



### Policy

Educational Programs

Adopted: 6/22/24

Revised: 4/8/2026

## I. PURPOSE

Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish has adopted the following policy to outline the procedures/guidelines for the use, reporting, and oversight of seclusion and restraint of students with exceptionalities by its employees.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Emergency:** A sudden, generally unexpected set of circumstances that require immediate action.
- B. **Imminent Risk of Harm:** An immediate and impending threat of a person causing substantial physical injury to self or others. The risk is “imminent” if it is likely to occur within a matter of moments.
- C. **Mechanical Restraint:** The use of any device or object used to limit a student with an exceptionality’s freedom of movement. This term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel or utilized by a student with an exceptionality that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related service professional and are used for the specific and approved purposes for which such devices were designed.
- D. **Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NCI):** The research-based program adopted by Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish for use by school employees in implementing the use of seclusion and restraint.
- E. **Physical Restraint:** Using bodily force to limit the movement of a student with an exceptionality’s torso, arms, legs, or head. Physical restraint does NOT include:
  - 1. Consensual, solicited, or unintentional contact.
  - 2. Momentary blocking of a student with an exceptionality’s action if it is likely to result in harm to the student with an exceptionality or any other person.
  - 3. Holding of a student with an exceptionality, by one school employee, for the purpose of calming or comforting the student with an exceptionality.
  - 4. Minimal contact for the purpose of safely escorting a student with an exceptionality from one location to another.

5. Minimal physical contact for the purpose of assisting a student with an exceptionality in completing a particular task or response.
- F. Seclusion: The involuntary isolation and confinement of a student with an exceptionality until he or she is no longer an imminent danger to themselves or others.
- G. Seclusion Room: Rooms with strict environmental and supervision requirements and introduces sensory rooms as monitored calming spaces exempt from seclusion rules.
- H. Sensory Room: Unlocked monitored spaces to calm disruptive behavior without requiring imminent risk criteria
- I. Time Out: A behavior reduction procedure that involves the absence of positive reinforcement for a limited period of time.

### **III. POLICY**

- A. Notification requirements for school officials and parents/guardians:
  1. The parent or legal guardian of a student with an exceptionality who has been placed in seclusion or physically restrained shall be notified by school staff by the end of the day.
    - a. The school leader or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian at the telephone number(s) listed on the student's emergency contact card before the end of the day on which the incident occurs.
    - b. In addition to a phone call, parents/guardians must be notified in writing, attempting the fastest method first, by the school leader or designee within twenty-four (24) hours if physical restraint or seclusion is used on their child.
    - c. The notice to parents/guardians shall include the reason for seclusion or physical restraint, the procedures used, the length of time of the seclusion or restraint and the names and titles of the school employees involved. If the parent has a concern or complaint, they will follow the standard school complaint procedure.

2. Continuous monitoring without interruption is mandatory during restraint or seclusion until release
    - a. Upon release, staff must notify the school principal and special education director within one hour.
    - b. Parents or guardians must be contacted by phone as soon as practicable, no later than the end of the same school day.
    - c. The school nurse or designated health designee must assess and document the student's condition by the end of the school day.
  3. Incident reports must be completed and submitted to the principal by the next school day and to parents by the following school day
    - a. Reports must include detailed documentation consistent with video and audio footage to avoid discrepancies that could lead to legal exposure.
    - b. Principals or designees and special education directors must review all available footage to ensure compliance with procedures and training.
- B. Seclusion Room Standards and Sensory Room Use**
1. Seclusion Room
    - a. Only one student per seclusion room is allowed; two or more students disqualify the space as a seclusion room.
    - b. The student must be released immediately once no longer at imminent risk; delays constitute illegal seclusion.
    - c. Athlos will audit seclusion rooms now to ensure full compliance before complaints or legal scrutiny arise.
  2. Sensory Room
    - a. Appropriate use of sensory rooms is not considered seclusion, but misuse could be deemed illegal seclusion.
    - b. The statute prescribes only specific terms allowed for these rooms to prevent legal challenges based on terminology.
    - c. Use of sensory rooms must align with behavioral plans and be transparent to parents and oversight bodies.

