

SAFE PRACTICE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SCHOOL SPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** In order to reduce the risk of accidents during physical education lessons or extra-curricular activities, headteachers are asked to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the following guidelines that are intended to minimise hazards during physical education activities.
- 1.2** The aim is not to restrict the scope of the physical education programme in any way, but there is a degree of responsibility, which all teachers should recognise when supervising physical education activities.
- 1.3** These guidelines identify key points for safe practice in teaching of physical education and school sport in Stockport MBC. For a more detailed description of safe practice in physical education, schools should refer to the Association for PE publication 'Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport (2012 edition)'. All schools are recommended to have a copy of this publication available in school/departments.
- 1.4** Risk assessment is a legal requirement under the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992'. It should therefore be an integral part of the planning and delivery of physical education at all stages of the learning process. It should be used to identify the hazards and calculate the risks associated with the school facilities, equipment used, activities taught, procedures in operation, transport arrangements and staffing expertise for physical education. Risk assessment should be undertaken annually.

2 SUPERVISION/SAFETY OF PUPILS

- 2.1** Headteachers must authorise teachers to carry out all physical education activities and ensure that they are suitably qualified and competent to do so.
- 2.2** Headteachers must ensure that pupils engaged in physical education activities of any kind are supervised by qualified staff, that there is good discipline and control and, where specialist equipment is used, that appropriate safety precautions are taken at all times.
- 2.3** Pupils should not have unsupervised access to on site swimming pools, gymnasiums and sports halls. Entrance doors should be locked when the facility is not under the direct supervision of the teacher.
- 2.4** All jewellery and other personal effects such as watches, rings and earrings should be removed and long hair should be tied back. Sweets and gum should never be chewed when taking part in physical activity.

3 ACCIDENT PROCEDURE

- 3.1** The physical education department/school should have an efficient first aid procedure in place for dealing with injury if it should occur. These procedures should include planning for pupils away from school in visits and fixtures
- 3.2** First aid boxes and travelling first aid kits should be readily available to staff.
- 3.3** It is advisable that all teachers of physical education should receive first aid training

appropriate to their teaching responsibilities with pupils and that teachers should have ready access to a registered first aider.

- 3.4 If an accident occurs and a pupil sustains an injury, prompt action must be taken to give first aid if deemed desirable. If the injury appears serious enough to warrant further attention, or if there is any degree of doubt about the extent of the injury, arrangements must be made for the injured pupil to see a doctor, or to be taken to hospital.
- 3.5 All accidents should be entered as soon as possible in the School Accident Book and a full report completed on the online 'Accident/Incidents' form for more serious accidents, involving a child being sent to the hospital.
- 3.6 For more serious accidents it is recommended that detailed notes of the incident are taken and these kept on file.

4 DEFECTS IN PE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

- 4.1 Before use, headteachers must ensure that any defects in apparatus, or facilities, including playing surfaces, are reported so that arrangements can be made for repairs. Defective equipment must be removed from normal use immediately and marked '**DO NOT USE**'.
- 4.2 An annual inspection of all PE apparatus should be undertaken by a specialist manufacturer/supplier to advise on safety standards for servicing and repair requirements.

(Details of the authority contract the annual check of Physical Education can be obtained through Office Online).

5 SWIMMING

- 5.1 Teachers accompanying pupils to swimming pools are expected to supervise pupils at all times, and to assist with instruction and supervision on the pool side. Teachers have overall responsibility for their class at all times.
- 5.2 The recommended swimming teacher/pupil ratio is 1 to 20 but this can be increased to, but not exceed, 35 if the class teacher works with a group of pupils on the poolside.

(For more detailed guidance on roles and responsibilities on the poolside see Stockport School Swimming Guidelines, which are available on Office Online)

6 TRAMPOLINING

- 6.1 This activity requires special precautions and these must be adhered to at all times.
- 6.2 Trampolines must be used only under the direct supervision of skilled teachers who have attended a course on trampolining through British Gymnastics and that qualifications are 'refreshed' every five years.

At times, individuals question the need for refresher training, on the basis that they have taught trampolining continually since completing their qualification and do not feel that they have 'lost touch' with the knowledge and practice required. If this is the case, the risk assessment would need to present this justification. In the event of an incident occurring the school would need to be able to verify that lack of staff

training was not a factor.

Effective practice would see PE departments keeping a record of who was appropriately trained in the department, when they gained their qualification, and when they would be due to refresh. In this way schools can be sure that they are meeting best practice requirements, and confident that they are keeping up to date with developments.

