



## Physical Restraint Guidelines

This procedure governs actions by employees of the Elkhart Community Schools who may need to physically restrain a student receiving special education services who is engaging in violent or disruptive behavior. Physical restraint in these circumstances should only be employed when the student's violent or disruptive behavior causes, or is reasonably likely to cause, injury to the student, other students, adults or property.

1. Physical restraint shall be defined as any mechanical or personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the free movement of a student's arms, legs, or head. The term does not include the following permissible actions.
  - a. Physical acts such as the following:
    - i. Briefly holding a student in order to calm or comfort the student.
    - ii. Restraint involving the minimum contact necessary to safely escort a student from one area to another; and
    - iii. Intervening in a fight, a principal, teacher, or other school corporation personnel may take reasonable action necessary to prevent violence when a fight or physical struggle that takes place in his/her presence while on duty, whether the fight is among students or other individuals.
  - b. Mechanical devices such as the following:
    - i. Mechanical devices, including, but not limited to, supports prescribed by a health care provider to achieve proper body position or balance;
    - ii. Helmets or other protective gear used to protect a student from injuries due to a fall; or
    - iii. Helmets, mitts and similar devices used to prevent self-injury when the device is part of an individualized educational plan (IEP) and is the least restrictive means available to prevent such a self-injury.
2. Guidelines for use of physical restraint
  - a. Physical restraint is used only when other attempts to de-escalate the behavior have failed, and when the student is in eminent danger of causing harm to self, others, or personal property.
  - b. Normally, physical restraint should not be used for those students who are reinforced by physical restraint. Exceptions to this would be limited to occasions when a student or others are at risk of immediate physical harm, e.g. running into a street, etc.
  - c. When a student has previously engaged in behavior that indicates physical restraint was or may be necessary, the possible use of such action must be discussed in a case conference and written into the positive behavior intervention plan (PBIP) within the IEP plan.
  - d. Any use of physical restraint must be documented on the physical restraint reporting form.
  - e. The data should include at a minimum the following information:
    - i. Student name, date and time the procedure was used;
    - ii. The names of all staff members present;
    - iii. A description of the behavior that precipitated the use of physical restraint;
    - iv. A description of techniques used to de-escalate the behavior prior to the use of physical restraint; and
    - v. The length of time the physical restraint was used.
    - vi. A copy of this form should be placed in the student's confidential file.
  - f. Parent/guardians must be noted on the day physical restraint was used; in the event the building personnel is unable to contact parent/guardians a written record of the attempts made to contact parent/guardians must be maintained, setting forth the name of the employee who attempted to contact the parent/guardian and the times that attempts were made.

- g. Following the use of physical restraint, the staff members involved are to meet to discuss the following questions:
    - What precipitated the behavior?
    - Is there an expectation that the behavior will occur again?
    - What follow-up and changes should occur (i.e. revision to PBIP, etc.)?
  - h. If physical restraint is used frequently and the problem behavior(s) have not decreased, the case conference committee (CCC) should be reconvened to review other procedures that may be used to help the child gain better self-control.
  - i. Any staff member who has direct classroom supervision responsibilities for the student should receive crisis prevention institute (CPI) training prior to using physical restraint; and annual review regarding the proper use of such training.
3. Guidelines for mechanical restraints
- a. Mechanical restraints such as seat belts or other restraints in vehicles should be used at all times when students are being transported and the vehicle being used is so equipped.
  - b. Restraints used by law enforcement are specifically excluded from this policy when such restraints are being utilized in furtherance or law enforcement activities.
  - c. Medically prescribed devices whose purpose is to compensate for orthopedic weaknesses to protect the student from falling or to permit the student to participate in activities at school are also specifically excluded from this policy.
  - d. Mechanical restraints such as tape, straps, tie downs, weighted blankets, etc., are not to be used unless specifically recommended by an occupational or physical therapist or physician with specific recommendations for lengths of time of use and other circumstances for their use.