

New Oscott Safe Practice in PE, School Sports and Physical Activity (PESSPA)

UPDATED: April 2019 by Robert Wood (PE and School Sport Lead) using AfPE Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016.

Overview

An activity is judged to be safe in physical education and sport where the risks associated with the activity are deemed to be acceptably low. **It is the responsibility of the teacher to identify those risks and decide whether the level of risk is acceptable.** They should do this through good teaching and management of a situation on a day to day basis. These principles should be outlined in a health and safety policy and reviewed annually.

We encourage the children to consider their own safety and the safety of others at all times. We expect them to change for PESSPA into the agreed clothing for each activity area. Teachers are expected to set a good example by wearing appropriate clothing when teaching PESSPA. No potentially dangerous jewellery is to be worn for any physical activity.

People-related Principles

Clothing for activity

- Young people should wear clothing that is fit for purpose according to the activity, environment and weather conditions.

New Oscott PE kit includes a red t-shirt and black shorts for indoor. An additional tracksuit /jumper for outdoor PE.

- Any items worn for PESSPA, including any of cultural significance need to be relatively close fitting or removed for safety reasons (see Chapter 2, Section 10, Page 175 of AFPE Handbook, Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016)
- Loose clothing for swimming is not advised. Staff should refer to guidance in 'Teaching Swimming and Water Safety at Key Stage 1 or 2 - Primary School Support Materials – Swim Group November 2018' or AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 1, Page 352-369 for further clarification.
- Staff should always be suitably dressed to teach PE lessons. Appropriate footwear is essential.

New Oscott PE wear is available from Kukri Sports, but this is not compulsory.

Competence (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 2, Pages 68-70)

- Anyone teaching physical education lessons needs to be competent to do so.
- Competence to teach physical education may be defined as having the skills, knowledge and understanding and expertise necessary to plan, deliver and evaluate the physical education programme.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) highlights four means of demonstrating competence (AfPE Safe Practice 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 2, Page 68):

- to hold a relevant QTS qualification
- to hold an equivalent qualification
- have received appropriate in-house training
- be competent through experience

Staff are not legally required to hold a specific award in order to teach a physical education activity. However, it is wise for them to be able to demonstrate that they are suitably trained, experienced and qualified to undertake the activities in which they engage with young people.

Although an adult who does not have qualified Teacher Status (QTS) may be considered competent to work alone, they must always work under the supervision and direction of a qualified teacher.

At New Oscott all PE lessons are taken by an adult with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Other adults can be used in PE but under the direction of the teacher.

Control, Discipline, Behaviour and Group-management Skills

Poor discipline, control and behaviour management can adversely affect the standard of safety in any situation. Teachers need to consider:

- regular scanning of the whole group
- their own positioning in order to observe young people
- halting the activity when it becomes potentially unsafe
- that changing group sizes during a lesson needs careful consideration
- the whole school behaviour policy and how it relates to PE

Footwear – staff and young people (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 10, Page 176-177)

The basic principle is the necessity for secure footing whatever the surface or activity involved.

All staff need to change into appropriate footwear for the lesson location.

Barefoot work is safest in dance and gymnastics whether on the floor or apparatus as it allows the toes to grip.

Wearing only socks on a wooden floor causes slipping and this practice is dangerous for any activity.

Careful thought should be given to an activity where mixed footwear is worn by different young people. The premise is, again, secure footing, but consideration needs to be given to whether the mixed footwear would create a likely potential for injury being inflicted on others.

At New Oscott

For gymnastics, children need to wear pumps or barefoot.

For indoor PE lessons, other than Gymnastics and dance children can wear trainers.

Knowledge of young people (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 2, Page 71)

It is important that the teacher has relevant knowledge of the young people they teach.

Where the teacher is not the usual adult responsible, it is essential that the person is provided with key information about individuals within the group being taught.

Key information any teacher working with a group would benefit from knowing includes:

- relevant medical information
- behavioural information
- previous experience of the activity
- confidence and competence of individuals
- any special education needs and disability (SEND), individual need or any specific personal circumstances that may affect the young people's performance

At New Oscott

All supply teachers are given class information regarding medical and behavioural issues via the green folders.

Observation and Analysis (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 2, Page 72)

Teachers need to constantly check whether what is taking place is safe and, if not, **intervene or stop the activity to make it safe**. This requires the expertise to know what is safe and what is required to adjust the technique, skill or movement to make it safe.

Where teachers feel they do not have this level of expertise, they should discuss the issues with their line manager to determine what should be done to maintain safe situations in lessons.

At New Oscott

Teachers will check areas for safety by identifying any hazards, before any physical activity takes place.

Parental consent (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 7, Pages 143-147)

Parents cannot withdraw their child from prescribed curriculum subjects without formal agreement. They can, however choose whether their child can take part in optional Extra Curricular activities outside normal lesson times.

Consent forms do not indemnify the teacher should a young person be injured and thus no offer of indemnity by a parent should be accepted. A young person, if injured, can make a claim for compensation retrospectively in their own right within three years of becoming an adult, thus making the arrangement between teacher and parent meaningless in law.

At New Oscott, 2 hours of PE is compulsory for all children. Children are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities. If children are injured, they still actively take part in PE lessons, through leadership, coaching and refereeing.

Personal effects including jewellery and cultural or religious adornments (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 10, Page 179-182)

Staff need to be mindful of their own adornments and remove them prior to teaching physical education for both safety and role-model reasons.

Long hair worn by both staff and young people should always be tied back with a suitably soft item to prevent entanglement in apparatus and equipment and to prevent it obscuring vision. Nails need to be sufficiently short to prevent injury to self and others.