- 6.3** Several trampolines may be under the supervision of an experienced teacher. This can only happen where performers are practising, consolidating or refining those skills that they can already perform confidently and does not involve pupils venturing into new skills. If a lesson includes beginners they must work under the direct supervision of the teacher.
- 6.4** The use of end decks is strongly recommended, particularly where staff wish to develop rotational feet to feet 360 degree movement. Matting should be used down the sides of trampolines offering protection to a width of 2m and 20-25mm thickness.
- 6.5** There should be no more than 2 spotters down each side of the trampoline who need to be instructed in their role, understand their responsibility in being in the ready position and be physically capable of performing their tasks.
- 6.6** The trampoline should be placed well away from any overhead obstruction. There should be a minimum of at least 5 metres from the floor to the lowest hanging point. It should be positioned so as to minimise the risk of pupils being distracted as they perform. It is inappropriate to have other activities taking place in the same area.
- 6.7** The erection and dismantling of the trampoline must be under the direct supervision and control of the teacher who must also check that frame pads are present and secure. Only specifically designed spotting platforms with mattresses can be attached to the end frames.
- 6.8** The trampoline must be dismantled when not in use and to prevent unauthorised use should be secured with a chain and padlock.

(Teachers must make themselves familiar with the guidance provided in 'Safe Practice in PE & Sport' – 2012 Edition)

7 ATHLETICS

- 7.1** Equipment should be stored securely to prevent any unauthorised use.
- 7.2** The throwing events in athletics present the greatest risk of accident or injury. It is essential, therefore, that at all times the following precautions are observed:
 - before the commencement of any lesson all pupils taking part must be reminded of the safety precautions and of the throwing procedures to be followed;
 - pupils must be under the direct supervision of a teacher;
 - the activity should take place only in an area where there is no possibility of pupils engaged in other activities accidentally encroaching upon it;
 - all throwing must be from a scratch line or throwing circle, pupils should throw sequentially and in a pre-determined order, and must then rejoin the rest of

the group in the safe area before the next throw;

- throwing must be in one direction only. There must be no pair throwing or return throwing;
- left-hand throwers should work together at one end (on the throwers' left) of the scratch line;
- equipment must be collected only on the direct instruction of the teacher and only after the cycle of throws has been completed;
- pupils must not run to retrieve any equipment and
- thrown javelins must be levered to the vertical position before removal from the ground and then always carried in an upright position.

7.3 Throwing equipment should never be collected from a store or carried to a field without the direct supervision of the teacher. When javelins are moved individually to the throwing site, best practice is to have both ends protected (Reference p214 Safe Practice in PE & Sport' – 2012 Edition) .

7.4 The edges of long jump landing areas should be flush with the ground. The sand in the pit should be dug and raked over frequently and should be free from dangerous sharp objects and dog dirt. The edges of the take-off boards should be level with the surface of the runway. If grass is used as a runway surface spikes are essential.

7.5 When using high jump landing modules/crashmats there should be an adequate breadth, width and depth of modules to accommodate the needs of all participating pupils. Multiple modules/crashmats must be locked firmly together; this is best accomplished with a coverall pad. Fitted coverall sheets for landing areas are recommended. (Reference p215 Safe Practice in PE & Sport' – 2012 Edition)

8 CRICKET

8.1 When cricket is played with a hard ball, the grass/synthetic wicket (batting and bowling area) should be reasonably true and the general playing surface should be reasonably even and free from obstructions

8.2 Protective equipment for batters and wicket keepers must be worn when cricket is played with a hard ball in both matches and practices. Batters and wicket keepers must wear a protective helmet when batting and standing up to the stumps.

8.3 The English Cricket Board has drawn attention to the possible danger to young pupils fielding too close to the bat. They believe that no player should be allowed to stand so close to the bat that he could not be expected to get his hands, in adequate self-protection, to the ball hit off the face of the bat. The English Schools Cricket Association has extended the existing regulations covering the minimum fielding distances for young players in all matches where a hard ball is used. (February 2000)

“No young player in the Under 15 age group or younger shall be allowed to field nearer than 8 yards (7.3 metres), measured from the middle stump, except behind the wicket until the batsman has played the ball. For players in the Under 13 age group and below the distance is 11 yards (10 metres)”

9 OUTDOOR EDUCATION

9.1 Reference should be made to Stockport MBC 'Visits & Journeys Guidance' 2015

which forms an integral part of this safety policy.

