chief Schools Officer will collaborate in writing a report regarding the merits of the complaint and a proposed resolution and will send their report to the individual submitting the complaint and to the Superintendent.

A parent or guardian may appeal the decision of the principal and the Chief Schools Officer to the Superintendent. The Superintendent or his or her designee will make a decision on the appeal within fifteen (15) school working days of the written notice of the appeal.

VIII. Referral to Law Enforcement or Other State Agencies

Nothing contained in this policy or the Massachusetts regulations regarding Physical Restraints prohibits:

1. The right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual;

2. Law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other individual alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or
3. The exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to G.L. c. 119, § 51A.

IX. Policy Review

The Superintendent, or his or her designee, shall annually review this policy. This policy shall be provided to SPS staff and be made available to parents and guardians of SPS students.