

USE OF SENSORY ROOMS AND EMERGENCY INTERVENTIONS

Sensory Rooms

A sensory room is an area for a student to safely deescalate, regain control, and prepare to meet expectations to return to their educational program. The use of a sensory room may be an effective and appropriate method of behavior intervention for some students.

Except for unanticipated situations that pose an immediate concern for the physical safety of a student or others, sensory rooms may only be used in conjunction with a behavior intervention plan that is part of the student's IEP and designed to teach and reinforce alternative appropriate behaviors. Each sensory room must have prior approval by the Director of Special Education before it can be used for the above-stated purposes.

Staff Training

Staff who may be called upon to implement the use of the sensory room will be trained on the use of the room and related behavior management practices, including, if appropriate, the use of emergency interventions in accordance with Section 200.22(d) of the Commissioner's Regulations. Professional development on the use of the time out room will occur minimally on an annual basis.

Standards for Sensory Room Use

The location, size and access to the time out room will be in conformance with applicable laws and regulations. Parental notification shall be provided in accordance with Board policy prior to the initiation of a behavior intervention plan that will incorporate the use of a time out room for a student AND in any cases in which the time out room is used for the student. Once a student is calm and in control, the student should be given an opportunity to leave the sensory room and re-enter the classroom setting with staff support, as needed. A building principal and Director of Special Education shall be notified whenever a student is placed in a time out room for more than 20 consecutive minutes. Absent exigent circumstances, such notification shall take place on the same day that the student is placed in the time out room. A student will not spend more than 30 consecutive minutes in the time out room.

Data Collection to Monitor Use and Effectiveness of Sensory Rooms

Documentation is required for each instance that the sensory room is utilized as an intervention for a student. Procedures for documentation and data collection will be included in the annual sensory room professional development training.

Documentation will include:

- Student Name
- Date of sensory room use
- Time entered and time exited the sensory room
- Behaviors that led to the use of sensory room
- Interventions used prior to use of sensory room
- Parent notification method (email, phone call)

Data collected through the Sensory form will be regularly reviewed by the school psychologist to assess the effectiveness of the sensory room intervention and inform the need for any modifications to intervention or staff approaches moving forward. In addition, members of the CSE, including the parent, or other staff involved in providing educational support to the student, may request at any time that a review of the behavioral data be conducted.

Physical Restraint and Other Emergency Interventions

Staff will not use physical restraint as a substitute for systematic intervention to modify inappropriate behavior. Staff who may be called upon to physically restrain a student will be trained annually on safe and effective ways to do so. Physical restraint may be used as a last resort in an emergency where no other approach would be effective in maintaining the safety of the student and/or others.

“Emergency” means a situation in which immediate intervention involving the use of reasonable physical force pursuant to §19.5 of the Commissioner’s regulations is necessary. Emergency interventions shall be used only in situations in which alternative procedures and methods not involving the use of physical force cannot reasonably be employed and shall not be used as punishment or as a substitute for systematic behavioral interventions that are designed to replace, change, modify, or eliminate a targeted behavior. Staff who may be called upon to implement emergency interventions, to include physical restraints of a student, will be trained on safe and effective ways to do so.

In high-risk situations where a student is in imminent danger to themselves or others, a CCSD employee who is not trained in nonviolent crisis intervention may need to physically intervene. In these instances, staff must provide immediate support in order to keep the student(s) safe until trained CCSD employees arrive. Any such physical interventions shall be reported to the building principal and superintendent of schools.

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