



## Community Services: Education

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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

**Subject safety: science, technical, home economics, art and design and physical education**

This document provides information for teachers of the above subjects. Guidance to teachers can be found in a number of documents, online and from various sources.

This document indicates where teachers should go in the first instance for help and support.

Please note risk assessments **must** be carried out for all learning activities that involve the potential for entanglement, entrapment, drawing in of clothing, exposure to chemicals or hot gases and exposure to or contact with hot materials or surfaces. On completion of any risk assessment, and prior to starting the activity, appropriate controls must be developed and implemented. Essential within this process is the consideration of staff supervision. In addition long hair should be tied back or encaptured; loose jewellery must be removed; ties and scarves must be removed; other loose clothing must be removed or retained in place by means such as elasticated bands. It is **not acceptable** to tuck items into clothing.

On completion of activities the appropriate risk assessment must be reviewed and revised, if necessary, as part of the ongoing monitoring of the management of health and safety procedures.

### Science

- 1 Most of the guidance required for science departments and faculties can be accessed from 5 sources.
  - a SSERC through the safety net CD issued annually to secondary school departments/faculties or online through the SSERC website - [www.sserc.org.uk](http://www.sserc.org.uk) (which contains a link to safety net).

- b ASE - [www.ase.org.uk](http://www.ase.org.uk).
  - c Argyll and Bute Education website - [www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk](http://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk).
  - d By telephone from SSERC.
  - e Quality improvement officer (science and maths).
- 2 Departments/faculties should keep available essential reading material as a reference for members of the department. Information on essential reading material is available from the SSERC website [www.sserc.org.uk](http://www.sserc.org.uk). A list of this essential reading material is listed below and is up-to-date as of August 2009.
- a General reading materials:
    - i Argyll and Bute Council health and safety policy (via public folders);
    - ii School health and safety statement (SSERC safetynet contains a guide to schools on policy statement);
    - iii ASE Safeguards in school laboratories (11th edition 2006) - [www.ase.org.uk](http://www.ase.org.uk);
    - iv ASE Topics in safety 2001.
  - b More specific reading:
    - i Hazardous chemicals (SSERC);
    - ii Preparing risk assessments for project work (SSERC);
    - iii Microbiological techniques (SSERC);
    - iv Materials of living origin in schools (SSERC);
    - v Biology/biotechnology in microbiology, SSERC 2002: a code of practice (SSERC);
    - vi Radiological protection (SSERC).
- 3 It is essential that appropriate risk assessments are carried out and reviewed prior to any experiment being carried out. Advice on preparing risk assessments can be found on the SSERC website or from the Health and Safety Manager in Argyll and Bute Council. Advice from manufacturers on storage or use of chemicals or equipment should always be followed.
- 4 It is essential that schools carry out risk assessments as required by legislation on the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH).
- 5 Unattended experiments must not be carried out overnight in normal circumstances. Good practice must be applied and, where it is necessary for overnight experiments to be being carried out, staff must ensure that there is no danger to other members of staff or to the building. This is particularly appropriate when water, gas or electricity is essential to the experiment in case of disruption to the supply.
- 6 All school staff must be aware that only those qualified can carry out some biotechnology activities.

- 7 If schools are still using model steam engines, advice needs to be sought from the SSERC website in terms of maintenance.
- 8 Storage of highly flammable liquids must be in a lockable metal flammable cupboard. Advice should be taken from the SSERC website on specific chemicals.
- 9 Chemicals should be purchased at the minimum level possible. This will prevent a build up of out-of-date chemicals which require specialist disposal. Regular checks of the volume of materials should take place and where there is an excess of materials, then arrangements should be made to reduce this to an acceptable level.
- 10 Should unwanted chemicals require to be stored prior to specialist disposal, details of the name of the chemical, date stored, out-of-date details, and the volume or weight of unwanted chemical should be readily available for the specialist contractor. Care should be taken when storing such chemicals and advice on the SSERC website should always be followed. Argyll and Bute Council will from time-to-time organise uplift of such chemicals and it is imperative that schools are able to provide information timeously.
- 11 See education management circular 1.27a on Radiation in schools for advice on radiation.
- 12 Advice on the use of lasers is available on the SSERC website.
- 13 Departments/faculties should have a safety policy that is regularly updated and known to all staff and pupils. Departmental/faculty policies ensure that each teacher reports on the safety of a particular teaching area to the principal teacher/head of faculty. As necessary the principal teacher/head of faculty reports concerns to the school's health and safety officer.
- 14 Teachers demonstrate safe practice. They train pupils in good working practices in addition to making them aware of potential risks in a laboratory. Pupils are supervised appropriately when carrying out experiments.
- 15 Safety rules and procedures are displayed and discussed with pupils.
- 16 First aid kits are accessible and checked regularly.

