



Restraint Policy

It is extremely rare that PGL staff are required to restrain guests, however, in the event that restraint is necessary, the guidelines are as follows:

Policy Statement

- a) Staff should ensure that they do not use any form of physical force that may be construed as “assault” to control or discipline any guest. The only exception to this is in the use of physical contact to prevent an immediate danger or significant physical injury to, or the damage to the property of, any person.
- b) Staff who use force in a way that does not conform to this policy, or the following notes of guidance, may be subject to disciplinary action.
- c) There will be occasions where damage to property may be deemed preferable to the application of physical force as a preventative measure. However, staff should give consideration to the nature of the property in question and whether its damage may place any person at risk of injury or lead to criminal proceedings.

Guidelines

1. Preventive Measures

- A) On the basis that early action taken to diffuse a potentially violent situation is the most desirable solution, the following techniques should be used for dealing with young people who are becoming increasingly agitated:
 - Ignore the inappropriate behaviour
 - Redirect or remind the young person with verbal cues
 - Calm him/her down by setting expectations and giving them a choice about how to respond to the situation
 - Acknowledge the feelings that are causing the agitation, giving the young person the opportunity to express their feelings verbally rather than physically; or
 - Remove the source of the agitation, or the young person, to a more neutral environment.
- b) In considering the techniques mentioned above, there are a number of points to bear in mind:
 - There are clear situations where the appropriate behaviour cannot be ignored, such as violence or destruction of property
 - The feelings of the member of staff must also be acknowledged. Staff should endeavour to appear calm, even though they may be feeling quite the contrary
 - In attempting to diffuse the situation, the use of touch should be considered carefully. An attempt to calm by laying a hand gently on the young person’s shoulder, for instance, may lead to escalation of the behaviour.

2. Physical Presence

- a) By their very presence, staff should be able to convey messages of care and control. This presence should normally be sufficient to positively influence the young person’s behaviour, through the use of a look, gesture or quiet word.
- b) A deliberate strategy to deal with difficult behaviour may be for a member of staff to devote himself or herself exclusively to one young person. As far as is possible this should be through the use of constructive activity/discussion rather than just “shadowing” and, if possible, should be agreed in liaison with all other staff present.

- c) In the event that a young person is “running away”, this strategy is more advisable than resorting to “restraint”, unless the young person is placing him/herself in immediate danger or significant injury. In such situations the member of staff selected to stay with the young person, should allow the individual to move far enough away from the others involved allowing them sufficient privacy to compose themselves. The remaining staff should ensure that they are within shouting/signalling distance of their colleague and ready to assist if required. Unless this assistance is requested, they should make every effort to calm the remaining young people and prevent them from attempting to follow, or communicate with, the young person concerned.
- d) If the member of staff cannot keep pace with the young person, or is no longer in a position to request support from the team, s/he must accept that further efforts are not advisable. At this point the Duty Manager should inform the Police and follow standard procedures for a “major incident”.
- e) In using physical presence, the following factors must be considered:
 - The technique should not be persisted with, if the young person physically resists
 - If challenged, staff should be prepared to engage the young person who physically resists with what is being done and why
 - The conscious use of physical presence for control purposes can be oppressive if extended over long periods, and this should be borne in mind
 - Oppressive physical methods may also reactivate previous negative experiences for the young person, possibly resulting in a violent reaction.

3. Physical Restraint

Principles for using physical restraint:

- a.) **Staff should take steps in advance to avoid the need for physical restraint**, e.g.; through dialogue and diversion (see above); **and the young person should be warned verbally that physical restraint would be used unless s/he desists.**
- b.) **STAFF SHOULD HAVE GOOD GROUNDS FOR BELIEVING THAT IMMEDIATE ACTION IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT A YOUNG PERSON FROM SIGNIFICANTLY INJURING HIM/HERSELF, OR OTHERS, OR CAUSING SERIOUS INJURY TO PROPERTY.**
- c.) **Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint.** These staff members can act as assistants and witnesses.
 - Whenever possible there should be at least two members of staff present when a young person is being restrained and the most senior member of staff available should take charge of the situation.
 - If it is necessary to restrain a young person, a member of staff of the appropriate gender must be present from the earliest possible time.
 - In a situation where the young person’s behaviour is directed at a member of staff, the staff member concerned should not be involved in carrying out the restraint, unless there is no other alternative.
- d.) **If it becomes necessary to physically restrain a violent young person; to avoid injury and the infliction of pain, the amount of force used must be the minimum necessary to hold the young person safely:**
 - Staff must consider any hazards presented by the immediate environment (e.g.: rocks, windows etc.) and endeavour to steer the young person towards a safer area or consider how to protect all those involved, from the hazard.
 - The length of time a young person is restrained should be the minimum necessary to achieve the immediate objective.
 - As soon as it is felt safe, restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the young person to regain self-control. During this process the young person should be told what is happening and what

behaviour is expected of them. As the hold is relinquished, staff should look for indications that may suggest the young person will restart the aggressive behaviour.

Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment:

- a) In some circumstances it may not be appropriate to speak to the young person during the exercise of restraint as this may compound the issue. However most young people will respond positively if spoken to in a quiet and soothing manner, to encourage the speedy return of calm and self-control.
- b) Physical restraint should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk to people or property.
- c) Restraint should be ceased if the contact appears to be arousing any sexual expectations or feelings.
- d) Staff should be careful where they hold young people. For instance, they should be careful not to hold a young person in such a way that it involves contact with breasts or genitals and, if female, the individual should not be held with her legs apart.
- e) Young people known to be suffering from epilepsy must not be restrained. If during restraint, a young person begins to have an epileptic fit the restraint should cease.
- f) Pregnant women should not be restrained, unless as a last resort. If restraint is unavoidable, extra care must be taken to ensure the minimum amount of force is used.
- g) It is not normally acceptable to use force to prevent a young person taking drugs or alcohol. However, if drugs are being used to cause deliberate self-harm, physical action may be appropriate if all other attempts to dissuade the young person from taking drugs have failed and the young person behaves in a way that requires an appropriate level of physical response from staff. In situations involving drugs, the assistance of the Police should be seriously considered.

4. Restraint Techniques:

- a.) The physical restraint of a very violent young person of large stature (or in possession of a dangerous weapon) is likely to place the restrainer/s in some danger of injury, this risk will be reduced if as many staff as possible are called to assist.

On no account should members of staff attempt to overcome a large and violent young person merely to re-establish control.

If this sort of incident occurs, the staffs' efforts should be redirected towards protection of themselves and other young people. If circumstances permit, it may be advisable to contact the Police.

- b.) Generally, the most useful form of restraining is to encircle the individual with both arms. This can be done from a standing or sitting position. Care is needed if limbs are held since a struggle could result in a limb being wrenched or broken. This risk is minimised if limbs are held near a major joint or preferably on both sides of a major joint. Staff should also be aware of the possibility that a person being restrained in this manner may attempt to use their head as a means of striking the restrainer.
- c.) Physical intervention techniques that place the adult's weight on the young person, or that involve the adult straddling the young person, should be avoided and used only as a last resort. This is particularly applicable when restraining younger, smaller children; someone of the opposite sex; a young person with a history of sexual abuse and pregnant women.
- d.) In very violent incidents it may be necessary to restrain a young person by placing him or her down on the floor and holding his or her arms and legs. In a team restraint there must always be one leader who directs the action. This person must be the only one to give directions and should be the only one communicating with the young person. Any other staff involved must follow the leader's directions. It may be advisable for staff to relieve the primary person restraining the young person, if that person is tiring. Caution is required in this method of restraint; care must be taken to avoid friction burns and the

possibility of the young person's airway becoming blocked. It may also be necessary for someone to support/protect the young person's head from injury.

It is important to listen to what the young person is saying during an exercise of restraint and use judgement to adjust the hold if the young person complains of pain.

5. Incidents in Vehicles:

- a) If an incident develops while travelling in a vehicle, the driver should endeavour to stop the vehicle as soon as it is safe to do so. If travelling on a motorway, the driver must use his/her judgement to decide whether this should be on the hard shoulder or the next motorway exit/service station.
- b) If the situation cannot be brought back under control quickly, the young person behaving violently should be separated from the rest of the group or the individual who is the focal point of the behaviour. Often this is easiest to implement by asking the latter to leave the vehicle, circumstances permitting (Not desirable on a motorway).
- c) Having regained control, it may be advisable to allow the young person, who had been behaving violently, to walk about and regain their composure at the earliest opportunity. If on a motorway, the next service station should provide such an opportunity.

6. Recording the Incident:

At the earliest opportunity, staff must complete a Serious Occurrence Report which should be submitted to the General Manager; "how the incident was brought under control", should indicate how the young person was restrained, if relevant, and for how long.

Note: Any incident resulting in; an injury to any party that requires professional medical attention; the assistance of Police or other emergency service, must be regarded as "major" and be brought to the attention of the Regional Operations Manager a.s.a.p.

7. Following an Incident:

Debriefing the incident: The manager should ensure that any incidents of restraint are discussed at a Team meeting. This should enable a constructive review of how the incident was managed, provide support to the staff involved and initiate appropriate follow-up with the young person/referral agency involved.

8. Follow up Interview with the Young Person:

- a) Following the use of restraint, the young person should have the opportunity to recuperate and have time alone if appropriate. However, an interview should take place as soon as possible. The more time between the incident and the interview the less effective it becomes.
- b) The aim of the interview should be:
 - To return the young person to an emotional level at which they can function appropriately
 - To use the loss of control and the subsequent restraint incident to clarify the underlying causes that led to restraint being used in the first place
 - To develop a strategy for change with the young person that will lead to better self-control
- c) Consideration should be given to the needs of other young people who were present at the incident and observed the restraint.