A young person cannot be excluded from the curriculum for wearing jewellery but they and their parents must understand the safety risks involved. A young person must not take part if safety is compromised but this should be as a last resort.

Staff need to determine through their risk assessment of an activity whether a young person should participate or not, it may be acceptable for a young person to be withdrawn temporarily in certain situations, that judgement lies with the member of staff taking the session. Alternative arrangements for involvement in the session should be sought.

Disclaimers from parents about the wearing of any item of jewellery by a young person should be declined. Such indemnities have no legal status. The duty of care remains firmly with the school on such matters.

A compromise must be sought and careful discussion with parents usually results in the best outcome. Point out the dangers of not only the wearer being injured but also the possibilities for others to be injured too (e.g. a barefooted child standing on any object is painful but to receive a stud earring in the bottom of a foot is extremely painful.)

At New Oscott, staff ensure that all long hair is tied back. Nails need to be sufficiently short to prevent injury to self and others.
Children are instructed not to wear jewellery for PE lessons.

The following procedure should be applied at the commencement of every session:

- All jewellery must be removed for all physical activity
- it should be the responsibility of the young person to remove such items and to be responsible for its care, but it is the member of staff's responsibility to ensure it happens
- it is not advisable for staff to remove, replace or be responsible for the safe keeping of such items
- young people should be asked at the beginning of physical education sessions whether they are wearing body jewellery. If they disclose this information, the principles above should be applied. If this information is not disclosed, the session may proceed as planned. However, if a member of staff becomes aware that body jewellery is being worn during the session, they should apply the principles described above as soon as they become aware of the situation

In instances where young people are unable to remove jewellery themselves, (for example, very young children) then the parent has the responsibility to ensure that they do not wear such items on physical education days.

Students unable to remove earrings should be required to make them safe by taping front and back, which may offer a measure of protection. The taping should be sufficient to prevent the stud post penetrating the bone behind the ear should an unintentional blow be received (eg from someone or from equipment such as a ball).

This taping may be done at home for younger children or prior to the lesson for older students. Staff are not required to remove or tape earrings for students.

Where taping is utilised, the teacher supervising the group maintains the legal responsibility to **ensure the taping is effective** for purpose. Where staff consider the taping to be unsatisfactory to permit safe participation, they will need to consider alternative involvement in the lesson for the student.

Medical aid wrist bands

Recent developments in the manufacture of medical aid wrist bands have resulted in products with an acceptably low risk factor (soft materials used, Velcro fastenings). Such items should be acceptable for participation in most activities, largely avoiding the need for removal. However, these bracelets need to be regularly checked by the owner to make sure there are no hard or sharp edges that may cause injury. Where there is any concern, the bracelet can be covered with tape, padding or a soft, sports-style wristband.

Teeth Braces or Dentures

Young people know whether these are allowed to be removed and usually have a special container for them.

Sensory Aids

The decision as to whether it is safe or possible to wear **glasses** or **hearing aids** will usually be determined by the nature of the activity. Activities involving physical contact and full game situations may not be appropriate. For example, England Rugby (RFU) allows the wearing of glasses (in non-contact games) up to the under-8 age group, while The Football Association (FA) leaves this to the referee's discretion up to the age of 14. (See also sports goggles – Chapter 2, Section 11, 2.11.45–2.11.48, pages 188–189.)

Where the sensory aid needs to be worn for safe participation by the individual, then the staff, wherever possible, need to **amend** the activity (such as providing more space and time) or the equipment (such as using a soft ball instead of a harder one) in order to try to make participation while wearing a sensory aid as safe as possible for the wearer and others in the group.

At New Oscott, children are allowed to wear spectacles for PE lessons. Parents are advised to supply plastic lenses. In contact sports, children are advised to wear contact lenses or sports glasses. If this is not possible, then glasses can be worn with plastic lenses.

All watches, including FitBits and similar products, must be removed during all PE lessons.

Safeguarding

New Oscott have a safeguarding policy and procedures. Teachers need to know these, apply them and inform support staff of the required protocols and who the member of staff responsible for safeguarding is, to whom they should report concerns.

A teacher's duty is to pass on concerns about possible abuse to the appropriate person, using the appropriate method.

Context-related Principles

Changing provision (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 13, Page 223-224)

This principle is about ensuring **dignity, decency and privacy** where needed, be it for reasons of physical development or other individual needs.

The changing space should be **checked** regularly, before and during use, to ensure that:

- pegs, where installed, are not broken or exposing sharp edges
- adequate space is available for the number of students changing, including space to store their clothes neatly
- additional accessible space is provided, where required, for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (eg wheelchairs users, those requiring help with changing)
- benching and other furniture is fixed to prevent it toppling over during use
- there are no sharp edges to tiling or heaters that could cause injury
- floor surfaces are not slippery when wet
- personal items and clothing do not litter the floor to cause potential tripping hazards

Where **safety standards** are compromised, alternative arrangements need to be made and faults reported to the school leadership team.

Many **primary schools** lack purpose-built changing rooms but find spaces where the sexes, individuals or small groups can change separately. Preference expressed for separate sex areas regularly extends to students as young as the start of Key Stage 2. Schools should begin to consider how they can accommodate this safely by:

- using screens in a classroom to separate the room
- allowing one sex to change during a break time, if this occurs directly before the lesson
- using two different areas, such as a cloakroom and a classroom if supervision is available
- considering how appropriate changing areas might be provided in their long-term planning.

When changing, there is no statutory requirement for students to be **supervised** at all times. However, case law provides a clear indication that the incidence of injury is much higher when students are not supervised than when they are.