### **Technical**

- 17 Most of the guidance required for technical departments and faculties can be accessed from 7 sources.
  - a Argyll and Bute Council's health and safety in technical education: code of practice.
  - b BSI code of practice for health and safety for design and technology in schools and similar establishments; BS 4163-2007.
  - c PUWER Regulations and the ACOP re Woodworking machinery.

- d CLEAPSS risk assessments for technology in secondary schools, 1991.
  - e Argyll and Bute Education website - [www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk](http://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk).
  - f By telephone from SSERC.
  - g Quality improvement officer (enterprise and technology).
- 18 Departments/faculties should keep available essential reading material as a reference for members of the department. A list of this essential reading material is listed below and is kept up-to-date.
- a General reading material:
    - i Argyll and Bute Council health and safety policy and support policies (via public folders);
    - ii departmental health and safety policy.
  - b More specific reading:
    - i Hazardous chemicals (SSERC);
    - ii Preparing risk assessments for project work (SSERC);
    - iii Guidelines on the COSHH regulations for departments of technical education in secondary schools;
    - iv Department health and safety file.
- 19 It is essential that appropriate risk assessments are carried out and reviewed prior to any new process or procedure being carried out. Advice on preparing risk assessments can be found on the SSERC website or from the Health and Safety Manager in Argyll and Bute Council. Advice from manufacturers on storage or use of chemicals or equipment should always be followed.
- 20 Schools should be aware that only those qualified can use woodworking machinery.
- 21 It is essential that schools carry out risk assessments as required by legislation on the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH).
- 22 Storage of highly flammable liquids must be in a lockable metal flammable cupboard. Advice should be taken from the SSERC website on specific chemicals.
- 23 Chemicals should be purchased at the minimum level possible. This will prevent a build up of out-of-date chemicals, which require specialist disposal. Regular checks of the volume of materials should take place and where there is an excess of materials, then arrangements should be made to reduce this to an acceptable level.
- 24 Should unwanted chemicals require to be stored prior to specialist disposal, details of the name of the chemical, date stored, out-of-date details, and the volume or weight of unwanted chemical should be readily available for the specialist contractor. Care should be taken when storing such chemicals and advice on the SSERC website should always be followed. Argyll and Bute Council will from time

to time organise uplift of such chemicals and it is imperative that schools are able to provide information timeously.

- 25 The department has a safety policy that is regularly updated and must be made known to all staff and pupils. Departmental policies ensure that each teacher reports on the safety of a particular teaching area to the principal teacher. As necessary the principal teacher reports concerns to the school's health and safety officer.
- 26 Teachers demonstrate safe practice. They train pupils in good working practices in addition to making them aware of potential risks in workshops. Pupils are supervised appropriately when using powered processes.
- 27 Appropriate warning notices and guards are always provided. Rules and procedures are displayed and discussed with pupils.
- 28 First aid kits are accessible and checked regularly.

### **Home economics**

- 29 Most of the guidance required for home economics departments and faculties can be accessed from 4 sources.
  - a Argyll and Bute Council's health and safety in home economics: code of practice.
  - b Food Standards Agency (FSA) - [www.food.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.food.gov.uk/scotland).
  - c Argyll and Bute Education website - [www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk](http://www.education.ea.argyll-bute.sch.uk).
  - d Quality improvement officer (enterprise and technology).
- 30 Departments/faculties should keep available essential reading material as a reference for members of the department. A list of this essential reading material is listed below and is kept up-to-date.
  - a General reading material:
    - i Argyll and Bute Council health and safety policy (via public folders).
  - b More specific reading:
    - i FSA Safety and hygiene publications - [www.food.gov.uk/scotland/safetyhygienescot](http://www.food.gov.uk/scotland/safetyhygienescot);
    - ii Other food hygiene websites and UK nutrition and health institutions and organisations;
    - iii Preparing risk assessments for project work (SSERC);
    - iv Guidelines on the CoSHH regulations;
    - v Department health and safety file.
- 31 It is essential that appropriate risk assessments are carried out and reviewed prior to any new process or procedure being carried out. Advice on preparing risk assessments can be found from the Health and Safety Manager in Argyll and Bute

Council. Advice from manufacturers on storage or use of substances or equipment should always be followed.

