



Student Welfare PE & Sports Policy

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STUDENT WELFARE PE & SPORTS POLICY

Physical and Sport Education

The nature of physical and sport education activities means that Principals and teachers must ensure that appropriate precautions and safety measures are taken to minimise any potential risk to students. Such precautions and safety measures will include risk management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks as well as relevant training in first-aid for the teachers. In addition to the specific safety requirements and guidelines provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Principals and teachers are advised to refer to relevant references and associations/organisations to ensure that each activity is conducted within currently accepted guidelines. While teachers of physical and sport education usually have appropriate qualifications/expertise, other teachers and adults who assist with sport education programs may be required to undertake additional, specialised training.

Mouth guards

The National Health and Medical Research Council has advised that dental injuries are the most common type of facial injury sustained during participation in contact sports. The majority of these injuries can be prevented if an individually fitted mouth guard is worn.

While the wearing of a mouth guard may prevent or reduce the severity of dental injuries, Principals and teachers need to review their practices so that the likelihood of such injuries occurring is minimised. For example, students must not be permitted to throw the bat after hitting the ball when playing T-ball, softball or baseball, and the students on the 'bench' must be kept well away from the first and third base lines.

The three types of mouth guards available are:

- Individually fitted mouth guard. This is available through a dentist and is custom made.
- Semi-adaptable mouth guard. This is sold over the counter and is adaptable in the mouth after warming.
- Standard mouth guard. This is sold ready-made over the counter.

Although these are the three types of mouth guards available, the individually fitted mouth guard provides the maximum protection. To be effective, mouth guards should fit properly and have sufficient retention to prevent dislodgement by an impacting force. Mouth guards can be made to allow for missing and erupting teeth, and to fit over orthodontic wires. An ill-fitting mouth guard has the potential to cause injury. A mouth guard that has to be held in place by clenching the teeth is unsatisfactory. Yearly replacement may be needed for younger students to allow for growth and development. Given their personal nature, schools are not expected to provide mouth guards for student or staff use. Principals should advise parents of the benefits of their child wearing a mouth guard when participating in physical activities. Principals should also suggest to parents that they provide their child with an appropriate mouth guard particularly when their child is competing in the following contact sports: football (all codes), basketball, hockey, lacrosse and martial arts. The mouth guard should be worn during formal

training sessions. Where parents notify the school that they have provided their child with a mouth guard, teachers should take reasonable steps to ensure that the mouth guard is worn when the child is participating in contact sports.

Physical and sport education equipment

It is the responsibility of the Principal and teachers to ensure that all items of equipment are safe to use. Both fixed and mobile equipment should be regularly inspected, records kept and the necessary repairs and maintenance undertaken.

Basketball

Students and other users of basketball facilities in schools should not be permitted to swing from basketball rings at any time (except in the rare circumstance of preventing injury to themselves or another person).

Also, portable basketball rings/netball rings are subject to the same safety requirements as permanent basketball rings/netball rings. Portable basketball rings/netball rings, and any relevant fittings such as sockets for indoor rings, need to be thoroughly checked for safety prior to use and students must be instructed that swinging on such rings is not permitted. Principals should ensure that basketball towers, backboards and rings are incorporated into the school's regular facilities and equipment inspections and that appropriate maintenance is undertaken as required. Details of inspections and maintenance need to be recorded and retained at the school.

High jump

High jumping should only be permitted where teachers or instructors are experienced in high jump instruction or have appropriate qualifications. The Fosbury Flop technique can be used if the teacher or instructor is experienced in teaching this technique and the students have developed the necessary preliminary skills for the run-up, take-off, flight and landing phases of the jump. Foam practice-bars or round fibreglass bars are recommended. Triangular aluminium bars must not be used. Block mats are to be used. As the mat thickness required is dependent on the weight of the jumper, the height being attempted and the type of surface on which the landing mat is positioned, manufacturers should be consulted about the relevant specifications. It is recommended that gym mats be used to surround block mats, thereby adding to the safety of the jumper. All mats should be inspected regularly to ensure that they are in a safe condition.

Baseball, softball, cricket

Catchers

A body protector, shin protectors, face mask, and throat protector should be worn. When a hard ball is used, it is recommended that male students wear a genital protector (box).

Batters

When a hard ball is used a double eared helmet should be worn and should remain on when the batter is running between bases. It is recommended that male students wear a genital protector (box).

Wicket keepers

When a hard ball is used, a helmet and face mask should be worn. When a hard ball is used, it is recommended that male students wear a genital protector (box).

