Approved:10/23/2025
Amended

Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI) Policy

Policy No. 2017

The Freedom Preparatory Academy (FPA) Governing Board is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and disruption-free learning environment for all students. When a student's behavior poses an immediate danger to self or others, an Emergency Safety Intervention (ESI) may be necessary to ensure safety. In accordance with Utah Code §53G-8-301 and Utah State Board of Education Rule R277-608, this policy outlines the lawful and appropriate use of ESIs, including physical restraint and seclusion. All interventions must uphold the safety, dignity, and rights of students, prohibit corporal punishment, and promote the ethical and responsible management of student behavior.

Definitions

- Emergency Safety Intervention (ESI): Use of physical restraint or seclusion when a student presents an immediate and significant danger to self or others.
- Physical Restraint: Personal restriction that immobilizes or significantly reduces a student's ability to move arms, legs, body, or head freely.
- Seclusion: The involuntary placement of a student alone in a safe, enclosed space where they are physically prevented or reasonably believe they are prevented from leaving. It must be carried out by school personnel in accordance with Utah Administrative Code requirements for school safety, design, and operation. Seclusion involves purposeful isolation from peers and adults and is distinct from timeout.
- Timeout: A behavior support strategy that may be included in a student's approved treatment plan. It involves temporarily removing the student from the group in a safe, unlocked space to help the student regain composure. Timeout is distinct from seclusion and must not be used as such.
- Chemical Restraint: Use of medication to involuntarily limit a student's movement. Prohibited except as prescribed by a licensed professional for medical reasons.
- Mechanical Restraint: Use of a device to restrict freedom of movement. Prohibited except for protective/stabilizing devices prescribed by a professional, safety equipment (e.g., seatbelts), or law enforcement equipment.

- Physical Escort: Temporary touching or holding to guide a student to another location.
- Key Identified Employees: Staff members designated to receive ongoing comprehensive ESI training.
- Immediate Danger: Imminent risk of physical harm to self or others likely to cause substantial or serious bodily injury.
- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA): Systematic process to identify purpose of interfering behavior and guide interventions.
- Corporal Punishment: The use of physical force to discipline a student, intended to cause pain or discomfort. This can include actions like hitting, spanking, or slapping and is not allowed. (see policy 1012)

Prohibitions

- Corporal punishment.
- ESI used as discipline, punishment, retaliation, coercion, humiliation, convenience, or due to staffing shortages.
- Prone (face-down) restraint.
- Supine (face-up) restraint.
- Restraint obstructing a student's airway or primary mode of communication.
- Mechanical restraint, except for protective/stabilizing devices prescribed by a professional, safety equipment (e.g., seatbelts), or law enforcement equipment.
- Chemical restraint, except as prescribed by a licensed professional for medical reasons.
- Seclusion for students below grade 1.
- Other dangerous practices as identified in the Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (LRBI) Manual.

Conditions for Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint may be used only when necessary and in the following situations:

- In self-defense.
- To take possession of a weapon or dangerous object.
- To prevent physical injury to the student or others.
- To remove a violent student from a situation.
- To protect property when physical safety is at risk.

Additional Requirements Designated staff may use physical restraint or seclusion only when:

- The student presents an immediate danger to self or others.
- No other safe or effective intervention is available.

All interventions must be:

- Limited to the shortest duration necessary to ensure safety.
- Immediately discontinued once the threat subsides or the student shows signs of severe distress.

Seclusion Requirements

- Any enclosed seclusion area must be approved by the Executive Director or Director of Student Services in consultation with the ESI Committee.
- Schools must submit written justification including data and reasoning for designated areas.
- When possible, parents must receive written notice before seclusion areas are used.
- Areas must comply with fire and safety codes (R392-200, R710-4).
- Use limited to circumstances of immediate danger.
- Student must be continuously observed by trained staff familiar to the student.
- Maximum use: 30 minutes per incident.
- All incidents must be documented and debriefed with staff, student, and parent.
- Seclusion is not considered timeout (see policy definitions).

Training Requirements

ESI Training: Key identified employees will receive ongoing comprehensive training in the use of ESI. Training includes de-escalation strategies, safe and effective use of ESI, and documentation.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI) may not be included as a planned strategy in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) unless less restrictive alternatives have been tried, a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) has been completed, and positive behavioral supports are actively implemented. For students receiving services under IDEA or Section 504, any use of ESI must fully adhere to relevant federal and state regulations, as well as school policy.

Oversight and Committee

Under the direction of the Director of Student Services FPA shall establish an ESI Committee composed of: one administrator, one licensed educational professional with behavior support training, one parent/guardian of an enrolled student, and one licensed educator.

- Meet often enough to monitor ESI use.
- Determine and recommend professional development needs.

Reporting and Accountability

- FPA shall collect, maintain, and regularly report all ESI data to the Utah State Board of Education.
- Schools must provide parents with documentation within 48 hours of ESI use and notify them of their right to request records.
- Parents may request meetings with staff and administrators following any ESI incident.
- Confirmed violations will result in prompt corrective action, possible discipline, retraining, or referral to UPPAC.
- Employees disciplined under this policy may appeal through FPA's grievance procedures.

Procedures for Implementation of Emergency Safety Interventions (ESI)

1. Before an ESI

- Attempt de-escalation strategies and positive supports first.
- Call for assistance if behavior escalates.
- A trained key identified employee determines if the student poses immediate danger.

2. During an ESI

- Use only if absolutely necessary for safety.
- Apply least restrictive method possible.
- Never use prone, supine, or airway-restricting restraint.
- Continuously monitor the student for safety and distress.
- Terminate immediately when danger ends or student is in severe distress.
- If seclusion is used: must be in approved space, door unlocked, student observed by staff familiar to them, maximum 30 minutes.

3. Immediately After an ESI

- Ensure student's safety and provide support.
- Apply release criteria before ending restraint/seclusion.
- Notify parent/guardian immediately.
- Notify school administration as soon as possible.
- Document incident in SIS before student leaves school.

4. Documentation and Debriefing

- Provide written documentation to parents and the ESI Committee.
- Documentation includes reason, duration, interventions attempted, and physical space description (for seclusion).
- Debrief with student, parent/guardian, involved staff, and witnesses if appropriate.
- Conduct post-ESI assessment to evaluate effectiveness and adjust supports.