

**USE OF REASONABLE FORCE**

**Definitions**

- A. Physical force: Any use of bodily force or physical restriction that substantially immobilizes or reduces the free movement of a student through physical contact.
- B. Chemical sprays: The use of chemicals, such as OcSpray or similar chemical weapons to control a student or limit a student's freedom of movement.
- C. Restraint: Physical intervention or force used to control a student, including the use of a restraint device.
- D. Restraint Device: A device used to assist in controlling a student, including, but not limited to metal handcuffs, plastic ties, ankle restraints, leather cuffs, other hospital-type restraints, pepper spray, tasers or batons.
- E. School resource officer: A commissioned law enforcement officer who provides law enforcement services and may perform other duties for the district, and is assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with the district.
- F. School security officer: A classified or contracted school district employee other than a school resource officer who provides security services in the district under the direction of a school administrator.
- G. De-escalation: The use of strategies to defuse an individual who has lost self-control, is non-compliant or is demonstrating unacceptable behavior. These strategies address behavior that is dangerous, disruptive or otherwise impedes the learning of a student or others.
- H. Isolation: The exclusion of a student from his or her regular instructional area and restricting the student alone within a room or any other form of enclosure, from which the student may not leave. Isolation does not mean in school suspension of a student wherein the student is monitored, but left unsupervised for a period of time in a room or enclosure to do schoolwork.
- I. Less than lethal devices: Restraint devices or chemical sprays that are unlikely to cause permanent physical harm, impairment or death. \*Examples of less than lethal devices are batons and electrical impulse control devices.
- J. Bodily injury, physical injury or bodily harm: Physical pain or injury, illness or an impairment of physical condition.
- K. Substantial bodily harm: Bodily injury which involves a temporary but substantial disfigurement or which causes a temporary but substantial loss or impairment of the function of any bodily part or organ or which causes a fracture of any bodily part.
- L. Great bodily harm: Bodily injury which creates a probability of death or which causes significant serious permanent disfigurement or which causes a significant permanent loss or impairment of the function of any bodily part or organ.

**Use of Force Continuum**

Whenever possible and practical, the use of force continuum will be followed for all students. District staff must only use the degree of force necessary to protect a student, students or staff from imminent bodily injury, substantial bodily harm or great bodily harm.

**A. The generally accepted use of force continuum includes, in order:**

1. Staff/school security officer presence;
2. Verbal/non-verbal communication, de-escalation;
3. Physical interventions;
4. Restraint devices;
5. Sprays or electrical devices; and
6. Other reasonable force as authorized by RCW 9A.16.020.

**B. Appropriate use of force**

1. Physical force may be used to prevent or minimize imminent bodily injury, substantial bodily harm or great bodily harm to self or others, or if de-escalation interventions fail or are inappropriate to protect district property.
2. Restraint devices or chemical spray may be used when a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, substantial or great bodily harm to self or others or will cause significant property damage, but will be used only by personnel trained and authorized by the board to use these tools after de-escalation interventions fail or are inappropriate.
3. Restraint devices or chemical spray may be used as needed to obtain possession of a known or reasonably suspected weapon or other dangerous object on a person or within the control of a person.
4. Less than lethal devices may be used only as necessary to prevent substantial bodily harm or loss of life and only by trained personnel who are authorized by the board to use such level of force. RCW 9A.16.020.
5. Consistent with the provisions found in WAC 392-172A-03120, nothing in this policy and procedure precludes the use of reasonable force to control unpredicted spontaneous behavior by a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that includes an Aversive Intervention Plan or by a student with a Section 504 Plan, when the behavior poses a clear and present danger of serious harm to the student, to another person, or to property; or of seriously disrupting the educational process. (See Policy/Procedure 3247, Isolation and Restraint of Students with IEPs and Section 504 Plans).

**C. Inappropriate use of force**

1. Physical force, restraint devices or chemical spray will not be used as a form of discipline or punishment;
2. Physical force, restraint devices or chemical spray will not be used as an initial response to destruction of property, school disruption, refusal of the student to comply with school rules, or

a staff directive; or a verbal threat that does not constitute a threat of imminent bodily injury, unless other forms of de-escalation intervention fail or are inappropriate; and

3. Physical force, restraint devices or chemical spray should not be used as an intervention, if the school employee, school resource officer or school security officer knows that the student has a health condition or physical problem and the condition or problem would be exacerbated by the use of force.

**D. Degree of force**

1. Force must not be continued if a determination is made by the staff member administering the force that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent bodily injury to him or herself or others; and
2. Force must be administered in such a way so as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during the use of force, the student demonstrates significant physical distress, the force must be reduced immediately and, if necessary, school staff must take immediate steps to seek medical assistance.

**Monitoring**

An adult must continually monitor any student when force is used. The monitoring must be conducted by direct observation of the student. Monitoring must include regularly evaluating the student for signs of physical distress.

**Staff Training Requirements**

All training will include instruction in positive management of student behavior, cultural sensitivity, effective communication for defusing and de-escalating disruptive or dangerous behavior and safe and appropriate use of force, isolation and restraint. Annually, administrators will provide all staff with the district established policy and procedure regarding the use of reasonable force.

**A. Physical Force**

All staff should be informed of de-escalation strategies and proper physical intervention procedures. Appropriate staff and those who are required or reasonably anticipated to provide physical force intervention will be trained in the use of physical force intervention.

**B. Restraint Devices or Chemical Spray**

Only staff trained and authorized to use restraint devices or chemical spray procedures will administer it to students. The appropriate personnel will include those staff members who are most likely to be called upon to use restraint devices or chemical spray to prevent or address disruptive or dangerous student behavior.

**Reporting Requirements**

**A. Processing the Incident**

Following the release of a student from the use of restraint or isolation, the school will implement follow-up procedures. These procedures will include reviewing the incident with the student and the

parent or guardian to address the behavior that precipitated the use of restraint or isolation, and reviewing the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint or isolation to discuss whether proper procedures were followed.

**B. Incident Report**

Any school employee, school resource officer or school security officer who uses any chemical spray, restraint device or physical force, as defined in this procedure, on a student during school-sponsored instruction or activities, will inform the building administrator or a designee as soon as possible and within two business days submit a written report of the incident to the district office.

**C. Annual Report**

The building administrator or a designee will maintain a log of all instances of use of force as defined by this procedure, which will be available to the superintendent and the board annually.

**D. Informing parent/guardian of Incident**

The principal or a designee will make a reasonable effort to verbally inform the parents within twenty four hours of the incident and send written notification as soon as practical but postmarked no later than five business days after the use of force, If the language of the parents is other than English, the written use of force report will be provided to the parent in the language of the home, if practical.

**Resolution of Concerns About a Use of Force Incident**

A student or his/her parent or guardian who has concerns regarding a specific incident involving use of force may seek to resolve the concern by using the District’s complaint process which is set forth in Policy 4220 Complaints by Citizens.



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