

## **USE OF RESTRAINTS**

### **Definitions:** (RSA 126-T:1, IV)

1. “Restraint” means bodily physical restriction, mechanical devices, or any device that unreasonably limits freedom of movement. It includes mechanical restraint, physical restraint, and medication restraint used to control behavior in an emergency or any involuntary medication.

“Restraint” shall not include:

(a) Holding a child to calm or comfort the child, holding a child’s hand or arm to escort the child safely from one area to another, or intervening in an ongoing assault or fight.

(b) Brief periods of physical restriction by person-to-person contact, without the aid of medication or mechanical restraints, accomplished with minimal force and designed either to prevent a child from completing an act that potentially would result in physical harm to himself or herself or to another person, or to remove a disruptive child who is unwilling to leave an area voluntarily.

(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 or 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 or she reasonably believes to be necessary for such purpose.

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 or 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 or her body.

**Procedures for Managing The Behavior of Students:** (RSA 126-T:2)

The Superintendent is authorized to establish procedures for managing student behavior. Such procedures shall be consistent with this policy and all applicable laws. The Superintendent 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:** (RSA 126-T:2)

Restraint will be used only when the physical action of a student creates a substantial risk of harm to self or others; and/or as a last resort when all other positive interventions have failed, or the level of immediate risk prohibits exhausting other means.

Restraint is appropriate only when a student is displaying physical behavior that presents substantial risk to the student or others, and considered when, in the opinion of the supervising adult, the threat is imminent. Persons implementing a restraint will use extreme caution, and will use the least amount of physical strength necessary to protect the student. The use of physical intervention should not exceed that necessary to avoid injury. The degree of physical restriction employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the potential consequences. School administration may elect to contact the local law enforcement agency for support if necessary.

A restraint of a student will be conducted in a manner consistent with the techniques prescribed in the District approved training program. The purpose of the restraint is to assist the student to regain emotional stability. It should last only as long as is necessary to accomplish this. To the extent possible, it will be conducted in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality and dignity of all involved.

Restraint should be carried out by trained persons authorized by the Superintendent, Special Education Administrator, Principal, Director or his/her designee. Untrained staff is limited to physically intervening by using the minimal amount of physical contact with the student to protect the student and ensure the safety of others until trained staff is available. Untrained staff should request assistance from trained staff as soon as possible.

**Authorization and Monitoring of Extended Restraint:** (RSA 126-T:11)

1. Restraint shall not be imposed for longer than is necessary to protect the student or others from the substantial and imminent risk of serious bodily harm.
2. Students in restraint shall be continuously and directly observed by district personnel trained in the safe use of restraint.
3. No period of restraint of a student may exceed 15 minutes without the approval of a supervisory employee designated by the principal/director to provide such approval.
4. No period of restraint of a student may exceed 30 minutes unless a face-to-face assessment of the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of the student is conducted by a supervisory employee designated by the director who is trained to conduct such assessments. The assessment shall also include a determination of whether the restraint is being conducted safely and for a purpose authorized by

this chapter. Such assessments shall be repeated at least every 30 minutes during the period of restraint. Each such assessment shall be documented in writing and such records shall be retained by the facility or school as part of the written notification required in RSA 126-T:7, II.

**Prohibition of Dangerous Restraint Techniques** (RSA 126-T:4)

Use of the following restraint and behavior control techniques is prohibited:

1. Any physical restraint or containment technique that:
  - (a) Obstructs a child's respiratory airway or impairs the child's breathing or respiratory capacity or restricts the movement required for normal breathing;
  - (b) Places pressure or weight on, or causes the compression of, the chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, or abdomen of a child;
  - (c) Obstructs the circulation of blood;
  - (d) Involves pushing on or into the child's mouth, nose, eyes, or any part of the face or involves covering the face or body with anything, including soft objects such as pillows, blankets, or washcloths; or
  - (e) Endangers a child's life or significantly exacerbates a child's medical condition.
2. The intentional infliction of pain, including the use of pain inducement to obtain compliance.
3. The intentional release of noxious, toxic, caustic, or otherwise unpleasant substances near a child for the purpose of controlling or modifying the behavior of or punishing the child.
4. Any technique that unnecessarily subjects the child to ridicule, humiliation, or emotional trauma.

**Reporting Requirements and Parental Notification:** (RSA 126-T:7)

In the event restraint is used on a student, the building principal will, within 24 hours, verbally notify the student's parents/guardian of the occurrence. Every effort will be made to notify parents immediately.

The building principal will, within 5 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-T:7, II. The Superintendent may develop a reporting form or other documents necessary to satisfy these reporting requirements.

Unless prohibited by court order, the Superintendent shall, within 2 business days of receipt of the notification required in the above paragraph, send by first class mail to the child's parent or guardian the information contained in the notification/report. Each notification/report prepared under this section shall be retained by the school or facility for review in accordance with rules adopted under RSA 541-A by the state board of education and the department of health and human services.

**Transportation:** (RSA 126-T:12)

The school 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 designee will ensure that all reasonable and appropriate measures consistent with public safety are made to transport or escort the student in a manner which:

1. Prevents physical and psychological trauma;
2. Respects the privacy of the child; and
3. Represents the least restrictive means necessary for the safety of the child.

Whenever a student is transported using mechanical restraints, the Superintendent or designee will document in writing the reasons for the use of the mechanical restraints.