The degree and method of supervision will vary according to the particular circumstances, but age, behaviour, potential bullying, and safety aspects of the space itself will contribute to deciding whether constant direct supervision is necessary or intermittent direct supervision is safe. The location of the staff responsible for the group is of particular importance. It must be considered whether they can provide the level of

supervision required while they are fulfilling their usual pre-lesson organisational tasks. Some schools use changing time as a positive part of the learning experience.

Remote supervision refers to a situation in which a member of staff responsible for a group of students is not directly present. This type of supervision may be implemented in appropriate circumstances where only one member of staff is available for changing-room supervision (eg in situations such as teaching mixed-gender groups). Remote supervision might involve tasking a reliable student with reporting any concerns in the changing area to the member of staff who is outside the changing area.

The suitability of remote supervision would be dependent on the location of the changing areas, student behaviour, age and ability. This method is only satisfactory when the member of staff remains on hand in the immediate vicinity outside the changing area to respond to any alert.

Direct supervision of students enables the member of staff to intervene at any time. Decisions to supervise less directly should not be taken lightly.

At New Oscott, children get changed in their classrooms up to Year 4. In Upper Key Stage 2 (years 5 and 6) boys and girls get changed in separate classroom and are supervised accordingly. Reasonable adjustments will be made for individual cases.

Equipment (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 12, Page 191-210)

Equipment used in lessons should be visually checked prior to young people using it, to ensure it is safe to use, assembled correctly and not damaged or faulty.

Equipment that has been condemned by a specialist company must not be used and needs to be removed so it cannot come back into use inadvertently.

Young people need to be taught how to lift and carry equipment safely from an early age.

Equipment should be used to the purpose it is designed for. Where a decision is made to use an item for a purpose it is not actually designed for, the teacher would need to have a very strong justification for deciding to improvise in the event of an accident.

Safety and rescue equipment, such as that relevant to swimming lessons, needs to be confirmed as being to hand before lessons begin.

At New Oscott, equipment that could potentially be used inappropriately is only to be used when supervised in PE lessons. This includes rounders bats, tennis rackets, hurdles or other objects which may cause injury.

Injuries, emergencies and critical incidents (See AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 1, Section 7, Pages 58-59)

Everyday living and working present potential risks, but these risks are managed by adopting strategies learnt from a range of experiences. Staff have a responsibility to employ methods to control and manage risk as part of good teaching and management.

Establishing and maintaining a safe working environment is something that all staff delivering or teaching physical education, school sport and physical activity (PESSPA) need to aim to achieve, and is a statutory requirement of the **Teachers' Standards** (see Chapter 2, Section 2, page 73), and of Level 2 coaching qualifications.

Figure 3 shows how the likelihood of injury might be anticipated as one progresses along the continuum from a totally safe situation to one that is considered dangerous.

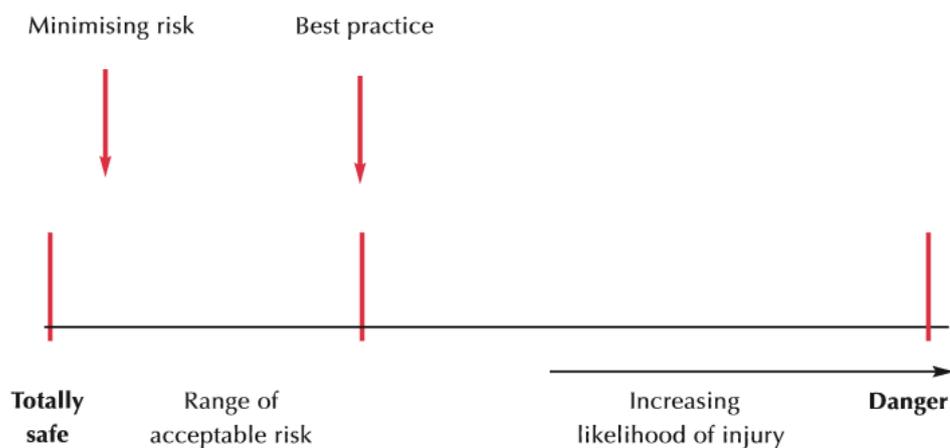


Figure 3: Managing risk

Whitlam, P. (2004) *Case Law in Physical Education*. Leeds: afPE/Coachwise Ltd. ISBN:1-902523-77-6.

Thorough planning and preparation of their PESSPA sessions will help staff to anticipate the level of **potential risk**, and they should proceed with the session only when the level is acceptable. An activity may be extremely challenging on the continuum in Figure 3, but planning and effective management will help maintain a safe learning environment.

Trying to eradicate all risk in PESSPA in order to achieve a 'totally safe' PESSPA environment (as suggested on the left of the diagram) is not only unrealistic, but could also result in sessions that present little challenge to students. This may limit the level of work expected of students and hamper their progress. Low-risk teaching is usually demonstrated by individuals who lack competence, and therefore confidence, in managing risk.

When students are not challenged sufficiently, they are more likely to struggle to stay on task, and a decline in standards of behaviour can result, which might in itself lead to a situation becoming less safe.

Teachers need to know and apply the school's procedures for dealing with injuries and other emergencies. Where concerns exist about not knowing the whole-school procedures, teachers need to consult the head teacher.

New Oscott have the red hand procedure in place, where all teachers carry a red hand, which is taken to another member of staff if there is a critical incident.

Inhalers should be accessible during each PE lesson.

Work area (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 13, Pages 211-227)

Before and during lessons, the work area needs to be checked to ensure it is safe for young person participation.

