

Physical Restraint Policy

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools. Further, the Martha's Vineyard Public School program is free from the unreasonable use of physical restraint and such an intervention is used only in emergency situations after other less intensive alternatives have failed or have been deemed inappropriate.

The Massachusetts Department of Education has established regulations governing the use of physical restraint on students that supersede all previously established procedures as detailed in 603CMR46.00.

Physical restraint:

- Will be administered only when needed to protect a student or other students and staff from imminent, serious physical harm, and
- Will be administered in the least intrusive manner possible and should be used to prevent or minimize harm to the student.

At the beginning of each school year, principals will identify program staff that are trained and are responsible for administering proper physical restraint procedures. These individuals will participate in in-depth training in the use of physical restraint and appropriate de-escalation methods. Principals will arrange for training of all staff in the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools restraint policies and practices within the first month of the school year, and, for employees hired after the school year begins, within a month of their employment. Each principal will include in the student and staff handbooks procedure to be used in their school for "preventing student violence, self-injurious behaviors, and suicide, including individual crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student". Each student handbook will also include methods for "engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure" and a procedure for orally reporting to parents within 24 hours of a restraint and a written notice to follow within three (3) school days, along with the schools "alternatives to physical restraint. The handbooks will include a description of the training and reporting requirements and follow up procedures, a procedure for "receiving and investigating complaint", a procedure for conducting periodic review of data and documentation on the use of physical restraint and an outline of the reporting requirements of the regulations and a procedure to obtain principal approval of a time-out for more than thirty (30) minutes.

Physical restraint, medication restraint, mechanical restraint and the use of a prone restraint are prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to students or others.

{Adoption Date}

Revised: March 2015

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23C