

Restraint, Isolation, and Other Uses of Reasonable Force

Purpose and Scope

The Board recognizes that the most effective response to challenging behavior is prevention through strong relationships, positive behavioral supports, and early intervention, rather than emergency physical interventions.

It is the policy of the Educational Service District (ESD) that all students are entitled to a safe, supportive, and inclusive educational environment where they are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion. The ESD is committed to the use of positive behavioral interventions, trauma-informed practices, de-escalation strategies, and other preventative approaches that reduce the likelihood that restraint or isolation will become necessary.

Restraint and isolation are emergency safety interventions of last resort. They shall never be used as a means of discipline, punishment, coercion, retaliation, convenience, or as a substitute for appropriate educational, behavioral, or therapeutic supports.

This policy applies to all students receiving educational services from the ESD, including students served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and students receiving services in any ESD-operated educational program.

This policy is intended to address district students and is not intended to prevent or limit the lawful use of reasonable force with adults or persons who are not students when otherwise authorized by law.

Use of Restraint or Isolation

Restraint or isolation may be used only when reasonably necessary to control spontaneous behavior that poses an imminent likelihood of serious harm to the student or another person, and only after less restrictive interventions have been determined to be ineffective or inappropriate under the circumstances.

Whenever restraint or isolation is used, staff shall employ only the least amount of intervention reasonably necessary to protect the immediate physical safety of the student or others. The intervention shall end immediately when the imminent likelihood of serious harm has dissipated.

Property destruction, disruption of the educational environment, noncompliance, refusal to follow directions, disrespectful behavior, or verbal threats that do not create an imminent likelihood of serious harm shall not, by themselves, justify the use of restraint or isolation.

Prohibited Practices

The following practices are prohibited in all ESD programs:

- Mechanical restraint, except as specifically permitted by law for prescribed medical, orthopedic, therapeutic, or vehicle safety devices used as intended;
- Chemical restraint;
- Prone restraint;
- Supine restraint;
- Wall restraint;
- Any restraint or physical escort that interferes with breathing or blood circulation or otherwise creates a substantial risk of death, serious injury, or medical complications;
- Any restraint that restricts blood flow to the brain;
- Any restraint or isolation used as discipline, punishment, coercion, retaliation, convenience, or as a planned behavioral consequence.

Nothing in this policy authorizes the use of techniques prohibited by state or federal law.

Students with Disabilities

The ESD recognizes its continuing obligation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible students.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan shall not include isolation as a planned behavioral intervention.

Restraint may be included in an IEP or Section 504 Plan only when permitted by Washington law, including when:

- the student's individual needs require advanced educational planning;
- the student's parent or guardian requests that restraint be included;
- a licensed health care provider documents that restraint is medically necessary; and
- the parent or guardian provides informed, voluntary written consent.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to limit the rights afforded students under IDEA, Section 504, or other applicable laws.

Prevention and Staff Training

The Board directs the Superintendent to ensure that staff receive training appropriate to their assigned responsibilities regarding:

- trauma-informed educational practices;
- positive behavioral interventions and supports;
- culturally responsive practices;
- conflict prevention and de-escalation techniques;
- safe implementation of emergency interventions;
- documentation and reporting requirements; and
- applicable state and federal law.

The ESD will prioritize preventative practices designed to reduce the need for restraint and isolation.

Procedures

The Superintendent shall develop and maintain procedures governing:

- the circumstances under which restraint or isolation may be used;
- monitoring students during an intervention;
- parent and guardian notification;
- documentation and incident reporting;
- post-incident review and continuous improvement;
- staff training requirements;
- annual reporting to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); and
- any additional requirements established by state or federal law.

Annual Review

The Superintendent or designee shall annually review incidents involving restraint or isolation, evaluate trends, identify opportunities to reduce future incidents, and report information to the Board as required by law and Board policy.

Board Adoption: 09/30/21

Revision:

First Reading: 08/27/26

Second Reading: 09/24/26

Adoption: 09/24/26

Reference:

[RCW 9A.16.020 Use of force—When lawful.](#)

[RCW 9A.16.100 Use of force on children—Policy—Actions presumed unreasonable.](#)

[RCW 28A.150.300 Corporal punishment prohibited—Adoption of policy.](#)

[RCW 28A.155.210 Use of restraint or isolation—Requirement for procedures to notify parent or guardian.](#)

[RCW 28A.600.485 Restraint of students—Use of restraint or isolation specified in individualized education programs or plans developed under section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973—Procedures—Summary of incidents of isolation or restraint—Publishing to website.](#)

[WAC 392-172A Provision of special education services](#)

[Chapter 392-172A WAC – Provision of Special Education Services](#)

Cross Reference:

[Policy 2161 - Special Education and Related Services for Eligible Students](#)

[Policy 2162 - Education of Students with Disabilities Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)