

Physical Intervention and Restraint Protocols

Physical Restraint and COVID-19: These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with Massachusetts regulations outlined in 603 CMR 46.00 and local procedures.

Direct service providers should be mindful that seeing staff putting on protective equipment or being approached by staff wearing protective equipment can create anxiety in students. Use a student-centered approach and offer reassurance throughout interactions.

Limiting Risk of Infection Prior to a Physical Restraint

- Plastic protective gowns that can be easily ripped or torn are not advised as they may become a hazard.
- Ensure staff are wearing disposable gloves, disposable masks, face shields, and long sleeves to the maximum extent possible.
- Only staff required for safely restraining a student should be involved; one additional staff member should monitor and address protective equipment needs for those staff who are involved in the restraint in the event that protective equipment needs to be altered or adjusted.

Limiting Risk of Infection During a Physical Restraint

- Keep hands clear of eyes, mouth, and nose of self and others.
- First responders should be relieved as soon as possible if not wearing appropriate protective equipment.
- Given the risk of COVID-19, it is even more important than usual to try to avoid long and extended restraints.

Limiting Risk of Infection After a Physical Restraint

- Remove and dispose of and/or clean protective equipment immediately in the manner that you were trained.
- Avoid touching your face and limit contact with hard surfaces before immediately washing hands.

To minimize exposure, it is recommended that staff have a change of clothes available should their clothes become contaminated.

Once all health and safety issues have been addressed, follow debriefing and reporting procedures for the restraint.