Demonstrations (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 5, Page 123)

Staff should be aware of safeguarding procedures with regard to placing parts of a young person's body correctly during a demonstration.

Staff must be fully capable if they wish to demonstrate a skill being taught, and have warmed up appropriately to be able to perform it safely.

Staff must not place themselves in a situation where they might cause damage to themselves or to young people in their care. It is always advisable to use a competent young person to demonstrate skills and activities.

At New Oscott, Staff must be fully capable if they wish to demonstrate a skill being taught, and have warmed up appropriately to be able to perform it safely. When appropriate, staff will use a competent young person to demonstrate skills and activities.

Staff must not participate with children.

Group work (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 8, Pages 148-159)

Where the class is divided into smaller groups, methods of supervision need to be carefully considered.

Matching the young people (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 8, Pages 155-157)

Individual young people's levels of confidence, strength, prior experience, size and ability need to be accommodated in teaching contexts and the earliest stages of competition. Grouping and pairing young people according to any of these individual characteristics need to be considered in order to establish a safe learning environment.

Such group management is essential where weight bearing, physical contact or where a hard ball is thrown or bowled at an opponent form part of the learning. Careful consideration should be given in mixed ability, mixed age and mixed gender groupings.

At New Oscott, Reception, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6 are suitable groups for activities.

Ongoing risk assessments (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 9, Pages 160-173)

Risk assessment is simply a judgement as to whether a situation is safe within established practice and procedures or additional precautions are required to make the situation safer.

Risk-benefit analysis is the act of comparing the benefits of the activity or experience against the level of risk and likelihood of injury occurring. If the risk is greater than the benefit, then the activity either does not take place or is amended to a level where the positive benefit is greater than the risk of injury.

Written risk assessment for physical education should be available in all schools and departments and should be readily available to all who contribute to teaching the programme.

New Oscott has detailed risk assessments for all areas of activity, available to staff on the school server

Dynamic (i.e. continuous or ongoing) assessment of risk, anticipating the likelihood of injury occurring, should be part of a teacher's normal planning, teaching and evaluation of a session.

Such risk assessments are not in written form but should be evident in planning and teaching of the activity as an ongoing process. This involves forethought and anticipation of what could go wrong in the planned session and how any such event would be managed effectively.

Progression (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 5, Pages 116-119)

Progression is about the staged development of expertise according to confidence, ability and successful prior experience.

Fatigue and injury may occur where young people are required to use equipment or attempt a task that is inappropriate to their age, stage of development or ability and where they are required to play on pitches and courts inappropriate to their stamina, strength or disability, or where they are required to carry out events over longer distances than those recommended for their age or stage of development.

Age related pitch and court sizes should be made available, either in a permanent or temporary form as well as age related and ability related equipment.

Differentiation should be created through the use of the STEP principle.

Weather conditions (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 5, Pages 124-126)

Staff must assess the safety of weather conditions, there should be no risk to the wellbeing of either young people or staff to the dangers of extreme heat, cold, thunder and lightning, high winds, ice etc.

At New Oscott, playgrounds are used for PE, except when they are extremely wet to the point where they are slippery or if they are with standing water. The field should not be used if frozen or slippery and staff should complete ongoing risk assessments and adapt lessons suitably. Water bottles should be available for children and should be stored in a safe place during the PE lessons.

Exposure to sun (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 11, Page 189)

Young people exposed to prolonged spells of sunshine (e.g. when playing a cricket match or taking part in outdoor athletics) may be at risk unless suitable preventative measures are taken. Staff should monitor young people for signs of heat exhaustion.

School staff are recommended to take the following common-sense precautions:

- young people should not be over-exposed to direct sunlight particularly around midday
- teach young people when and how to cover their bodies with loose-fitting, lightly
- woven material that will screen them from the sun, however, such clothing should not be so loose as to endanger them during physical activity
- be particularly vigilant with fair-skinned young people and very young children, whose skin reacts quickly to sunburn
- sunglasses and hats can provide effective screening in selected activities where they pose no danger to the wearer or other participants in terms of the quality of the items or the nature of the activity
- parental approval will be required to use sunscreen products, which parents should provide
- provide access to shade and water

At New Oscott, Children are not be over-exposed to direct sunlight. Children are allowed constant access to water. Children are allowed to bring sun hats. Sunglasses are not permitted. Water bottles should be available for children and should be stored in a safe place during the PE lessons.

Rules (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 5, Page 123 and Chapter 2, Section 11, Pages 189-190)

Teachers have a duty of care and a duty of control when officiating in competitive games.

They need to know the rules relevant to the activity and must apply the rules stringently in order to avoid unnecessary, foreseeable injury.

At New Oscott, Teachers are responsible for refereeing matches. Where appropriate and deemed safe by the teacher, Young leaders can officiate the games. Teachers should have a clear stop signal and children should be aware of the importance of stopping immediately after hearing the signal.

Staff involvement in PESSPA (for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 8, Pages 157-158)

Every school should have a detailed scheme of work that provides for safe, structured progression in the physical education programme.

All schools should have a clearly stated policy on physical contact between staff and students. It is the responsibility of the school to inform parents of this.

It is important that a teacher informs a young person when contact is required for example in gymnastics, and what form the contact will take and that the young person confirms that this is acceptable.

Full staff participation in young people's activities is not advised, whether in lesson times or competitive contexts, such as staff versus young people matches, because of the likelihood of injury caused by differences in size, strength, previous experience and confidence.

Staff should not participate or demonstrate activities which are beyond their physical capabilities.