Rugby

Where rugby is played as part of the physical education or sport program, or in the playground outside of the scheduled teaching program, students with long, thin necks must not play in the front or second row of scrums. A subjective assessment of all players will need to be made as to whether or not they have the physique to play in the front or second row of the scrum. If there is any doubt in a teacher's mind concerning the appropriateness of students' physiques, the students must not be permitted to play in these positions.

Specific neck strengthening exercises should form part of the training program for all students participating in rugby. Mouthguards should be worn when training and playing rugby. Students should also wear appropriate head protection when training and playing rugby. Where rugby is included in a school's program, parents/guardians must be provided with adequate information on the nature of the activity and the potential risks. Parents/guardians may withhold permission for their children to participate.

Weight training

Primary students are not to participate in weight training and weight lifting. Secondary students may participate in these activities provided they are supervised by a qualified physical education teacher who has specialised knowledge in this field.

School sports

Interschool sport is regarded as an excursion and therefore must be approved by the Principal. As with all excursions, provisions must be made for the continuous instruction of students who remain at the school. In circumstances where a small group of students represents the school at a sporting event, the Principal should make every effort to provide a teacher to accompany and supervise the students. Private cars driven by parents/guardians or the teacher may be used to transport the students. However, the supervising teacher must travel at the same time as the students and be at the venue to supervise the students as they arrive. Where arrangements cannot be made for a staff member to accompany the students, the excursion cannot go ahead as an official school activity. Parents/guardians of the students may, however, be prepared to make private arrangements to take their children to these sporting activities and to provide supervision for them while they are in attendance.

Starting pistols

Cap starting pistols and electronic devices are to be used. Operators of starting pistols should wear ear muffs or plugs approved to AS 1270, with a SLC 80 rating of at least twenty-five. Except for competitors, others present should be at least 10m away from the starter or should also wear hearing protection.

Gymnastics

In the conduct of a gymnastics programs, Principals should ensure that teachers have the appropriate competencies to teach the skills and activities that are undertaken as part of the program. It is essential that activities selected are appropriate for the students' ages and abilities. All activities require adequate preparation and instruction to ensure students are physically ready to perform skills. This includes appropriate lead up and prerequisite developmental skill progressions and drills. It is essential that practice of these is provided for all students. The recommended activities for gymnastics programs in schools are:

- Acrobatics
- Basic tumbling
- Hand apparatus
- Circuits—fitness and skill development
- Group performances
- Non-inverted vaulting activities
- Aerobics.

The following activities are **not** recommended for gymnastics programs in schools:

- Somersaults
- Bridges
- Headstands
- Hock swings
- Neck rotations
- Sideways landings from a height
- Excessive deep knee bends
- Wheelbarrows
- Inverted spring activities
- Excessive weight-bearing on wrists.

All equipment and apparatus used in the conduct of a gymnastics program must be suitable for the requirements of the activity and for the age and ability of the students. The equipment and apparatus must be safely maintained and set up and prepared appropriately for the activity for which it is being used.

Physical and sport education equipment.

Adequate and safe matting should be used around all equipment at all times.

Crash mats

Where the program activities require the use of crash mats, floor mats should be placed on the floor to the side and behind the crash mat area.

Mini-trampolines

Where the program activities involve the use of a mini-trampoline then the mini-trampoline should have a suitable cover over the springs so that the springs are not exposed. Schools may take students on excursions to gymnasiums with specialist instructors who have the technical knowledge and skills to instruct the students. However it is the teachers who have the overall responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students.

Trampoline sports

Trampoline activities should only be permitted under the strict supervision of teachers or other approved adults, both of whom should complete an accredited coaches' course such as provided by [Gymnastics Australia](#). At least four 'spotters' who have been instructed in correct spotting techniques are required to guard each side of the trampoline. Prior to use, each trampoline should be checked for safety (springs, bed, frame and frame pads). A minimum ceiling height of 5m is recommended, with at least 2.5m clear of walls on all sides. At no time should students or any equipment be permitted under the trampoline. Appropriate clothing should be worn, including socks/gym shoes for safety and hygiene. Students should only be permitted to climb (never jump) onto and down from the trampoline. Correct safety measures should be taught, including appropriate progressions for learning skills. Students should be made aware of the risks associated with performing for long periods or at excessive heights. Only one performer should be permitted on the trampoline at any one time. Further advice on the safe use of trampolines is available from Gymnastics Australia, telephone (03) 9830 4588.

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Approved by: [Executive Principal]

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