

Safety in Physical Education Guidance - updated January 2016

Cambridgeshire County Council supports the development of physical education (PE) and school sport as it plays a significant role in the overall learning experience at school. In so doing, the County Council recognises that risk is present in all physical activities and these risks must be assessed and managed effectively. It is often not possible or desirable to remove all risks from physical activity, but it is important that all the hazards and risks involved in different activities are recognised. These hazards and risks are likely to form part of the appropriate curriculum and teachers must ensure that children learn to manage these risks appropriately. This document sets out the County Council's guidance to avoid unnecessary risks and support the teaching of such activities.

All persons involved in the administration and supervision of physical education must:

- have the competence to be aware of the potential hazards associated with the activities undertaken under their control
- take appropriate precautions to identify risks likely to cause harm or injury to participants or others
- teach participants to approach activities with understanding and self-control, so minimising risks to themselves and others;
- ensure that activities undertaken are appropriate to the experience and qualifications of the person in charge and to the age and capability of the participants.
- adhere to established, regular and approved teaching practice and procedures to help avoid foreseeable problems.

It is necessary for **all** staff involved in the teaching of physical education to have at least the minimum recognised qualifications before being allowed to teach any of the range of PE activities. Those activities where there are acknowledged potentially higher risks; swimming, formal gymnastics, trampolining and many of the outdoor and adventurous pursuits will require teachers with appropriate specialist training and nationally approved qualifications. There is a useful competency checklist available in 'SAFE PRACTICE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT' (2012) for such activities and the range of personnel that may teach or supervise them. (See later reference).

Accordingly this Guidance Document is addressed to:

- Governing Bodies
- Headteachers, Youth and Community Officers and Continuing Education Managers
- Teachers, Tutors, Youth and Community Workers and Coaches

It is important to recognise that however specific the advice and guidance may be, in dealing with PE subjects, there will always be a need for careful exercise of experienced professional judgement by the individuals who teach or supervise to ensure that their duty of care is properly fulfilled in any given situation.

Any such judgement should form part of a comprehensive set of risk assessments undertaken and reviewed regularly for the set up and delivery of physical education and school sport. This enables schools and settings to fulfil their duty of care to provide a safe working environment and safe systems of work for staff, students and visitors.

It must be known and understood by all involved in teaching or supervising PE and school sport that their duty of care cannot be delegated to any other body. The school authority (*local authority, governors, trust*) retains the responsibility for pupils where a duty is provided through a third party such as an individual coach, coaching agency or at an off site centre.

The County Council adopts the guidance and advice of the 'Association for Physical Education' (afPE) in their book 'SAFE PRACTICE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT' (2012 ISBN 978-1-905540-94-5). Published every 4 years this is the national guidance and best practice for the subject.

All educational establishments should have a reference copy of the above which is a nationally recognised document and is the text to which reference would be made in a court of law as 'regular and approved practice'.

Copies may be obtained from **1st4sport.com**
Chelsea Close, Off Amberley Road, Armley, Leeds, LS12 4HP. TEL: 0113 201 5555. Fax: 0113 231 9606
E-mail enquiries@1st4sport.com
Website: <http://www.1st4sport.com/>
who publish the book on behalf of AfPE.

Whilst Cambridgeshire County Council recognises the use of afPE's Safe Practice in PE and Sport book, it should be noted that specifics in this local guidance note take precedence over any advice given in the Safe Practice book.

The County's policy for conducting swimming takes precedence over any advice given in the Safe Practice book.

The County Council has a clear policy for schools for Learning Outdoors, Educational visits and Outdoor Education which takes precedence over any advice given in the chapters on 'transport management and group management' and 'adventure activities'. Alongside the Council policy there is also a school level policy that the Educational Visit Coordinator manages. For assistance please contact the Outdoor Education Adviser Service.

CCC Specific guidance

Individuals.

All watches, jewellery and cultural or religious adornments must be removed. This includes earrings, studs and sleepers. If such items cannot be removed the individual is not prepared in an acceptably safe way and cannot continue as is, so must take part in modified activity. Care also must be exercised to ensure good hygiene is observed. Schools should not accept responsibility for removing or storing rings or studs used as adornment to body piercing. Items that are removed should not be stored communally to avoid contagion/infections.