C. Prohibited Practices and Legal Safeguards

1. Any mechanical restraint without medical orders and physical restraint that applies excessive pressure or is disproportionate to the student's size is prohibited
  - a. Restraint cannot be used as punishment or discipline and must never be threatened as a consequence.
  - b. Medical exemptions require consultation with counsel to develop alternative safe behavior plans.
2. Principals must annually notify parents during IEP meetings about prohibitions on restraint and seclusion for students with specific conditions
  - a. This notification is mandatory and becomes part of the required documentation and communication trail.
3. Knowledge of the student's individual needs, medical issues, and behavior history is critical to lawful and safe implementation of restraint or seclusion
  - a. Failure to know or implement this knowledge can result in serious injury, lawsuits, and findings of failure to implement the IEP.
  - b. The statute focuses on protecting the child's safety first, and only trained personnel should act during crisis situations.
  - c. Rehearsed, automatic responses from trained staff rather than emotional or uncoordinated interventions.

D. School Leadership and Special Education Directors

1. Finalize and adopt updated restraint and seclusion policies and procedures before December 1 effective date
2. Amend student handbooks with crisis intervention information and distribute addenda to parents/legal guardians of students with IEPs/BIPs
3. Designate and train school health designees with appropriate certification and background; ensure clear rationale for designation is documented
4. Conduct audits of seclusion rooms across schools to confirm legal and regulatory compliance with safety and structural requirements

5. Update crisis intervention plans and ensure they are incorporated in IEP meetings; train staff thoroughly on these plans
6. Implement procedures for continuous monitoring during seclusion/restraint, parent notification, and timely incident reporting within statutory timelines
7. Monitor students with repeated incidents (3+) and convene IEP meetings to revise supports every three weeks
8. Establish lead responder protocols for crisis events and emphasize coordinated, trained intervention only

**E. Behavioral Plans, Training, and Staff Roles**

1. After three incidents involving restraint or seclusion in a school year, districts must convene an IEP meeting to review and revise behavior plans
  - a. The director or supervisor must review the student's plan every three weeks to ensure effectiveness and compliance.
  - b. The crisis intervention plan must be followed precisely; failure to implement plans or train staff undermines legal defense and student safety.
2. A new role, the school health designee, must be designated to assess restraint or seclusion use when the nurse is absent or unavailable
  - a. This person must be highly trained, certified in crisis intervention, and capable of acting responsibly in high-pressure situations.
  - b. Athlos will practice thoughtful selection with clear rationale to withstand scrutiny in complaints or hearings.
3. All staff involved in restraint or seclusion must be trained and certified, including regular education, administration, social workers, and SROs
  - a. SROs must be trained on their limited role to avoid legal risk for the school and law enforcement agencies.

- b. Training must include updates on new legal requirements and procedural changes effective December 1st.
  - c. Untrained or unknowledgeable staff are not part of the solution and increase risk to the student and district.
- F. Seclusion and Restraint (SAR) Team
- 1. Each school must have a seclusion and restraint team (SAR Team) consisting of four (4) to six (6) staff members, based on school enrollment, to be selected by the School Leader.
    - a) The SAR Team must include at least one school administrator.
    - b) The School Resource Officer shall not be a part of the SAR Team. C.

Training requirements relative to the use of restraint:

- 1. All staff involved in restraint/seclusion will be trained on legal changes, new statutory requirements, and best practices, including SROs and law enforcement liaisons
- 2. Members of the SAR Team shall be required to undergo training in crisis intervention based on the guidelines of this policy. Other staff members may be required to undergo this training on an as needed basis.
- 3. The training program implemented by Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish is the Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) Program by Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). Training shall include, but not limited to the following:
  - a) Preventive techniques
  - b) Physical restraints
  - c) Written exam, which must be completed with 80% accuracy
- 4. Staff members certified to use restraints/holding skills must re-certify every four years and complete a refresher course every two years.
- 5. Documentation of certified personnel will be maintained by the School Leader.

D. Methods of Physical Restraint

1. Restraint methods shall be in accordance with training in Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI) and the use of Non-violent Physical Crisis Intervention (NPCI) methods. Key elements of NPCI include:
  - a) The intent is to calm the child with exceptionalities
  - b) Restraint does not occur on the floor, thus reducing risks of restraint-related positional asphyxia and other injuries.
  - c) Team interventions are used when necessary.
  - d) NPCI is used only as a last resort when a student with an exceptionality presents an imminent risk of harm to self or others.
  - e) NPCI is used to provide care, welfare, safety, and security. It shall never be used to punish.

E. Notification to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE)

1. The School Leader or designee shall be responsible for maintaining documentation of all instances of seclusion and restraint and for informing the LDOE according to LDOE requirements.
2. A copy of the Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish guidelines and procedures on seclusion and restraint shall be provided to the LDOE.

F. The guidelines related to seclusion and restraint shall be posted on the school website.