At New Oscott, Staff do not participate in competitive activities with children or other staff

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES TO SPECIFIC AREAS OF ACTIVITY

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

(for further information see AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 8, Pages 434-462)

The outdoor and adventure activities context

Outdoor and adventure activities (OAA) recognise the benefits of environmental education and adventure, which encourage students to take responsibility for their own actions in appropriately challenging situations. These opportunities offer learning through 'real' experiences and have the potential to develop skills for life. OAA include:

- **local/low-level outdoor activities** such as problem-solving activities, introductory orienteering, low-level climbing, excursions in normal lowland countryside, and team-building activities, which can develop trust, communication and leadership skills using simple equipment in safe, controlled environments
- **outdoor adventure activities (often conducted off site)** such as rock climbing, sailing, potholing, canoeing and abseiling, in which the spirit of adventure needs to be balanced against responsibility for the well-being and safety of those participating.

General safe-practice issues

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of OAA. A helpful summary of these are provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about OAA are provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with these and apply them to their unique set of circumstances. The rules of the governing bodies of sport may not always be appropriate to schools, and schools should adjust their practice where necessary. (See Chapter 1, Section 2, 1.2.10–1.2.14, and Chapter 2, Section 5, 2.5.60–2.5.61.) Links to websites can be followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of OAA.

For activities on school sites during normal curriculum time:

- many activities which will take place on the school site do not require specialist qualifications - check very carefully before proceeding with any activities and adhere to the regulations for those activities which do require a specialist qualification
- there should be access to first aid at all times
- safety factors need to be considered for each activity undertaken

- young people and staff should be properly dressed, for example, clothing which prevents scratches and stings in a wooded environment, warm clothing and appropriate footwear for inclement conditions
- young people must be taught the restrictions and bounds of an activity and be aware of their own limitations, staff need to point out the 'out of bounds' areas e.g. pond, car park, school building and why restrictions are placed on these areas
- safety codes for non-standard items of equipment do not exist e.g. milk crates, tyres etc. - you must set high standards for these and make sure the young people know them

Before doing any activity involving the use of non-standard items of equipment:

- spend time with the young people giving consideration to possible problems that may occur
- try out the activity with a small group - closely supervised
- make modification to the equipment, or activity if needed
- only use the equipment as part of a programme within which young people are taught the safety procedures

AQUATIC ACTIVITIES

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 1, Pages 352-369)

The aquatic activities context

Swimming is a very inclusive, health-promoting activity that can be continued for life. Learning to swim and be confident in water not only saves lives, but can also provide the essential foundation for individuals to access many water-based recreational activities. Aquatic activities include swimming, water safety activities, lifesaving, diving and open-water swimming.

General safe-practice issues:

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of aquatic activities. A helpful summary of these is provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about aquatic activities is provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with this and apply it to their unique set of circumstances. The rules of the governing bodies of sport may not always be appropriate to schools, and schools should adjust their practice where necessary. (See Chapter 1, Section 2, 1.2.10–1.2.14, and Chapter 2, Section 5, 2.5.60–2.5.61.) Links to websites can be followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of aquatic activities.

Provision

Due to the evident hazard of drowning, learning to swim and develop water safety skills continues to be an entitlement and a statutory element of the national curriculum (eg in England [2014] and Northern Ireland [2015]).

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 2, Pages 370-376)

The athletics context

Curriculum provision of athletics can play a key role in developing physical literacy. It provides an introduction to, and progression in, running, jumping and throwing, and can establish firm foundations for confident and competent participation in other physical education, school sport and physical activity (PESSPA) activities. Primary school is a key environment in which to develop the fundamental principles associated with these skills in their purest forms.

General safe-practice issues

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of athletics activities. A helpful summary of these is provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about athletics activities are provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with these and apply them to their unique set of circumstances. The rules of the governing bodies of sport may not always be appropriate to schools, and schools should adjust their practice where necessary. (See Chapter 1, Section 2, 1.2.10–1.2.14, and Chapter 2, Section 5, 2.5.60–2.5.61.) Links to websites can be followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of athletics activities.

COMBAT ACTIVITIES

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 3, Pages 377-387)

The combat and martial arts activities context

Combat activities are competitive contact sports that are characterised by one-on-one combat in which a winner is determined against a set of rules. In many combat sports, a contestant wins by scoring more points than their opponent (eg boxing, fencing, self-defence and wrestling). Some combat activities are regulated by **recognised governing bodies of sport**, and others are not. This does not necessarily imply unsafe practice.

Martial arts are traditions of combat techniques practised for a variety of reasons, such as self-defence, competition, physical health and fitness, entertainment, as well as mental, physical and spiritual development. Martial arts include the activities aikido, judo, karate, kendo, ju-jitsu, kung fu and taekwondo. The activity known as '**mixed martial arts**' (MMA) takes place within a caged arena for safety. This is currently not an activity that afPE condones in schools.

Mixed combat activities lessons are becoming common, providing a 'taster' of several different sports. Where schools offer more than one combat activity in any one session, staff should be appropriately qualified in **each of the activities** involved. The term 'mixed combat activities' should not be confused with the activity of 'mixed martial arts' as detailed above.

General safe-practice issues:

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of combat activities. A helpful summary of these is provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about combat activities are provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with these and apply them to their unique set of circumstances. The rules of the governing bodies of sport may not always be appropriate to schools, and schools should adjust their practice where necessary. (See Chapter 1, Section 2, 1.2.10–1.2.14, and Chapter 2, Section 5, 2.5.60–2.5.61.) Links to websites can be followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of combat activities.

It is advisable to **inform parents** about decisions to introduce combat and martial arts activities into a school programme.