Long hair must be tied back securely and fingernails should be appropriately short to prevent injury and applies to both boys and girls.

Pupils must be dressed and shod in a manner which is appropriate to the activity and which allows full freedom of movement without any danger of snagging. Personal protective equipment should be worn when it is deemed necessary for safe participation.

Equipment.

Apparatus must be inspected annually for wear and signs of pending failure. It should be checked (as teachers are not qualified to inspect) at the start of every session by the teacher and by pupils, and then by an assigned member of staff more formally on a termly basis and by a qualified person annually who is competent to carry out any necessary repairs and issue a certificate of "Serviceability for Use".

Broken or suspect apparatus must be put out of use and clearly marked so as to prevent further use until it has been repaired.

Teachers must understand the uses of mats. Mats need to be selected carefully to meet the needs of both child and activity. The general purpose mat of approximately 25 mm thickness is adequate to meet most landing needs inherent to the usual level of Primary school gymnastics.

Mats should not be placed in indiscriminate and inappropriate profusion as they will become a real and greater danger to participants tripping and falling.

Mats may be required by inexperienced pupils in the very early stages of gaining skills in traversing apparatus at height. Once pupils have developed sufficient skills and confidence mats can be safely dispensed with.

Formal gymnastics as an extra curricular activity.

All the forms of formal gymnastics have the potential for danger. Only teachers who have successfully taken a specialist course in gymnastics are qualified to teach formal gymnastics and the named skills (BG awards or Olympic Gymnastics). Unless qualified to this level, springboards and trampettes are not to be used at primary level.

Physical education in secondary schools.

All the aforementioned requirements stated relating to Primary school PE will need to be met but a higher level of awareness, training and competence will be required of staff to ensure risks are controlled to an acceptable level given the wider range of activities offered and increased levels of hazard and exposure. Secondary schools should consider carefully the competency of individuals who teach or supervise PE and school sport to ensure that their duty of care is properly fulfilled in any given situation and ensure this is reflected in their risk assessments and safe systems of work.

Trampolining in secondary schools

To teach and supervise Trampolining in secondary schools, teachers must have undergone a specialist coaching course to a qualification standard set by the British Gymnastics such as British Gymnastics Teachers award (level 1 for teaching up to but not including rotation or level 2 to include rotation), or a British Gymnastics coaches award level 2. Pupils will not be allowed to undertake work that is of a higher level of attainment than that of the supervising teacher or coach.

To continue to teach and coach, the holder of the initial British Gymnastics teachers coaching qualification is required to update their training after three years by successfully completing a British Gymnastics Trampolining Refresher Training Course and will thereafter be renewable by refresher training every three years.

Out of schools hours (OSHL) activities

This document also sets out the County Council expected standards for OSHL activities including school sport, which may take place before school, during lunchtimes and after school and which may be delivered by support staff. "Support staff" is the term given to all adults, other than trainee teachers, without qualified teacher status (QTS) who contribute to the learning of pupils in schools. This term includes regular staff on the school roll as well as visiting staff, whether occasional or regular contributors. In physical education and sport contexts such contributors are usually coaches employed directly or indirectly on short term arrangements.

The County Council adopts the guidance and advice of the Association for Physical Education (afPE) which has produced concise guidance for head teachers and other leadership staff responsible for deploying visiting support staff within physical education and sport. This guidance, ('Best practice guidance on the effective use of individual and agency coaches in PE and school sport') is available on the CCC website pe.learntogether.org.uk, the afPE website: www.afpe.org.uk and in Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport, 2012 and covers safe recruitment, induction, qualifications, experience and qualities necessary for a coach to work alone, day to day management, monitoring quality and effectiveness, and dealing with inadequate performance by the coach.

Associated County Council forms and documents

- **Manual Handling** - See section 3.13 Manual Handling
- **Training** – See section 3.4 Information & Training
- **Fire** - See section 3.11 Fire Safety
- **PPE** - See section 3.21 Personal Protective Equipment
- **Accident Reporting** - See section 3.8 Accidents/Incidents
- **First Aid** – See section 3.7 First Aid
- **Sun safety**
- **Play Equipment** (Fixed)
- **Playground Equipment Checklist**