10 GYMNASTICS

- 10.1** The placement of mats in gymnastic lessons is important. They should be used where there is anticipation that children will need to cushion deliberate landing, as in controlled dismount jumps from apparatus (NB: pupils should never dismount from climbing frames by jumping off from any height). Mats should be viewed as an extension of the apparatus and should be placed in relation to an expected response to a set task. Mats should never be used to protect against the foreseeable outcomes of poorly developed skill, such as anticipating that pupils will fall from height.
- 10.2** Mats should be used when pupils explore formal gymnastic movements e.g. rotation.
- 10.3** The use of crashmats is not appropriate in a primary curriculum gymnastics lesson. The use of such equipment should be reserved for 'closed skill' acquisition within the gymnastics club where the movements have been teacher or coach chosen. During secondary gymnastics lessons where thicker mats may be necessary for more specialised, advanced gymnastic activity, teachers need to exercise caution. Too much absorption may present a greater risk when dismounting to feet with greater momentum & lead to over rotation on landing. In such situations, staff are advised to 'firm up' the landing surface by over laying the mattress with general gymnastics mats where necessary. If more than one safety mattress is used, they should be secured together and any gaps covered e.g. by using a longer agility mat. Teachers making the decision as to whether to use safety mattresses should be suitably qualified & experienced to assess the specific associated risks.
- 10.4** Pupils should be taught the appropriate, age specific skills of apparatus handling.
- 10.5** The use of trampettes and rebound boards are not appropriate for curriculum gymnastic lessons in primary schools.
- 10.6** "Pirates" and other competitive chasing games using apparatus as obstacles are dangerous and should never be played
- 10.7** Gymnastic benches should be used for recognised gymnastic activity or for pupils to sit on only and should not be used for any other purpose.

11 PARKOUR

- 11.1** Staff working within an educational setting wishing to lead parkour sessions should acquire coach/leader accreditation through Parkour UK. However, staff with a specialist physical education qualification may feel confident to instruct basic parkour after appropriate 'top-up' training offered through their initial training institution; employer e.g. Local Authority; or through a training agency recognised by Parkour UK. More advanced work should only be undertaken by leaders/instructors holding Parkour UK coaching accreditation.
- 11.2** Parkour within an educational setting should be restricted to:
- Indoor work areas using selected gymnastic equipment in an appropriate way and suitably deployed to present meaningful challenging activity;

- Purpose-built indoor parkour apparatus;
- Purpose-built outdoor parkour parks/installations

Parkour sessions within an educational setting should always be directly supervised by a suitably qualified and experienced adult.

12 RUGBY

- 12.1 Contact versions of the game should only be introduced and managed by suitably experienced staff and coaches following recognised teaching progressions and guidelines and working within Rugby Football Union/Rugby Football League regulations.
- 12.2 Contact versions of the game are not appropriate for primary rugby delivered within core curriculum time
- 12.3 Mixed gender competition is generally suitable for children of primary age but is not appropriate for secondary age pupils.

13 ROUNDERS/SOFTBALL

- 13.1 Rounders posts should be of appropriate height, have secure bases and rounded tops
- 13.2 Rounders bats should be carried when running and not thrown down. Softball bats should be **placed** down in the batting area and not thrown down.
- 13.3 Backstops should position themselves to be sufficiently far back to avoid any contact with the batters backswing (they should also have an awareness that the bat may slip from the batters grip during the swing).

14 HOCKEY

- 14.1 Players should develop and exercise good stick and ball control at all times
- 14.2 Controlled pushing should be established before introducing hitting.
- 14.3 When using 'full game' hockey sticks/balls, shin pads and mouth guards are strongly recommended for match play and competitive practices. In terms of physical education lessons and non-competitive after school clubs/practices, although they should be encouraged, they are not 'required'. In circumstances such as these, or mini game situations within lessons using this equipment, the teacher should place restrictions on the players to only be able to use 'push pass/shot' or 'slap pass/shot' (i.e. no hitting should be allowed) – this will restrict both the backswing and follow through of players and significantly reduce the risk of head contact.
- 14.4 Hitting should also be restricted, in any situation, if there is a player defending the goal without full goalkeeper protection and padding when players are using hockey sticks and hard balls.

15 CONCUSSION

15.1 Concussion is a disturbance of the normal working of the brain but without there being any structural damage. Because a child or adolescent's brain is still developing, staff should be particularly cautious as concussion can have more of an impact on the brain. Staff delivering activities should have a raised awareness of concussion, be able to identify signs/symptoms and be aware of management protocols and procedures in school

16 FREE STANDING GOAL POSTS

16.1 Accidents to young people have highlighted the need for great care in the use of freestanding goal posts. The advantages of portability and lightness are countered by a real danger that the posts may lack stability and topple over unless measures are taken to promote safe usage.

16.2 They should be obtained from recognised suppliers assembled according to manufacturer's instructions and should be properly stabilised when in use.

17 SPORTS DAYS

17.1 Staff should be mindful that activities to be featured in sports days are those in which pupils have had recent experience, have received developmentally appropriate teaching and are competent to compete in. Pupils should not participate in 'show case' or unfamiliar activities that have been introduced on the day with no prior teaching & learning having taken place.