

Guidelines on the Use of Restraint and Monitored Seclusion

Introduction

The Georgia Department of Education supports a positive approach to behavior that uses proactive strategies to create a safe school climate that promotes dignity, , increases instructional time, and improves student achievement for all students. It is essential that a positive schoolwide discipline or behavioral support system be developed and implemented in each school and program. When teachers and administrators implement a positive, schoolwide discipline program with fidelity, a safe learning environment is created and students are able to learn without the constant interruptions that occur when teachers are required to address discipline problems in the classroom.

While it is essential that a positive behavioral support program serve as the foundation for the school's discipline program, it is clear that some students exhibit more severe behavioral challenges that may require more intensive and individualized behavioral interventions. For students with disabilities, these interventions should be clearly specified in the students' Individualized Education Programs and/or Behavior Intervention Plans and implemented when less intensive intervention have not been successful in addressing the students' behavioral problems. In situations in which students are a danger to themselves or others, it may be necessary to utilize significantly more intensive interventions such as restraint and monitored seclusion. The sole purpose of using restraint and seclusion should be to defuse the situation, protect the students and others from injury, and regain a safe and productive learning environment.

Restraint and seclusion should ONLY be used with students in situations when less intensive interventions have failed and when the student is an immediate danger to himself or others. These intensive interventions require diligent assessment, monitoring, documentation, and reporting by trained personnel.

These guidelines provide information to administrators, staff and families on the use of restraint and monitored seclusion for students with disabilities

Definitions

The following definitions are provided related to the use of restraint and monitored seclusion:

1. “Behavior intervention plan” (BIP) refers to a plan for a child with a disability, included in the IEP when appropriate, which uses positive behavior interventions, supports and other strategies to address challenging behaviors and enables the child to learn socially appropriate and responsible behavior in school and/or educational settings.
2. “Functional behavioral assessment” (FBA) refers to a systematic process for defining a child’s specific behavior and determining the reason why (function or purpose) the behavior is occurring. The FBA process includes examination of the contextual variables (antecedents and consequences) of the behavior, environmental components, and other information related to the behavior. The purpose of conducting an FBA is to determine whether a Behavioral Intervention Plan should be developed.
3. “IEP” refers to the Individualized education program (IEP) which is a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with IDEA 2004. [34 C.F.R. § 300.22]
4. “Restraint” refers to an intensive intervention that restricts the free movement of all or a portion of a student’s body.

“Physical restraint” involves direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s movement. Restraint protects the safety of the student and others until the student no longer a danger. Physical restraint includes techniques such as supportive holds, but does not include the following actions:

- Providing the minimal contact necessary to physically escort a student from one area to another;
- Providing physical prompting to assist in completing a task/response if the student does not resist or resistance is minimal in intensity or duration; or
- Holding a student for a brief time in order to prevent an impulsive behavior that threatens the student’s immediate safety (e.g., running in front of a car).

“Mechanical restraint” means the use of any device or material attached to or adjacent to a student’s body that restricts normal freedom of movement and which cannot be easily removed by a student. Mechanical restraint includes, but is not limited to, safety harnesses and lap belts fastened behind the chair. It does not include:

- An adaptive or protective device recommended by a physician or therapist when used as recommended. For example, an adaptive chair with laptray can be used for positioning a student with a physical disability and is not considered restraint. If the chair is used to restrict the movement of the child due to behavior, it is considered restraint.

- Safety equipment used by the general student population as intended (e.g. seat belts,).

Although chemical restraints are used in clinical settings, they are not appropriate for use in schools or GNETS programs. Any medication prescribed for individual students should be administered as authorized by the student's physician.

5. "Monitored seclusion" refers to an intervention that isolates and confines the student in a separate supervised area until he or she is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others. Monitored seclusion occurs in a specifically constructed or designated room or space that typically has a locked door, and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Monitored seclusion may also be referred to as "isolated timeout" or "seclusion timeout".

Monitored seclusion does not include in-school suspension, detention, or a student requested break in a different location in the room or in a separate room. It also does not include timeout, a behavioral intervention in which the student is removed from the learning activity for a short period of time because the student is not placed in an isolated room from which he/she is restricted from leaving..