- 32 It is essential that schools carry out risk assessments as required by legislation on the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH).
- 33 The safe handling/storage/cooking of food is included in home economics health and safety policy. Pupils are also made aware of risks of food poisoning.
- 34 Storage of highly flammable liquids should be in a lockable metal flammable cupboard. Advice should be taken from the SSERC website on specific chemicals.
- 35 Flammable substances should be purchased at the minimum level possible. This will prevent a build up of out-of-date substances, which require specialist disposal. Regular checks of the volume of materials should take place and where there is an excess of materials, then arrangements should be made to reduce this to an acceptable level.
- 36 Departments have a safety policy that is regularly updated and must be made known to all staff and pupils. Departmental policies ensure that each teacher reports on the safety of a particular teaching area to the principal teacher. As necessary the principal teacher reports concerns to the head teacher/campus principal.
- 37 Teachers demonstrate safe practice. They train pupils in good working practices and procedures in addition to making them aware of potential risks in kitchen areas. Pupils are supervised appropriately when using powered processes.
- 38 Appropriate warning notices and guards are always provided. Rules and procedures are displayed and discussed with pupils.
- 39 First aid kits are accessible and checked regularly.

### **Art and design**

As with any practical activity, there is an element of risk in art and design activities. However this can be kept to an acceptable minimum if those involved are aware of the potential hazards and take appropriate steps to avoid accidents. It is particularly important that teachers are aware of their responsibilities regarding health and safety and ensure that pupils act safely, within acceptable bounds, at all times. The National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) is an organization that works with teachers throughout the United Kingdom. The NSEAD guidance is intended primarily for secondary school teachers who are responsible for practical activities in art and design. However teachers in primary schools and those training to be teachers may also find it helpful.

The health and safety section is comprehensive, containing information on all activities within the teaching of art and design. This website is updated regularly.

Detailed information on 'equipment and processes' and 'materials' are available at the following sites.

Equipment and processes [www.nsead.org/hsg/hs600.aspx](http://www.nsead.org/hsg/hs600.aspx)

Materials [www.nsead.org/hsg/hs700.aspx](http://www.nsead.org/hsg/hs700.aspx)

Further guidance available from [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Departments must have a safety policy that is regularly updated and known to all staff and pupils. Departmental policies ensure that each teacher reports on the safety of a particular teaching area to the principal teacher. As necessary the principal teacher reports concerns to the head teacher/campus principal.

Teachers demonstrate safe practice and train pupils in good working practices in addition to making them aware of any potential risks.

First aid kits should be accessible and checked regularly.

### **Physical education**

Formal procedures should exist in all schools for the design and delivery of a physical education curriculum which is safe and, so far as is reasonably practicable, without risks to health for staff and pupils partaking in the activities.

Appropriate arrangements will require to be established based on a risk assessment of the physical education activities to be provided. The completed risk assessments should be incorporated within the schemes of work and lesson plans so that health and safety forms an integral part of the lesson/activity planning and delivery.

#### General requirements

Head teachers should ensure that the teaching of any activities in physical education are only undertaken by teachers who, by training and experience, can organise them safely and have sufficient knowledge to ensure the teaching of basic skills as a prerequisite. Particular attention should be given to the teacher-pupil ratio to promote safe practice. If other adults are used to assist the teaching of games and other activities, appropriate child protection measures should be in place.

Equipment and facilities should always comply with the standards laid down by the appropriate national body, British Standards Institute or other appropriate organisation and should be subject to regular and routine checks and maintenance which should be documented.

Pupils should be suitably clothed for the particular activity. No jewellery should be worn, hair should be tied back when necessary, chewing gum and sweets should not be allowed.

Barefoot work should be undertaken for gymnastics and dance where the floor surface is suitable. Children must not be permitted to work in stockinged feet. Where barefoot work is not possible, children should wear plimsolls or similar soft-soled footwear.

In the teaching of all physical education it is important to ensure that pupils are suitably trained and physically capable of participating. Teachers should be aware of specific safety recommendations made by the various national bodies and be competent to organise a programme of work suitable to the age and experience of the pupils.

In the case of physical contact sports, particular care needs to be taken in the coaching of pupils, and in any contact situation pupils should be paired according to size and ability.

Specific consideration should be given to this in relation to staff versus pupil games.

Where teachers are acting as umpires/referees, they must be fully conversant with the responsibilities attributable to that role and be competent to carry them out.

#### Pupils with additional support needs

Care should be taken to ensure that teachers are well informed of the individual needs of each pupil and its particular relevance to physical education.

It is important that:

- the pupil understands the tasks set;
- the teacher is able to apply appropriate teaching strategies to ensure a level of success;
- the teacher develops activities with regard to any limitations of the pupil.