All combat and martial arts activities should be appropriate to the age, ability, strength, stamina and experience of the students involved. A progressive scheme of work is essential. Basic **skills and rules** should be taught before competitive combat is introduced. Rules need to be applied fully and consistently.

DANCE ACTIVITIES, MOVEMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 4, Pages 388-390)

The dance context

Dance is a creative activity that uses movement with imagination through the processes of composing, performing and appreciating. Dance provides unique learning opportunities within schools in that it is a vehicle for young people to physically express and communicate their ideas, identity and culture, and their understanding about themselves, others and the society in which they live. Dance can contribute to students' physical, aesthetic, artistic, creative, cultural and social development, and can also play an important role in promoting physical and emotional health and well-being.

Different dance styles and techniques emphasise particular movements, use of the body, relationships with gravity and other stylistic elements. Students should be provided with opportunities to acquire and develop both safe and effective technique and approaches to working creatively. Although dance may seem relatively low risk in comparison to other physical education, school sport and physical activity (PESSPA) activities, comprehensive and informed risk management remains essential.

General safe-practice issues:

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of dance. A helpful summary of these is provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about dance are provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with these and apply

them to their unique set of circumstances. Links to websites can be followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of dance.

People

- Staff teaching dance need to be appropriately qualified or experienced
- Know how to prevent injury.
- Young people should work in bare feet where safe to do so; otherwise appropriate footwear should be used.
- Wearing socks (without shoes) on a wooden floor can cause slipping and are dangerous for any activity; staff should ensure young people do not work in this way.

At New Oscott children can wear pumps or have bare feet for dance activities.

GAMES ACTIVITIES

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 5, Pages 391-411)

The games context

Games include all team or individual activities or ‘**sports**’ in which players use a range of tactics and strategies to overcome opponents in direct competition. Depending on the demands of each particular game, and the level at which it is played, the degree of challenge faced will vary.

Participation in competitive games not only benefits physical health but can also benefit social and emotional health and well-being by building traits such as confidence, a sense of belonging, a sense of achievement, an ability to work effectively with others and resilience.

Curriculum games are sometimes categorised as invasion games (eg football, hockey, basketball, rugby, netball), net/wall games (tennis, badminton, volleyball), and fielding and striking games (rounders, cricket, softball). In addition, target games such as archery and golf have become increasingly popular in schools.

General safe-practice issues:

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of games activities. A helpful summary of these is provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about games activities are provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with these and apply them to their unique set of circumstances. The rules of the governing bodies of sport may not always be appropriate to schools, and schools should adjust their practice where necessary. (See Chapter 1, Section 2, pages 1.2.10–1.2.14, and Chapter 2, Section 5, 2.5.60–2.5.61.) Links to websites can be

followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of games activities.

Alternative versions of specific games

It is possible to access alternative versions of many games activities played in school or club settings. This is particularly useful when:

- introducing a game to younger or less able students
- making a game more inclusive and accessible to a wider range of participants
- less space is available for learning
- fewer participants are available.

Where 'outdoor' games are played indoors (as a result of poor weather or limited facilities), it is important that adjustments are made to ensure the safety of those involved. Consider:

- clearly marking the reduced playing area, and making players aware of this
- ensuring adequate run-off areas are available
- reducing team numbers
- considering any necessary changes to the rules of the activity.

One of the most significant features of games activities, in terms of assessing and managing risk, is that they challenge participants to work in situations that are constantly changing, where the body may be still or moving. The degree of challenge faced will vary significantly, depending on the demands of each particular game and the level at which it is played.

The use of a range of equipment in games activities, including projectiles – some of which are very hard – and a range of implements, such as bats, sticks and rackets, further complicates the situation.

General safe practice issues

People

- Staff should have a current working knowledge and understanding of the rules, techniques and tactics of the activity they are supervising, teaching or officiating on.
- Know and apply rules stringently and consistently.
- Wear kit, footwear and additional clothing appropriate to the activity and weather conditions.

Context

- Equipment should be fit for purpose and meet young people's needs, abilities and developmental stages.
- Equipment should be of the correct size and weight for the age, ability and category of player.

- Goal posts and nets need to be secured so as not to topple over during play, have protective padding applied where relevant, taking note of NGB guidelines.
- Facilities should be regularly maintained to provide a safe working environment.

Organisation

- Good organisation should ensure weather conditions do not affect safety.
- Rules should be applied consistently to provide a safe context.
- Progression should be provided through conditioned practices and mini games that match the age, experience, ability and confidence of all young people.

Additional safety information for invasion games

'Invasion games' is a collective term applied to team games in which the objective is to attack and defend parts of the playing area with the aim of scoring more goals or points than the opposition. They include fast moving activity, frequently involve physical contact and in some games, hard implements.

The most common causes of accidents include:

- unintended collision with other players
- being struck by a hard implement or ball
- poor application of technique, such as when tackling

Additional safety information for net/wall games

Net/wall games are comparatively safe compared to other types of game, but injuries do occur, predominantly involving eye damage.

The most common causes of accidents include:

- being struck by a racket or fast moving missile (ball, shuttlecock etc)
- tripping or slipping
- collision with obstacles, equipment or another player
- crossing a court when in use

Additional safety information for striking and fielding games

Striking and fielding games involve throwing, catching, running, bowling and striking using an implement. Potential risk is increased when using a hard ball.

The most common causes of accidents include:

- being unintentionally struck with a fast moving hard ball
- being unintentionally struck with a bat or stick
- collision with another player or item of equipment such as a post

GYMNASTIC ACTIVITIES

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 6, Pages 412-421)

The gymnastics activities context

Gymnastics involves moving the body with control and precision, and is often described as body management through the use of functional movement. Gymnastics activities can include a variety of movement experiences both off and on apparatus that include transferring weight, flight, balance and rotations. Gymnastics activities in schools help students to develop locomotor and balance skills, as well as body and spatial awareness, coordination, flexibility, agility, muscular strength and endurance and bone strength.