Limitations on the Use of Restraint and Monitored Seclusion

Restraint and monitored seclusion:

1. Should only be used in situations in which the student is in imminent danger of hurting himself/herself or others. When the student is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others, the restraint should be terminated and the student should be returned to the instructional activity or less restrictive environment. If monitored seclusion is being used, the student should be removed from the seclusion room and returned to the instructional activity or less restrictive environment.
2. Should not be used when the student is responsive to less intensive interventions and de-escalation techniques such as verbal commands and directives that are outlined in the student's IEP or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP).
3. Should not be used as a form of discipline or punishment, as a means to obtain compliance, or as a replacement for less restrictive alternatives.
4. Should not be used when students cannot be safely restrained or secluded.
5. Should not be used when the use of the intervention would be contraindicated due to the student's psychiatric, medical, or physical conditions as described in the student's Individualized Education Program or other medical and educational records.

Student and Staff Safety

When using restraint and monitored seclusion, school staff should take all precautions necessary to ensure the safety of the student and the staff engaged in restraining or secluding the student. Restraint and monitored seclusion should be implemented in a safe and humane manner without any intent to harm or create undue discomfort to the student. Ensuring safety requires that staff be trained in the use of restraint techniques and that monitored seclusion rooms are safe and used in an appropriate manner. Observers or monitors should always be present when the child is being secluded or restrained to observe the child's physical status and to determine when the child is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others. Restraint and monitored seclusion should be immediately terminated if the child is observed to be or appears to be in distress. Documentation of each instance of monitored seclusion and restraint should be maintained.

Written Procedures

Schools or programs that utilize restraint and monitored seclusion should develop written procedures that govern their use. The procedures should be reviewed with all school or program staff who will be utilizing restraint and seclusion and parents should also be provided with information regarding these procedures. All staff should be clearly informed as to who can make the determination to place the student in the monitored seclusion room.

School and program administrators should monitor the staff's adherence to these procedures and should immediately address any situations in which the procedures are not being followed. Procedures should be reviewed at least annually and changes should be made as needed.

Staff Training

Staff working with students with severe behavior challenges who are at risk of harming themselves or others should be trained in crisis management techniques and de-escalation strategies that can be used when students are in immediate physical danger to themselves or others. When these less intensive interventions are successful in de-escalating the situation, restraint and seclusion should not be used.

All staff, who would be called upon to participate in restraints, should successfully complete training in the use of restraints prior to restraining a student who is a danger to himself/herself or others. This training should be provided by a qualified trainer and the restraint approach used should be approved by the school or program administrator. In order to prevent injury to the students and staff, any staff not trained in restraints should not participate in the restraint of a student.

Staff should receive training in the adopted restraint approach on a schedule that is prescribed by the training program and approved by the administrator. Records should be kept and

maintained to document all restraint training completed by staff. Administrators should monitor the use of monitored seclusion and restraint to ensure implementation with fidelity. Coaching and follow-up training should be provided on an on-going basis and any situations in which the procedures are not being followed should be immediately addressed.

Staff participating in the seclusion of students should be trained in the procedures used to seclude students in a safe manner. The importance of maintaining a safe seclusion room, providing constant monitoring during the seclusion, and documenting the seclusion using incident reports should be required and included in any training provided to the staff.

Parental Notification

Upon entry into a school or program that uses restraint and monitored seclusion, a student's parent should be notified in writing that these techniques may be used but are only used in situations in which the student is in immediate danger to himself/herself or others. The notice should inform parents that they will be notified in writing each time restraint or seclusion has been used on their child.

If used, restraint and monitored seclusion should be clearly addressed in the development of the student's IEP or in the development of the Behavior Intervention Plan and the parents should be involved in the development of these documents. In addition, a program or school may choose to obtain written parental consent at the beginning of each school year for their child to be restrained or placed in a seclusion room. Staff should immediately notify parents when their child is removed from the school setting by law enforcement or medical personnel.

The student's parents or guardians should be notified each time the student is restrained or placed in a seclusion room. This notification should occur in writing and should include a copy of the incident report that is used to document the use restraint or seclusion. Parents and school staff may mutually agree that notification via e-mail or telephone is adequate. Regardless of the method used, documentation of the parent notification should be maintained.

Ensuring Safe and Effective Use of Restraint

When using restraint to protect students who are a danger to themselves or others, the following guidelines are recommended:

1. Less restrictive interventions outlined in the student's IEP or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) should first be used to de-escalate the behavior and he/she should only be restrained when these interventions prove unsuccessful.
2. Restraints should be conducted by staff who are trained in the restraint procedures that have been adopted by the school or program. Staff should know and utilize the prescribed procedures for requesting assistance.

