

Establishing a Safe Working Environment in PE

It is our priority during a PE lesson to ensure that we establish a safe working environment. PE lessons are a statutory requirement in maintained schools up until the end of Key Stage 4 and all pupils are required to attend. The only exception to this is if the child has a statement of special educational needs that explicitly states that the child is unable to participate in PE lessons.

Staff have a duty of care to ensure that children are able to participate actively without unnecessarily endangering themselves or those working around them.

Our guidance is based on the afPE Safe Practice document and the Local Authority. Serious accidents can and have occurred as a result of contact between pupils wearing earrings or studs and other pupils or equipment, thus damaging the ear, or where items of jewellery have caught in apparatus and torn the ear lobe.

The following procedures are applied at the commencement of every lesson:

- All personal effects should be removed. Staff will always give verbal reminders to children and, where necessary, visually monitor the group and/or individuals. Personal effects include items such as watches, jewellery and piercings.
- **Piercings must be removed for PE and swimming lessons.** If children are wearing earrings to school, they will be required to remove their own. Staff will not remove earrings.
- We encourage parents or children to remove earrings before school on PE and swimming days.
- It is the policy of the school that tape or plasters are not to be used to cover piercings. The taping of piercings can create a perception of safety. Tape can often fall off, often without the wearer knowing, and does not reduce the risk of compression injury.
- The use of retainers (flat plastic studs that retain the piercing when earrings or studs are removed) is an acceptable substitution where a total removal is not possible. Provided these are flat and cannot cause damage if a blow or ball hits the side of the head as this significantly reduces the risk of injury. Staff cannot put these retainers in.
- Newly pierced ears can take a period of up to six weeks before sleepers and studs can be removed. In this case, where removal of earrings is not possible, strategies to enable safe participation in the lesson will be introduced. Adaptations will be made in terms of how children take part in the practical aspects of the lesson. Children can contribute to group planning, designing and tactical discussions, and monitoring performance or refereeing. Please note that after a period of six weeks, or when healed, the expectation is that earrings are removed prior to PE lessons.

- We encourage parents to make use of the summer holidays for ear piercings. This will enable ears to heal before returning to school in September.

Swimming lessons

- As with PE, piercings must be removed before commencing swimming lessons. If piercings cannot be removed because ears have been newly pierced, then children will not be able to get into the water and will be given alternative tasks to do during the lesson time.

Hair

- Long hair should be tied back and secured with suitable hair apparatus to ensure that it is not caught, pulled or affected in any way by physical activity.

Other safety aids

- The decision as to whether it is safe or possible to wear safety aids such as glasses or hearing aids will be determined by the nature of the activity. Activities involving physical contact and full game situations may not be appropriate. Where sensory aids need to be worn for safe participation by the individual, the staff, wherever possible, will amend the activity or equipment in order to try and make participation while wearing a sensory aid as safe as possible for the wearer and others in the groups.

The safety of our children is paramount. We thank parents for their cooperation with this policy which helps ensure that a safe working environment is always provided.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any child and it helps to promote equality at the school.

Reviewed: October 2023