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Reporting Requirements for Restraint of a Student at School

In 2009 Education Secretary Arne Duncan sent a letter to all states encouraging them to review their current policies and guidelines regarding the use of restraints and seclusion in schools and to develop or revise them to ensure the safety of students. In Washington State there is no requirement to even let parents know if their child has been restrained at school. For children in Special Education, this is critical, as many of these children cannot communicate what happens at school to their parents.

School staff should be required to report the use of physical restraint anytime that it results in any injury to a student or staff member, or anytime a physical restraint is of a duration longer than two minutes. The staff member who administered the restraint should verbally inform the program administration of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report no later than the next school working day. The written report should be provided to the school principal. They should maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint and have them available for review by OSPI, upon request.

Most importantly, the principal should verbally inform the student's parents or guardians of the restraint as soon as possible, preferably on the same day the incident occurred, and by written report postmarked no later than two school working days following the use of restraint.

The written report should include:

- (a) The names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint.
- (b) A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to de-escalate the situation; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
- (c) A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
- (d) For extended restraints, the written report shall describe the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts and the justification for administering the extended restraint.
- (e) Information regarding any further actions that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student.
- (f) Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents or guardians to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter.

It is important that parents be involved and aware of when their child is restrained. Often, parents may have intervention ideas that may work better than restraint, but unless they are informed, they can't participate in finding better solutions.

**Protect our Children and Keep Parents Informed & Involved
Require Parent Notification When Restraints are Used**