Head teachers must be aware that this may mean adjustment of the teacher/pupil ratio and the introduction of individualised programmes.

#### Physical education in a multicultural society

The physical education curriculum should take account of cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

#### Teacher/adult participation

Teachers must bear in mind that:

- participation must not impact on their effective control of a game or of the lesson as a whole;
- participation in body contact games will be restricted to demonstrating the skills of a game or keeping the game moving; demonstrations that require physical contact will ensure that children are matched by size, strength, experience and ability;
- teachers should not participate in a game involving young people as a member of one side against another.

This advice applies additionally to games other than rugby football in which physical contact is present or can reasonably be foreseen to occur. The same principles should also be applied where hard missiles are projected, eg throwing a cricket ball.

At times teachers will operate in the dual role of teacher and referee/umpire. Good practice demands that this dual role does not reduce their capacity to discharge adequately the duty of care of those in their charge.

Departments must have a safety policy that is regularly updated and known to all staff and pupils. Departmental policies ensure that each teacher reports on the safety of a particular teaching area to the principal teacher. As necessary the principal teacher reports concerns to the Head Teacher/Campus Principal.

Teachers demonstrate safe practice and train pupils in good working practices in addition to making them aware of any potential risks.

First aid kits are accessible and checked regularly.

Physical education activities

This part of the document gives advice on the activities regularly and routinely provided in schools.

Teachers should familiarise themselves with the health and safety information provided by the activity's governing bodies and by BAALPE (British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education).

The following general points are offered to assist teachers in achieving the necessary standards.

Good practice requires that:

- teaching in all activities follows a carefully planned and graduated progression that ensures all pupils master the necessary skills at any given level of competence before progressing to the next stage;
- before any competitive play can begin, pupils are given instruction in the rules of the game or sport to be pursued, as well as training in the basic skills involved;
- pupils/students know and understand what constitutes a safe standard of practice, and accept responsibility for meeting that standard;
- team sizes are not greater than those approved by the relevant governing body;
- the length of an activity is appropriate to the age, stamina and ability of the players;
- all activities are preceded by an appropriate warm-up session and end with a warm-down session;
- equipment and clothing, including footwear, are appropriate to the activity and are checked before activity commences;
- regular arrangements are made for the inspection, repair and maintenance of equipment and facilities;

- faulty equipment is not used, but is suitably marked and removed from general accessibility until repairs have been effected;
- pupils know and understand what constitutes a safe standard of practice, and accept responsibility for meeting that standard;
- pitches should be large enough to allow safe play without overcrowding, free from dangerous objects like stone, glass or animal faeces and level, without depressions and bumps that may cause a body to trip or a ball to rise unduly; this advice applies to grass and synthetic pitches, tennis courts and playground areas; special care needs to be taken to avoid hazards resulting from inclement weather conditions, eg frost, on any playing surface; all loose debris should be removed before play commences.

Good discipline will be evident where:

- participants are aware of the need for a disciplined approach to any of the learning activities;
- players respect all other participants, officials and their decisions;
- players conduct themselves within both the spirit and the wording of the rules of an activity;
- excessive and over zealous competitiveness, loss of temper, violent conduct, personal fouls and intemperate language are strongly discouraged, and such occurrences are always accompanied by appropriate action by those in charge.

Further reading

*Safe Practice in Physical Education* (Millennium Edition); British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (BAALPE).

Useful websites

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/pesafety](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/pesafety);

[www.sportscotland.org.uk](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk) - includes section on child protection in sport;

[www.scottishathletics.org.uk](http://www.scottishathletics.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services

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## **Appendix 1: specific activity guidance**

### **Archery**

School archery should be carefully organised at all times by an experienced and suitably qualified teacher. The staff-pupil ratio for archery should be a maximum of 1 teacher to 12 pupils, with not more than 4 at each target. Targets should be suitably positioned, 6 metres apart with a clearance of 45 metres behind. A shooting line should be clearly marked and a further line 5 metres behind should be marked for spectators. The whole area should be clearly marked and, where necessary, roped off.

When taking place indoors, targets must be placed with a secure wall behind them.

Teachers or participants must not be allowed to venture in front of the firing line until all archers have completed shooting their arrows.

Equipment must be carefully maintained and stored securely to avoid unsupervised use.

### **Football**

Whilst any sport involving physical contact will include a risk of injury this should be minimised by safe practice and specific attention being given to the suitability of the playing surface.

Surfaces should be free of stones, glass and other debris, and games should not be played if frost damage causes dangerous ridging.

Games should be played in controlled conditions, and good conduct and a healthy attitude towards opponents should be encouraged. Excessive competitiveness should be avoided.