General safe-practice issues:

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of gymnastics activities. A helpful summary of these is provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about gymnastics activities are provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with these and apply them to their unique set of circumstances. The rules of the governing bodies of sport may not always be appropriate to schools, and schools should adjust their practice where necessary. (See Chapter 1, Section 2, 1.2.10–1.2.14, and Chapter 2, Section 5, 2.5.60–2.5.61.) Links to websites can be followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of gymnastics activities.

Safe exercise practice

Staff should be well informed about the principles of safe exercise practice, and able to incorporate them into their gymnastics activity sessions in relation to:

- warming up and cooling down
- developing and monitoring safe, effective and correct joint alignment (eg knees over toes when bending, correct spinal alignment in different moves, avoiding moves/exercises that put stress on joints, especially the neck, lower back or knees)
- developing and monitoring safe, effective and correct technique to minimise the risks associated with high impact (eg safe jumping and landing technique) and appropriate use of control (eg ensuring that all movements are 'stoppable')
- developing safe technique for supporting others' weight (when appropriate).

Guidance on specific gymnastics activities

Curriculum gymnastics

For the purpose of this resource 'curriculum gymnastics' refers to movement challenges that develop body management and locomotor skills. Curriculum gymnastics helps students to acquire precision of movement and quality of response in the creative contexts of balancing, inverting, climbing, rolling, jumping, landing, transferring weight, stepping and managing the body in flight. Skills and creative sequences are developed using the floor, mats and/or small and large gymnastics apparatus.

Staff teaching curriculum gymnastics should be competent to do so and should work at a level at which they feel confident about their own experience and expertise.

An appropriate British Gymnastics (BG) advanced level teaching or coaching award is strongly advised for staff wishing to offer formal gymnastics in primary or secondary schools, through an out-of-hours club and/or when seeking to involve students in, and prepare them for, competitive involvement.

On no account should any school gymnastics session ever be left **unsupervised**. In the event of the member of staff needing to resolve any emergency or organisational problem, all gymnastics activity should stop until the member of staff deems it safe to continue.

It is recognised that work on apparatus presents higher risks than floor or mat work, with the majority of recorded incidents typically involving falls or misjudged descents from gymnastics equipment. However, work at a low level (ie on the floor or when using benches and mats) requires equally rigorous risk management.

Most **primary schools** deliver curriculum gymnastics through a task-centred or problem-solving approach, building in some direct teaching where progress and safety issues require a specific focus. The ability of staff to set realistic and appropriate movement challenges based on the existing abilities of their students is key to safety in this approach.

Physical **support** may be necessary in the learning of more complex skills, usually to prevent under- or over-rotation. Guidance on physical contact should always be followed.

Sensible and appropriate progression would typically involve the development or consolidation of skills using the floor or mats, followed by application and further consolidation of the skills on apparatus.

The frequency, intensity and duration of **training sessions** for students progressing towards competitive situations need to reflect the physical and mental maturity of those involved.

Reasonable adjustments to tasks, and clear support and guidance can create a safe learning environment to enable students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to participate fully.

Barefoot work is preferable for curriculum gymnastics where the surface is appropriate.

Sprung floors used exclusively for gymnastics lessons provide optimum levels of safety and are the most conducive to barefoot work.

Soft-soled, flexible gymnastics slippers are also appropriate to enable the 'feel' of a movement. Thick-soled training shoes are not suitable. Socks should never be worn on a polished surface.

Clothing should allow free, unrestricted movement without being loose. Very loose clothing may snag on equipment and cause injury.

Apparatus should conform to appropriate standards, and be purchased from reliable sources and stored in a manner that allows ready access. **Equipment** should be

maintained in good order, and removed if damaged or condemned. The condition of apparatus and equipment should be monitored regularly by a member of staff responsible for, and experienced in, the teaching of gymnastics, and checked visually by the teachers and students prior to commencing work.

Organisation of lessons needs to take account of accommodating large groups in a limited space, such as with compact apparatus arrangements or alternating periods of observation with practical involvement.

Students should be involved in **moving and assembling apparatus** from the earliest ages in a manner appropriate to their age, ability, physical development and safety awareness.

Many primary schools make use of BG's **Key-Steps** Gymnastics competition framework. The equipment required to meet the different levels of competition does not differ from that recommended for use in primary schools. At the highest level (Y6 Option 3) of the vaulting element, the use of regular 25mm gymnastics mats is sufficient for safe landing, providing correct landing technique has been taught and mastered by the students.

Inspection of gymnastics equipment and apparatus should take place at least annually by a specialist company.

At New Oscott, we allow pumps to be worn or in bare feet for/gymnastics.

At New Oscott, mats are placed under and near to any vaulting or climbing activity. Children are made aware that mats are only there for a cushion on landing and will not prevent serious injury. Children are instructed to carry mats with 4 people on a corner. In UKS2, 2 children can carry the lighter mats, one at each end. Mats should also be used for all floor work.

HEALTH RELATED PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 4, Section 7, Pages 422-433)

The health-related physical activities context

Health-related physical activity (HRPA) is physical activity associated with health enhancement and disease prevention. All UK countries highlight the importance of HRPA in their national curriculum orders and have made learning about healthy active lifestyles (HAL) (albeit under different titles) an inclusive learning entitlement.

