



C H A R T E R S C H O O L

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Positive Behavior Support Policy and Procedures

Pursuant to 22 Pa. Code 711.46, YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School has adopted the following Positive Behavior Support policy and procedures:

Positive Behavior Support (PBS). Positive Behavior Support is the primary method of addressing student problem behaviors. Positive, rather than negative, measures form the basis of positive behavior support programs at the School to ensure that all students are free from demeaning treatment, the use of aversive techniques, and the unreasonable use of restraints. (“Aversive techniques” are deliberate activities designed to establish a negative association with a specific behavior.)

When students require specific intervention(s) to address behavior that interferes with learning, YouthBuild Philadelphia includes positive behavior support plans as part of their IEPs. A positive behavior support plan is developed by the IEP team, is based on a functional behavior assessment, and becomes part of the student’s IEP. These plans include methods that utilize positive reinforcement and other positive techniques to shape a student’s behavior, ranging from the use of positive verbal statements as a reward for good behavior to specific tangible rewards. The behavior support program includes research-based practices and techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance an individual student’s opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment. The behavior support program and plans are based on a functional assessment of behavior and utilize positive behavior techniques. Positive techniques for the development, change, and maintenance of behaviors are the least intrusive necessary.

De-Escalation Strategies. Among the positive behavior support techniques used by YouthBuild Philadelphia staff in times of crisis are de-escalation strategies. There are many times when a student’s behavior presents as a crisis but does not warrant outside professional involvement. The student is “out of control” of his or her own ability to calm down, needing the assistance of a staff person in de-escalating. YouthBuild Philadelphia staff are trained annually in the use the following de-escalation strategies:

1. Use tone of voice to assist in de-escalating the student. Use a modulated, low, monotonous tone. Raising your voice only escalates the student.
2. Stay and appear calm. Your anxiety can make the student feel more anxious and unsafe. This, in turn, escalates the student further.
3. Remove the student from loud, busy environments to an environment that is calm and quiet. This also prevents the student from feeling more anxious and unsafe.

4. Don't try to reason with or discipline an escalated student. Reasoning is not possible for the student while escalated.
5. Be respectful, even when firmly setting limits. Agitated individuals are sensitive to feeling shame and disrespect.
6. Give choices when possible, with both alternatives being safe.
7. Redirect the student to an activity he or she enjoys or to a staff person with whom the student has a good rapport.
8. Keep instructions and dialogue simple in attempting to bring the level of arousal down.
9. Give the student appropriate space.
10. Listen—active listening often is enough to de-escalate the situation. Remember, the goal is to calm the student down and help him or her to feel safe and in control. Consequences, discipline, and conversations should occur only when the student has calmed down and is able to engage in understanding. Also remember, the student needs assistance in calming down. He or she does not have current control of his or her emotions.

Restraints. The use of restraints is only a measure of last resort at YouthBuild Philadelphia—only to be used after other less restrictive measures, such as de-escalation techniques. (The term “restraint” means the application of physical force, with or without the use of a device, for the purpose of restraining the free movement of a student’s body. The term does not include briefly holding, without force, a student to calm or comfort him, guiding a student to an appropriate activity, or holding a student’s hand to safely escort him from one area to another.)

In keeping with the School's mission to prepare all of its students for postsecondary life, School staff do not want to physically restrain students, but to teach them self-regulation and self-control. Toward this end, YouthBuild Philadelphia staff employ de-escalation strategies when a student is in an emotional/behavioral crisis. Students who have demonstrated that they need extra help in self-regulation are taught appropriate adult social and emotional behaviors.

Permitted uses of restraints. Restraints to control acute or episodic aggressive or self-injurious behavior may be used only when the student is acting in a manner as to be a clear and present danger to himself, to other students or to employees, and only when less restrictive measures and techniques have proven to be or are less effective. **IMPORTANT:** Restraints may be used only as a last resort. The use of restraints is never included in the IEP for the convenience of staff, as a substitute for an educational program, or employed as punishment.

However, in the event that an IEP Team determines that it is necessary to include the use of restrictive or intrusive procedures or restraints for controlling a student’s aggressive behavior in that student’s IEP, YouthBuild Philadelphia staff shall obtain parental consent prior to the use of those restrictive or intrusive procedures or restraints. In addition, the Team shall explain in the IEP— (1) how the restrictive or intrusive procedures or restraints will be used only with specific component elements of positive behavior support, in conjunction with (2) the teaching of alternative, socially-acceptable behavioral skills to replace problem behavior, as well as include (3) a plan for eliminating the use of restraints through the application of positive behavior support.

Mechanical restraints. Mechanical restraints, which are used to control involuntary movement or lack of muscular control of students when due to organic causes or conditions, are never employed at YouthBuild Philadelphia.

Prohibited restraint techniques. In no event may the following aversive, inappropriate techniques of handling behavior be used at YouthBuild Philadelphia:

- Corporal punishment
- Punishment for a manifestation of a student's disability
- Prone restraints: those restraints in which a student is held face down on the floor
- Locked rooms, locked boxes, or other locked structures or spaces from which the student cannot readily exit
- Noxious substances
- Deprivation of basic human rights, such as withholding meals, water, or fresh air
- Suspension constituting a pattern
- Treatment of a demeaning nature
- Electric shock.

Parental notification. When a student has been physically restrained, the parent is notified and an IEP Team Meeting is convened within 10 school days of the inappropriate behavior causing the use of restraints, unless the parents provide a written waiver of this required meeting.

IEP Team review. The use of restraints to control the aggressive behavior of an individual student requires a meeting of the IEP Team to review the current IEP for appropriateness and effectiveness. At this meeting, the IEP team considers whether the student needs a functional behavioral assessment, re-evaluation, a new or revised positive behavior support plan, or a change of placement to address the inappropriate behavior.

Authorization and training personnel. Only YouthBuild Philadelphia personnel who are so authorized by the Program Director may employ restraints to control a student's behavior. All authorized personnel are trained in the use of crisis-restraint procedures.

Each school year, all School staff received training in the PBS policy and positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques, and other emergency responses. At these trainings, select staff provide examples of each de-escalation technique listed in the PBS policy. Staff then discuss the PBS policy in small discussion groups. Staff are informed of the location of the electronic version of the PBS Policy on the School's Staff Share drive.

Data on restraints. YouthBuild Philadelphia maintains and reports data on restraints, as required by the PA Department of Education (PDE), on the RISC website, https://apps.leaderservices.com/_risc/index.aspx. The report will be reviewed during cyclical compliance monitoring conducted by the PDE.

Referral of student to law enforcement. Subsequent to a referral to law enforcement—for alleged criminal activity—of a student with a disability who has a positive behavior support plan, the student's IEP Team is convened to— (1) review the current IEP for appropriateness and effectiveness, (2) update (or develop) the functional behavioral assessment, and (3) revise (or develop) the positive behavior support plan.

PDE resources. YouthBuild Philadelphia accesses professional development opportunities and technical assistance provided by the PDE's Bureau of Special Education and PaTTAN, including the development of school-wide behavior support programs.

