

Section 9-26.1. Statement of Policy; limited use of physical restraint. — A. The School Board believes that every child is valued as a contributor in the education process and school staff must ensure that children are treated with dignity, respect, and special care. When there is a need to manage aggressive or violent behavior of students in emergency situations by trained personnel, there must be a balance between maintaining an effective and safe learning environment for students and school staff and safeguarding the rights and protections of students and staff. Physical restraint and seclusion may only be used by staff employed by Suffolk Public Schools for the purpose of behavioral intervention in accordance with this policy and the Virginia Board of Education Regulations Governing the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Virginia. The School Board encourages the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports to reduce and prevent the need for the use of physical restraint and seclusion. This balance should be reflected in policies that include processes and procedures ensuring that physical restraint and seclusion should only be used in emergency situations when other less intrusive alternatives have failed. The use of corporal punishment and abusive interventions, and mechanical restraint are not authorized, permitted, or condoned in the public schools of Virginia or in Suffolk Public Schools.

B. Physical restraint and seclusion may only be used by trained employees of Suffolk Public Schools for the purpose of behavioral intervention in accordance with this policy and the Virginia Board of Education Regulations Governing the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Virginia. The School Board encourages the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports to reduce and prevent the need for the use of physical restraint and seclusion. (Adopted March 14, 2013; Ordinance Number 12/13-32; Revised: June 13, 2013; Ordinance Number 12/13-149; Effective Date: July 1, 2013; Ordinance 24/25-46, Revised/Effective: January 16, 2025)

Legal Authority – Virginia Code §§ 22.1-16, 22.1-78, 22.1-279.1, 22.1-279.1:1; 8 vac 20-750-40, 8VAC 20-750-50, and 8 VAC 20-750-70