Learning about HAL involves students developing the knowledge, understanding, motor skills, social and emotional competences, positive attitudes and confidence necessary to feel empowered to make informed decisions about the role of lifelong physical activity in promoting health and emotional well-being in their own and others' lives.

All physical education, school sport and physical activity (PESSPA) activities have the potential to be health-related. In addition, specific exercise and fitness activities are increasingly used in both primary and secondary schools as contexts for learning about HAL. Such activities include various types of circuits, exercise to music/'aerobics' activities (including step and zumba), Pilates, skipping and yoga. Many secondary schools also promote learning about HAL in a fitness room environment (ie using cardiovascular machines, fixed resistance equipment and free weights). Given the increasing range of health-related physical activities currently included in PESSPA programmes, it is important that staff are very clear about the safe practice and principles to monitor and apply.

General safe-practice issues:

Fundamental principles of safe practice (Chapter 1) and principles of safe organisation and management (Chapter 2) should be understood and applied to all school provision of HRPAs. A helpful summary of these is provided in Table 6, Chapter 2, pages 64–67. More specific guidance and information about HRPAs are provided in this section, and staff should familiarise themselves with these and apply them to their unique set of circumstances. Links to websites can be followed to access additional information relating to safe provision of HRPAs.

Safe exercise practice

Staff should be well informed about the principles of safe exercise practice and able to effectively apply them when completing risk assessments of exercise and fitness activities, especially in relation to:

- warming up and cooling down
- developing and monitoring safe and effective technique (eg knees over toes when bending, correct spinal alignment, avoiding moves/exercises that put stress on the neck, lower back or knees)
- ensuring that exercise and fitness activities are developmentally appropriate for all students.

Equipment

Mats should be available for any exercises that require kneeling, sitting or lying on the floor (eg resistance exercises working against body weight, or cool-down stretches). Lightweight, portable, individual **exercise mats are ideal for this purpose. However, exercise mats should never be used in other activity areas as substitutes for proper gymnastics mats.**

Music is often used as an accompaniment for specific HRPAs (eg aerobics and circuits).

Staff should ensure that:

- **all electrical equipment** such as CD players has been PAT tested (see Chapter 2, Section 12, page 210)
- the volume of the music allows their students to hear staff instructions and peer conversations relevant to safe practice, procedures and learning

- the use of music does not adversely effect the ability of students to access learning (eg those with hearing impairments or autism/autistic spectrum disorder [ASD]/Asperger's syndrome). See Chapter 2, Section 14, page 235.

Guidance on specific health-related physical activities:

Fitness testing

Fitness testing is common practice in the majority of secondary schools and an increasing number of primary schools, and involves the administration of a range of simple tests that measure the components of health-related fitness (eg cardiovascular fitness, strength, endurance, flexibility) and performance-related fitness (eg agility, balance, power, reaction time). Examples of tests commonly used include the abdominal curl conditioning test, Cooper Run, Multistage Fitness Test ('beep test'), and sit and reach test.

It is recommended that any form of fitness testing carried out with students in curriculum time should be **positive**, meaningful, relevant, **developmentally appropriate**, and part of a planned, progressive programme of study, the primary aim of which is to promote healthy, active lifestyles (afPE [2015] 'Health position statement').

afPE advocates that fitness testing is **not good use** of the limited curriculum physical education time in primary schools.

For fitness testing to be seen as part of a PESSPA programme that promotes the health, safety and well-being of all young people, staff would be wise to consider:

- the appropriateness of the fitness tests chosen
- the implementation methods used
- over-use of fitness testing as a means for promoting and enhancing students' participation in physical activity.

Maximal tests, such as the Multistage Fitness Test ('beep test') and abdominal curl conditioning test, were designed **for elite adult performers**. The appropriateness of these tests for safe use with young people and children is questionable.

Maximal tests are problematic for use with mixed ability groups of students because:

- they can impose inappropriate physiological demands
- self-imposed and peer pressure can encourage exercise beyond safe limits
- screening is required prior to such tests
- close and continuous monitoring is essential.

Fitness tests that are individualised and developmentally appropriate are recommended

for curriculum use. Such tests might include:

- maximal tests that allow students to pace themselves during the time or distance allowed (eg **time/distance runs** and timed/paced muscular or **endurance tests**)
- **sub-maximal tests** (eg taking a pulse rate after 2–3 mins of paced step-ups), which make more appropriate demands on developing systems and provide more information for learning about fitness components.

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE PLAY IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

(taken from AfPE – Safe Practice in PESSPA 2016 – Chapter 2, Section 12, Page 201)

Play equipment

Soft play shapes should offer firm and predictable support, with replacement as wear and tear takes place. The surfaces of soft play equipment should be cleaned periodically.

Wheeled equipment, such as tricycles, should be confined to designated areas.

The use of **bats and balls** can prove hazardous in confined areas. Careful planning using **zoned areas** of the playground can help reduce any risk of injury.

Where lunchtime supervisory staff are involved in setting up activities or distributing equipment, they should be trained to do so. Care should be taken to ensure that equipment appropriate for different age groups is **not mixed up**. This avoids students inadvertently using equipment not designed for them in subsequent sessions.

Any '**young leaders**' leading activities using play equipment should be supervised at all times.

Playground climbing equipment

All climbing equipment should be appropriate for the age and developmental needs of the students who will use it. It is advisable to provide separate use of climbing frames for younger and older students, and for more timid students and more adventurous individuals.

Professional judgement should be used to decide whether inclement weather restricts the use of outdoor climbing frames. Considerations would include type of footwear worn, age and experience of the users, and materials used in the construction.

Safety surfaces require regular maintenance.