Suitable clothing and equipment should be used and studded footwear checked regularly for worn edges.

Indoor 5-a-side football should only be played in situations where loose equipment or furniture does not constitute a hazard and light bulbs and windows are suitably protected.

Fixed goalposts should be properly installed at the start of the season and routinely and regularly checked to ensure they remain secure and in a suitable state of maintenance. PE staff should also be instructed to visually examine the goalposts at the start of a match/lesson.

Free-standing goalposts should be erected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and checked prior to use to ensure they are stable and secure. Due to previous fatal accidents involving Free Standing Goals, the security of the goals is essential.

All goalposts should be stored so as to prevent the risk of them falling by securing to a wall or other equally effective method.

## **Athletics**

Teaching should only be undertaken by suitably qualified and competent teachers or coaches. It is important that safe methods should be taught to beginners and that young athletes are introduced to carefully graduated programmes suitable to their maturity and fitness. Children must never be expected to undertake activities beyond their capability.

The recommendations published by the Schools Consultative Committee of the Schools Athletics Association should be used as a guide to the events, distances etc suitable for a particular age group of pupils.

The throwing events in athletics are hazardous activities and the safety precautions laid down by the Schools Athletics Association should be observed at all times. For high jumping and pole vaulting a landing area of sand which should be regularly checked and maintained may be suitable for beginners. For serious training and competition a soft landing area is essential and should conform to the sizes and recommendations of the Amateur Athletic Association. Gymnasium mats and crash mats are not considered suitable. Teachers should be familiar with the AAA documentation on athletics safety measures. Such techniques as the 'Fosbury flop' must not be permitted unless a proper built-up landing area is available and should not be used for primary pupils.

## **Badminton**

Playing area should be free of obstructions and pupils should be made aware of fixed obstacles.

Floor surfaces should be dry, level and free of dust.

The background and lighting should permit clear visibility of the shuttle in flight.

All equipment should be in a satisfactory condition and equipment not in use should be stored securely.

Posts should be properly positioned and secured.

Players should be aware of rules and arrangements for playing and extra care should be taken when courts are used for group practice.

## **Cricket**

When played outside with a soft ball cricket should present few difficulties to a teacher organising either class activities or a game. Softball cricket is a nationally recognised game with rules that are simple to understand and implement. Details are available from the National Cricket Association.

Cricket played with a hard ball requires that the teacher will be conversant with the rules governing the sport for the respective age of the participants.

## **Cycling**

Cycling should only be introduced within the school curriculum with the approval of the head teacher.

It is recommended that one adult leader should be responsible for a maximum of 7 pupils.

All pupils should have or be in the process of obtaining the cycle proficiency award.

Equipment should be checked and adjusted for the size of the rider.

All cyclists should wear appropriate head protection.

Group riding should be practised in a safe environment before pupils are allowed on the road.

Further information is available within the RoSPA pamphlet on 'Cycling Safety'.

## **Dance and aerobics**

It is important to ensure that dance and aerobics are taught by competent and experienced teachers. Some movement activities can be dangerous to untrained and unfit bodies.

Care should be taken to ensure that undue stress is not placed on the body by leg lowering movements, straight-leg sit ups or touching the floor from a standing position with a flat back and straight legs, or bouncing with a flat back.

Pupils should be able to perform with backs rounded and legs bent and at all times a warm up should precede vigorous exercise.

Other activities that should be undertaken with extreme care include kneeling exercises, and head rolling. In the latter activity it should only be undertaken with slow controlled movement.

## **Fencing**

The activity must be under the supervision of suitably qualified teachers. At all times full protective clothing must be worn, of the type approved by the Amateur Fencing Association's Schools Fencing Union.

## **Gymnastics**

The subject must be taught only by a suitably qualified and experienced teacher/coach, and it is recommended that they attend appropriate training courses from time to time, to acquaint themselves with new developments.

Gymnastic apparatus must conform to the appropriate standards and be routinely and regularly inspected and maintained. Where magnesium carbonate (soft chalk) is used, care should be taken to avoid breathing the dust.

All teachers should have an understanding and knowledge of the subject and its aims, and be suitably trained. They should only instruct in the form of gymnastics for which they

are trained and not be tempted to teach a standard beyond their knowledge and competence.

#### Use of mats/matresses

It is important that pupils are taught to land safely from a variety of situations and the development of safe controlled landings should be a major aim of the gymnastic lesson.

Care should be taken to ensure that mats are used appropriately. Crash mats are designed for the specific training of complex gymnastic skills and do not necessarily provide a suitable landing surface for curriculum gymnastic activities. They should not be used in primary schools.

