

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES SCHOOL GYMNASTIC LESSONS

Before the lesson

What pupils should know

- Concentration levels need to be kept high in gymnastic activity with clear focus and attention maintained throughout the session
- To remain vigilant when working on apparatus and to alert staff immediately to any concerns relating to the safety and stability of apparatus.
- To work effectively and responsibly as a team when assembling, setting out and putting away apparatus, or when producing joint movement sequences with others
- To lift and move pieces of apparatus safely using accepted techniques
- To work within personal limits and capabilities always seeking advice and support from staff in areas of uncertainty.
- To understand that body preparation, practice and consolidation are essential in gymnastics to acquire reliable technique, confidence and freedom from injury.
- Never to work or practice in an unsupervised setting in gymnastics
- To accept that personal attire for gymnastics has to meet health and safety requirements for safe participation
- Good technique is the key to safe practice and the protective capacity of mats, mattresses and pads, is limited
- Different pieces of apparatus, including mats, have specific and different functions in developing skilled activity and performance needs to comply with these expectations

People

Prior to the start of the lesson the school teacher must check if there are any pupils:

- with medical problems e.g. those children suffering from asthma, diabetes etc. and the location of inhalers and other medication;
- feeling unwell;
- who have missed recent previous work and need to be monitored through the session.

- Staff should change into appropriate footwear and clothing and remove jewellery.
- Jewellery and watches should be removed prior to the start of lessons and handed in for safekeeping. Jewellery should be discouraged at all times.
- Long hair should be tied back.
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Context

- Pupils should be encouraged to wear the correct school indoor P.E. wear – no baggy clothing or skirts etc
- The school should have a consistent policy on footwear. Depending on the cleanliness of the floor pupils should have bare feet or light plimsolls. Pupils should never participate in **socks** on polished surfaces.
- Hall space should be as uncluttered as possible. Unwanted furniture should be removed if possible.
- On arrival the school teacher must ensure that the hall floor is free from obstructions, grit, splinters etc.
- Equipment should be appropriate to the age, ability and size of the pupils and checked before use.
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Organisation

Comprehensive and progressive schemes of work should inform and encourage a consistency of approach, and give direction to the work in gymnastics.

There should be **sufficient space** and equipment to match the needs of the group. In order to ensure safe practice strategies may need to be employed to accommodate large groups working in limited space through alternating periods of observation with practical involvement.

- Pupils should be encouraged to use the toilet before gymnastics and made aware of the need for general cleanliness of the whole body particularly the hands and feet.
- The chewing of food, sweets and gum immediately before or during the lesson should never be allowed.
- Pupils must not enter the hall unless permission by a teacher has been given. When they are instructed they should do so calmly without running or pushing.
- The pupil teacher ratio should be determined by an informed risk assessment and needs to take into account the needs of pupils; staff competence; and facilities available.
- **Differentiated practice**, taking into account the varying abilities and progress of individual pupils, provides the basis for safe and successful learning.

During the lesson

All gym lessons should include a warm up. It is advised that schools adopt the warm up ideas in the PESS approach to gymnastics.

- The teacher must be positioned to see the whole hall and lesson.
- The class should be supervised closely at all times and never left unattended.
- When jumping and landing pupils should be encouraged to bend their knees and land on the balls of their feet in order to effect a cushioned and controlled landing.
- Establish a code of conduct for pupils.

Code of conduct

- Pupils must be taught, and understand, what is expected and required from them. Protocol and rules of the gym/hall/lesson must be fully observed.
- Ensure that there is a clear and understood signal to STOP/STAND, STILL/FREEZE.
- Noise levels should never be such that the teacher cannot be heard above it.
- Quiet concentration should be a demand.
- Children should sit away from equipment with their legs pointing forward, backs straight and hands on the floor behind them i.e. display good posture.
- A calm approach to the use of the apparatus is essential.

APPARATUS

- Apparatus should be in a good state of repair.
- Should be stored and carried safely by pupils through training.
- At least 2 maybe 4 pupils to each piece of equipment – dependent on size, weight and ease of movement.
- Face the direction of travel.
- Always keep apparatus below head height when lifting.
- Always lower the apparatus gently to the ground. Bend legs and keep back straight when lifting and setting up apparatus.

- Apparatus, including mats, should never be dragged along the floor.
- Walk around the apparatus rather than stepping over it.
- Use the apparatus for which it was designed.
- Limit the number working at one time on a piece of apparatus.
- Care needs to be taken when using mats in gymnastics, particularly with regard to their placement eg pupils are working at a height - using climbing frames or ropes - it may encourage some pupils to work beyond their capabilities.
- When setting up the equipment it is important to get the large equipment out first and then the mats and small equipment. When putting the equipment away the small equipment and mats go away first and then the large equipment.
- When using the climbing frame emphasise that children must climb up and down – no jumping off.
- Check that all equipment is safe and secure before using and during use. Encourage the pupils to take responsibility for the safety of their apparatus
- Wall bars and apparatus should be assembled and dismantled safely and pupils should be taught to do this wherever possible through training of pupils.

Trampettes

Because of the specialist nature of the activity and the potential risks associated with rebound jumping, trampolines and trampettes are not recommended for use in primary schools.

Individual abilities vary. DO NOT allow progression until pupils are confident and are able to do the skills properly.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire: Schools should follow their own fire evacuation procedure.

Injury: In the event of an accident during a gymnastic lesson, the teacher in charge should stop all activities and follow the schools emergency procedures. The accident should be recorded on an accident report form as soon as possible.