



Guidelines on Physical Control and Restraint of Children and Young People

Introduction

On rare occasions it may become necessary to physically restrain a child or young person to prevent them, causing injury or harm to themselves, to others or to property. In such circumstances no more than the minimum force necessary should be used and the member of staff should seek to avoid causing injury to the child or young person.

The Child Protection Policy and associated Codes and Behavioural Guidelines make it clear about what constitutes appropriate physical contact. It is important both to protect children and young people and minimise the risk of allegations being made against staff and volunteers.

Control and Direction through Physical Contact

There are occasions when control can be maintained by holding a child or young person in a manner that does not carry the force of physical restraint. Children and young people may be successfully re-engaged in the sport by an arm on the shoulder; similarly a young onlooker may be diverted from a potentially harmful situation such as in the Salle or Range. **The main factor distinguishing holding from physical restraint is the degree of force applied, the intention of the action and how the child or young person perceived the action.** It is appropriate to use such physical prompts and guidance when positive verbal prompting has been unsuccessful.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is the positive use of force in order to protect a child or young person from hurting themselves, others, or seriously damaging property.

On rare occasions there is no alternative to restraining children and young people physically in their own and others' interests and safety. In such instances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used, taking into account all of the circumstances. Such interventions should only be made when they are likely to succeed. **Ideally, more than one adult should be present.** Physical restraint is normally only necessary to prevent a child or young person causing harm to themselves or to others,

seriously damaging property, or committing some criminal act, which risks harm to people or property, when verbal commands will not control the behaviour. The purpose of intervention is to restore safety and restraint should not be continued for longer than is necessary. Physical contact and restraint should never be used in anger and staff should make every effort to avoid any injury to the young person. **They are not expected to restrain a child or young person if by doing so they will put themselves at significant risk.** Brief periods of withdrawal away from the point of conflict into a calmer environment may be more effective for an agitated young person than holding or physical restraint:

- the use of restraint should always be a last resort when all other attempts to control a child or young person have failed;
- during an incident of restraint the minimum force necessary should be used and the child or young person should continuously be offered the opportunity to regain self control;
- restraint should never be carried out in anger;
- when restraining, gender or cultural differences should be taken into account;
- children and young people should never be restrained by being tied up or bound.

All incidents where restraint has been necessary should be clearly recorded in the Log Book stating:

- the date and time the restraint occurred;
- why restraint was necessary;
- how restraint was carried out;
- who restrained the child or young person;
- how long this restraint lasted;
- who was present during the period of restraint;
- any marks noted on the child or young person as a result of the incident and how they occurred;
- action taken (e.g. treatment) in relation to any marks or injuries occurring as a result of the incident;

The child or young person's parent/carer should be informed when physical restraint has been necessary.

Restriction of Liberty

A child or young person attempting to leave a room or the premises should only be physically restrained if they are considered to be at risk of harming themselves or others. Children and young people should **never** be locked in a room and should not be required to remain in a building for an unreasonable length of time without relief. If a child or young person is being required to wait in a room while their parent/carer, social services or the police attend, a member of staff should remain with them.

If a child or young person has to be physically restrained to prevent them running away the restraint should not extend beyond holding with both arms engaged and employing controlled use of the weight of the body.

The child or young person should not be rugby tackled because this would entail forceful knocking over and possible injury.

Hitting Children and Young People

Staff nor volunteers should never hit or strike children and young people. If a child or young person is assaulting a member of staff due force may be used in self-defence. Due force can be described as the minimum force necessary to prevent or deflect the assault.

Searching Children and Young People

In the interests of safety for other children and young people, common sense dictates that certain staff such as official chaperones and programme managers must have some right to search children and young people if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting a child or young person of concealing a particular item. Searches should only take place in the presence of at least one other member of staff or volunteer working in an official capacity and be conducted by a member of staff of the same sex as the child or young person. Searches must not include intimate touching or strip-searching.

A child or young person does, however, have the right to refuse to be searched and so their consent should be sought first. If, because of their age or stage of development, a child or young person is unable to give their consent, their parent /carer or person acting officially in loco parentis or the police should be contacted to be present during the search.

Any search conducted without the child or young person's consent, or that of their parent/carers when appropriate, could become the subject of an assault charge against the staff member concerned.

If drugs or stolen property are suspected the matter would more appropriately be dealt with by the police to avoid the risk of evidence contamination or allegations of "planting".

Children and Young People with Special Needs

Children and young people with special needs who require complex or repeated physical management should have a prescribed, written handling policy which has been agreed by their parent/carers.

Appendix 1 is a proforma to be used for recording all incidents involving physical control. The original should be stored in a safe place and a copy of each completed Proforma should be sent to the *PGB* Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead Officer or Chief Executive Officer.

Appendix 1



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RECORDING OF EVENT INVOLVING PHYSICAL CONTROL

Centre/Project at which Physical Control used

Date & time physical control occurred	
Who was physically controlled?	
What was the nature of the physical control?	
Why was physical control necessary?	
How was physical control carried out?	
Who carried out the physical control?	
How long did the physical control last?	
Who was present during the period of physical control?	
Note any marks on the child/young person(s) as a result of the incident and how they occurred	
Note any action taken in relation to any marks or injuries occurring as a result of the incident	

Date & time child/young person's parent/carer notified, where required	
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Signature

Date
(Date report written)

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