3. The adults participating in the restraint should carefully observe the student to observe any physical distress and cease any action that may result in harm to the student.
4. When possible, all potentially dangerous materials such as jewelry, pencils, pens, belts, shoelaces or other objects should be removed to ensure the student's safety.
5. The student should be restrained in a manner that is safe to the student and the staff implementing the restraint.
6. The restraint should be removed as soon as the student is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others. Generally, students should be restrained for no longer than 10 minutes. If the restraint lasts longer than 10 minutes, additional staff support should be provided and the documentation log should explain the extension beyond the time limit.
7. As soon as appropriate after the restraint is removed, the staff should discuss the incident leading up to the restraint with the student and discuss strategies that the student can use in the future to more effectively control his/her behavior.
8. When the student is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others, he/she should be returned to the instructional activity or to a less restrictive environment.
9. The restraint should be documented in an incident report that is turned in to the school or program administrator.

Ensuring Safe and Effective Use of Monitored Seclusion

When secluding students who are a danger to themselves or others, the following guidelines are recommended:

1. Less restrictive interventions outlined in the student's IEP or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) should first be used to de-escalate the behavior and he/she should only be placed in monitored seclusion when these interventions prove unsuccessful.
2. Monitored seclusion should be conducted by staff who are trained in the seclusion procedures that have been adopted by the school or program. All staff should be informed of whom to immediately contact when seclusion timeout is required. All staff should be clearly informed as to who can make the determination to place the student in the monitored seclusion room.
3. The monitored seclusion room should provide the student with a safe environment in which he/she can be maintained until the student is no longer a danger to himself or others. Monitored seclusion rooms should meet the following standards:
 - Be of adequate size to allow the students to lie down.
 - Allow for visual monitoring of the student by staff supervising the seclusion and, if possible, auditory monitoring of the student.
 - Provide adequate lighting and ventilation.
 - Be free of safety hazards such as electrical outlets, glass windows, lighting fixtures or fire sprinklers within reach.
 - Be clean and in good repair.
 - Meet all fire and safety codes of the city and county in which the facility is located.

4. The student should be escorted to the monitored seclusion room in a manner that is safe to the student and to the adults involved in the removal.
5. Prior to placement in the monitored seclusion room, all potentially dangerous materials such as belts, shoes and/or shoelaces, jewelry, pencils, pens or other objects should be removed.
6. While in the monitored seclusion room, the adults supervising the seclusion should maintain constant visual contact/monitoring of the student. The door to the seclusion room should only be locked in the most extreme situations in which the student cannot be contained in the room. If a lock is placed on the seclusion room door, it should be designed to allow the student to escape the room in emergency situations. Locks may be pressure controlled or remote controlled.
7. When the student is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others, he/she should be removed from the seclusion room and escorted back to the classroom or other location.
8. The seclusion should be documented in an incident report and the school administrator should immediately be informed of the seclusion.

Role of Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Personnel

In situations in which the student is a danger to himself or others, it may become necessary to seek assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel. Nothing in this these guidelines document should be construed to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel.

Parents should be informed as soon as possible when students are removed from the school or program setting by emergency medical or law enforcement personnel.

Required Documentation

The use of restraint and monitored seclusion should be carefully documented by staff participating in and supervising the restraint or seclusion. Documentation should be provided using an incident report that is completed for each student in each instance in which the student is restrained or placed in a seclusion room. Programs and schools are encouraged to develop a standard incident report form. This report should minimally include the following:

- Date;
- Student's Name;
- Precipitating Behavior;
- Less Restrictive Intervention Implemented Prior to Restraint or Seclusion;
- Observations of Student's Behavior and Physical Status;
- Injuries to the Student or Staff;
- Total Time Spent in Restraint or Seclusion; and
- Staff Signature.

Completed incident reports should be reviewed by school or program administrators and other staff, as appropriate, on a weekly basis. Monthly summary reports should be maintained to document the use of restraint and seclusion. This monthly summary report should be signed by the school administrator and maintained on file in the school.

Analysis and Evaluation of the Use of Restraint and Seclusion Timeout:

Information from the incident reports should be used to regularly assess the effectiveness of these techniques. When a student repeatedly must be restrained or placed in a seclusion timeout room, or when the amount of time spent being restrained or secluded exceeds the recommended times, the staff should determine if the interventions are effectively meeting the student's needs.

There are several actions that the staff may undertake. They include:

- Reviewing Individualized Education Program (IEP), Functional Behavioral Assessment, and/or Behavioral Intervention Plan to re-assess the interventions that are in place to address the student's behavioral difficulties;
- Consulting with other professionals such as social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists to examine other interventions that may be more suitable in meeting the student's needs; and/or
- Considering other placement options which may be more effective in addressing the student's needs.