Mats used for gymnastic work should be designed to prevent 'bottoming out' and to prevent movement whilst in use.

The British Gymnastics Federation will advise on high impact (crash) mats to be used in specific gymnastics situations. Reputable manufacturers of mats will also supply information for other activities. Those who buy mats for school use must confirm with the retailer that the mats conform to appropriate standards.

Mats are therefore to be selected with care, to meet the needs of the child in the activity being followed. It is also helpful if, whenever the opportunity is presented, children are guided as to why certain mats are used in certain activities, and how their placing can enhance safety. Children should be protected against a false sense of security in the way mats can offer them protection.

The following points will help to increase understanding.

- The placing of mats is very important. They should be used where it is expected that children will need to cushion deliberate landings, as from high apparatus. They should not be placed around profusely and indiscriminately, as they can produce real danger to young people accidentally tripping over them.
- Teachers should beware of positioning mats where it is thought that there is a high probability of a child falling off the apparatus. It would be better to arrange the apparatus and the demands on the child so that there is a high expectation of safe performance.
- The need to provide mats in the prescribed way is vital where landing impact cannot be accommodated by the body. Where teachers provide several mats on top of and to the side of each other to give greater absorption cover, eg jumping from high apparatus, care should be taken not to leave gaps into which children might land and thereby injure themselves.
- When children are challenged with new tasks, care should be taken to ensure safe working conditions which reflect the capabilities and developmental stages of all the pupils.

- The general purpose mat of approximately 25mm to 35mm thickness is adequate to meet most landing needs inherent in the usual level of school gymnastics.
- If the force of a child's landing is increased by such factors as the weight of the child, the height of flight and the speed of the activity, thicker mats may be necessary.
- There are mats designed to cope with high impact landings. These absorb the impact without generating exaggerated reaction which can cause loss of control in the novice gymnast.
- It is sound practice to teach children to be aware of the placement of mats and to re-adjust mats which may have moved in use.
- Mats should be light enough for children to handle easily. It is better if at least 2 children carry a mat. This prevents folding and damage to the core of the mat.
- Mats should not be so light that their stability in use is impaired.
- Beware of using high-jump landing beds for other physical education purposes. They can produce a secondary recoil action and they can also give a child a misleading sense of what is possible and useful in gymnastics.
- Mats must be checked by the teacher to make sure that no pin, stone, or other dangerous object is concealed in the fabric.
- Mats must always be checked to make sure that the core substances are not disintegrating to the point where there is a risk of a child 'bottoming out' when using them.
- Mats should not be folded. Cracks and damage to the core are caused by this practice.
- Mats should be covered in material which is easy to clean and very stable when in contact with the floor.
- Mat surfaces should be free of holes or tears.
- Cleaning the underside of mats may be necessary from time to time.
- As with other apparatus, mats should be subject to annual inspection and repair or disposed of as appropriate.
- Newly purchased mats must meet current fire regulations but, if in doubt, schools should take advice from the local fire prevention service/health and safety section.

#### Use of trampettes

Trampettes must only be used under the supervision of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and in no circumstances should they be used as part of the curriculum in primary schools. Where stored on-site for extra-curricular use, access should be restricted. It is important that the equipment is regularly inspected and repaired and any adjustment needs to be tightened before use. The teaching of somersaults using a trampette presents

particular dangers and support at all stages of learning is required. Pupils should not be asked to perform a forward roll as part of the landing technique, they should be taught to land in an erect position on two feet.

### **Hockey**

A suitable level and well maintained pitch is necessary. Grass pitches should be cut and rolled regularly to ensure true movement of the ball.

Suitable clothing and equipment should be used and checked to ensure safety.

Consideration should be given to advising participants about the use of gum shields.

Indoor hockey should be played in suitable conditions and protective clothing worn, particularly by goalkeepers.

Goalkeepers should be taught conventional skills and techniques appropriate to their age and ability and wear adequate protection.

Adequate levels of supervision and control should be maintained throughout a hockey game.

### **Martial arts**

Martial arts should only be undertaken when special permission has been obtained from the education authority and parents /carers and in all cases suitable clothing, equipment and landing areas should be used.

The following qualifications are required by teachers leading such activities.

Aikido     minimum qualification for an instructor is 1st Kyu (brown belt) and for a qualified teacher 3rd Kyu (green belt).

Judo       the minimum grade that a qualified teacher should hold is 2nd Kyu; the minimum qualifications in adult education or the youth service is a 1st Dan and completion of a recognised course in the teaching/coaching of the sport.

