

Non-Violent Intervention and Physical Restraint Policy

Rising Tide Charter Public School recognizes its responsibility, under 603 CMR 46, to ensure that every student is free from the unreasonable use of physical restraint in school. For this reason, the appropriately trained Rising Tide staff will only restrain a student as a last resort in an emergency situation to protect a student or a member of the community from imminent serious physical harm to themselves or others, and after the student has proven to be unresponsive to other less intrusive interventions. All physical restraint will be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.05.

Situations where a student might have to be restrained include a fight between two students, a situation where a student becomes frustrated and angry with him/herself, or a situation where a student becomes defiant and/or upset with a Teacher. If a potentially dangerous situation should arise at school, the attending staff member will attempt to diffuse the situation with verbal intervention techniques, and if necessary, aim to escort the involved student(s) from the area and attempt to calm the situation. When time-out is used as a de-escalation strategy to calm a student, staff will be present to monitor the student, and permission from the building Principal must be received for any time out to last more than 30 minutes.

If all attempts to de-escalate the situation should fail and the student is about to inflict harm to him/herself or others, a staff member trained in physical restraint will restrain the student in the safest possible manner, administering the restraint using the least restrictive and shortest method possible to save any students or staff members from harm, and applying only the amount of force necessary to safely conduct the restraint.

Physical restraint at Rising Tide will not be used in the following ways:

- As a form of punishment
- As a response to the destruction of property
- As a standard response for any individual student
- If a student's medical condition prevents him or her from being restrained safely

Interventions and Alternatives to Physical Restraint

The following de-escalation strategies apply to potentially dangerous behavior with a group of students, or a student in an individual setting, and will be covered in the annual staff training.

A) Provide Personal Space

B) Body Language

- Be aware of non-verbal communication, provide a supportive, non-threatening stance

C) Verbal Intervention

- *Tips*

- a. Remain calm
- b. Isolate the situation
- c. Enforce limits
- d. Listen
- e. Be consistent
- f. Be aware of tone, voice, cadence

- *Scenarios*

- g. If a student asks a questions to seek information then provide them with a rational response
- h. If the student questions or challenges authority then ignore the challenge and attempt to re-direct the topic
- i. If the student refuses to comply with your direction then set clear, reasonable, and enforceable limits
- j. If the student acts out verbally and screams and swears then remove the audience from the room and allow the student to calm down in a safe place

D) Time Out

- Staff will temporarily separate a student from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student will 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 will be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the use of calming. The time-out will end as soon as the student has calmed.

E) Physical Escort

- Staff trained in physical restraint may also attempt to physically redirect an agitated student by temporarily touching or holding, without the use of force, their hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing the student to walk to a safe location

F) Physical Redirection

- Staff trained in physical restraint may also attempt to physically redirect an agitated student by temporarily placing one hand on each of the student's shoulders, without force, and redirecting the student to the learning activity, the classroom, or safe location.

Training

The Head of School is responsible for making sure all staff members are trained in accordance with the MA DESE guidelines for physical restraint training within the first month of school. This training will include the following components:

- Rising Tide's restraint policy
- Methods of prevention of the need for physical restraint, including de-escalation strategies
- Types of restraint and related safety considerations
- Administering restraint in accordance with student's needs/ limitations
- Identification of staff in each building who have received certification in physical restraint

A minimum of three staff members per building, six total, will receive initial certification in a 12 hour long competency-based physical restraint training, with an annual 6 hour re-certification required. These trainings will include prevention techniques, identification of dangerous behaviors, simulation in administering and receiving proper techniques for physical restraint, and the demonstration of proficiency with the techniques of physical restraint. Physical restraint will only be administered by these staff members who have received in-depth training in the proper and safe use of physical restraint. The initial and recertification trainings will take place during the first month of school.

When implementing physical restraint, trained staff will take the following actions:

- Avoid administering the restraint in a manner that will prevent the student from breathing or speaking
- Avoid administering prone restraint, mechanical restraint, medication restraint, and seclusion
- Release the student from the restraint if the signs of physical distress occur so that medical assistance can be given
- Seek approval from the building Principal for the continuation of any physical restraint lasting over 20 minutes.

Reporting

The staff member who administered the restraint will verbally notify the building Principal as soon as possible, and a written report should be submitted to the Principal by the next school day. The Principal will make every attempt to notify the parents of the student within 24 hours of the incident, and a written report will be mailed to the parents within three school days. The letter will provide parents with the opportunity to meet with school leaders to discuss the incident as well as include information regarding the staff involved with administering the restraint, student activity prior to the event, efforts made to de-escalate the situation, and the restraint holds used. The letter will also include whether the student who was restrained might face consequences for the behavior that led to the restraint. Consequences would be determined by a Discipline Committee, following procedures

outlined in the Student Handbook. In the event of an injury to a student or staff member the school will send a copy of the written report to the DESE postmarked within three days of the event. The school will report all restraint data to the DESE annually.

Review

A review process will be followed as soon as possible after each incident of restraint, including a review of the incident with the student to address precipitating behaviors, a debrief of the incident with any staff who were present, and a plan for discussing the necessary follow up with any students present for the incident.

The building Principal will conduct regular reviews of restraint data to assess the effectiveness of the current restraint policy and make modifications as necessary. Weekly reviews will take place to determine if a particular student is being physically restrained multiple times per week, in which case the Principal will oversee a team to create a plan of action for that student. The Principal will conduct monthly reviews of restraint data to determine if improvements can be made to the existing policy.

Board of Trustees

The Rising Tide board of trustees will select a school administrator to serve as the “building Principal” to oversee the physical restraint regulations. This individual is not required to be the school Principal.