Karate     the minimum grade that a qualified teacher should hold to teach in schools is 3rd Kyu and in adult education or the youth service the qualification should be at least 1st Kyu; when an instructor is used, it is important that the applicant's licence is checked with the Martial Arts Commission/British Karate Control Commission.

Kendo     minimum grade for a qualified teacher to teach Kendo should be at least 1st Dan.

### **Rugby**

The teaching of rugby must only be undertaken by suitably qualified and competent teachers/coaches who fully understand the teaching of correct techniques particularly tackling, scrummaging and falling on the ball.

Direct supervision must be provided at all times. Situations occur in the game of rugby that can be potentially dangerous and care should be taken to ensure that pupils are not put at unnecessary risk. Pupils should be matched according to size and weight; boot studs should be checked regularly and conform to BSI requirements to avoid sharp edges. The base of rugby posts must be suitably protected and corner flags should be flexible. Surfaces should be free of stones, glass and other debris and games should not be played if the ground is frozen.

### **Shinty**

When pupils are being introduced to shinty, schools should use the "First Shinty" equipment which has soft balls and rubber headed sticks.

When pupils progress to using wooden stick and hard match balls all under-4 players must use Camanachd Association approved helmets which meet the requirements of European Council Directive 89/686/EEC "Personal Protective Equipment" article 10.

### **Squash**

All pupils taking part in a game of squash should have been taught the basic rules and techniques and teachers should ensure that adequate levels of supervision and control are maintained.

Use of protective eye shields designed for squash is highly recommended by the Squash Rackets Association, owing to the potential for eye injuries in the game through being struck by the ball and schools must ensure that appropriate protective eye shields are worn.

Further details can be obtained from SRA, PO Box 1106, London W3 0ZD.

Access to courts in use should be controlled and instruction given to always knock on the door before entering the squash court.

### **Tennis**

Adequate levels of supervision and control should be maintained and the following issues properly addressed.

Lines on courts should be flat, level and securely fixed.

All courts should be properly maintained; shale or a similar material (non-grass courts) should be watered and raked regularly. Courts should not be used if made slippery by rain or frost.

Game nets and surround netting should be in good repair.

Pupils should be instructed not to jump/climb over or duck under nets when changing ends.

## **Trampolining**

Trampolines must only be used under the instruction of a qualified teacher/coach who has successfully completed the LEA Certificate of Competency or hold a BTF Coaching Award.

At no time should pupils be permitted to undertake an exercise more advanced than the instructor's award or course standard.

Equipment should be examined before each session with particular attention being paid to the position of leg braces, the stitching of the bed, and to ensure that there is the correct number of cables or springs and that these and the pads are properly in place. Annually all trampolining equipment must be inspected by a competent person and records of inspections kept on site.

Spotters should be used at all times and suitably trained in their duties - a minimum of 4 - maximum of 6. The trampoline must be rendered unusable outside those times when trampolining sessions are held, ie when no instructor is on duty. Particular care should be taken to teach pupils to fold and unfold the trampoline according to the instructions of the manufacturer.

Supporting aids should be used for advanced skills and multi-somersaults should be practised only with the use of such an aid.

Trampolines and trampettes should not be used in primary schools as part of the physical education curriculum.

## **Volleyball**

Attention to the following points in addition to those preceding this section will help to promote safe practice in the playing of the game.

The floor should be clean, dry and free of splinters, grit etc.

Any protrusions on walls or equipment not in use should be well clear of the court boundary, and all players made aware of these.

Weighted posts should be tied back to the wall, and not allowed to stand freely. Tie wires should be located well above head height.

Teaching ropes used as nets should be clearly visible to all participants.

Rules of the games should be strictly enforced, especially those covering play at the net which involves smashing and blocking and possible physical contact.

Skills should be well learned and consolidated before they are applied in competitive games and players should be matched by their skill levels.

Trainer (softer) balls should be used by beginners to prevent injury or hurt through their imprecise co-ordination.

When players are practising the smash or serve, they should be well spaced out and the ball should be aimed at an empty part of the court.

Practice balls should be placed in a receptacle when not in use. Balls left rolling around the floor constitute a hazard to safety.

### **Weight training**

Teachers must be suitably competent and have experience and knowledge of the various techniques and anatomical and physiological factors involved in weight training.

Equipment must always be carefully checked and stored safely on an appropriate rack.

Weights must be placed on suitable mats to prevent damage to the floor.

Pupils must only handle weights under supervision and should be thoroughly practised in lifting techniques. An adequate work area should be used so that pupils do not work within double arms' length distance.

All the equipment provided must be inspected and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

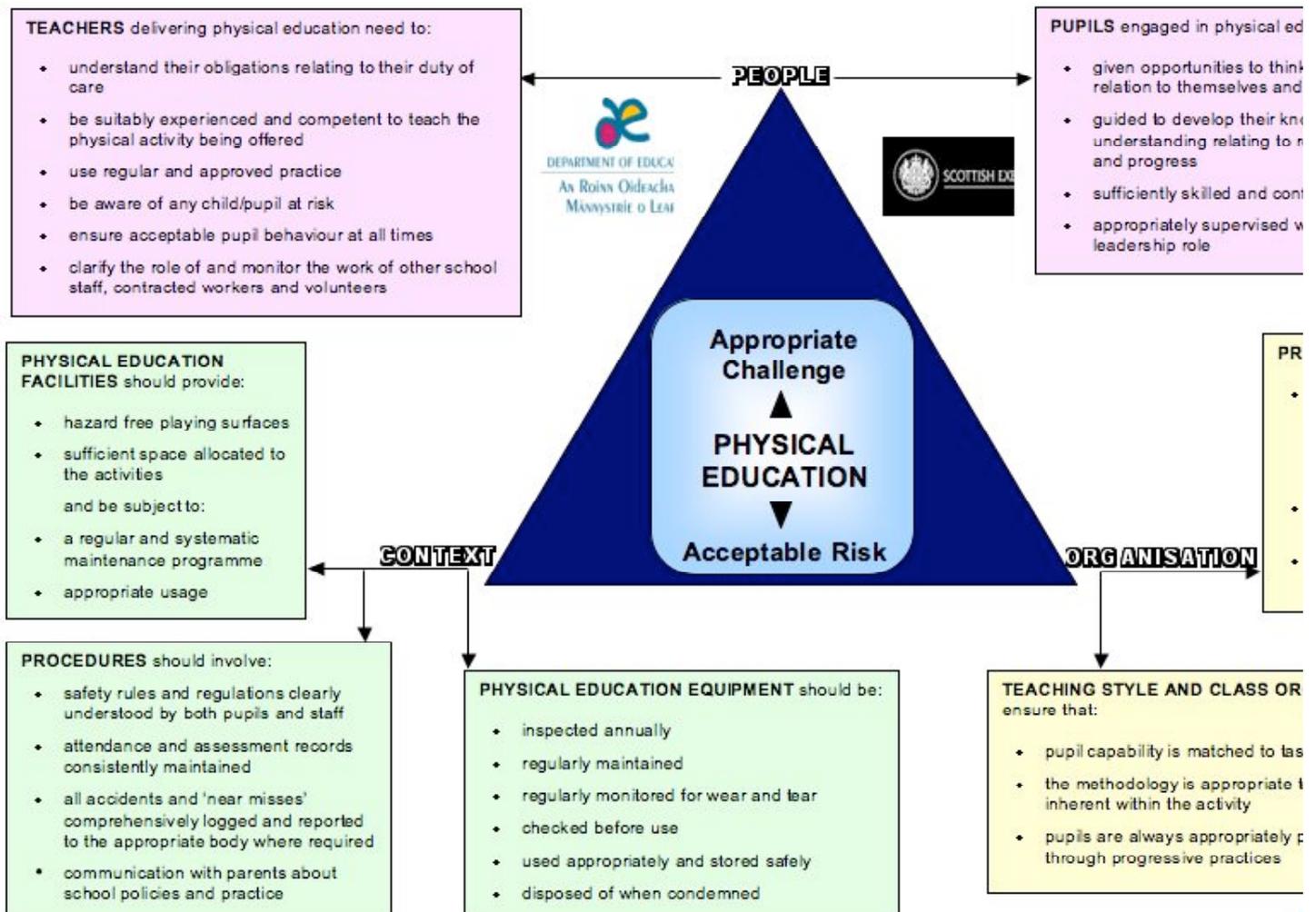
### **Multigyms**

The use of multigyms presents a wide range of hazards to users and special precautions are necessary where these have been provided.

All staff involved in the teaching/training on the equipment must be suitably qualified and experienced and in direct supervision of the activity. The area should be secured when not in use.

Appendix 2: poster

# SAFE PRACTICE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION



For further information see the DFES commended BAALPE publication 'Safe Practice in Physical Education', 1999 (millennium) edition Available from: [www.baalpe.org](http://www.baalpe.org) or telephone 01905 855584 Copies of this poster are available from: DFES Publications at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/pesafety](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/pesafety) or telephone 0845 60 22260

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