



Requirements for All Sport and Physical Activity

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1. Introduction

- The **Sport and Physical Activity Policy** includes requirements for the safe conduct of sport and physical activity occurring as part of a school event which are described in this document and in **Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines** documents located on the School Sport website.
- All principals, teachers and support staff in NSW Government schools must:
 - comply with the requirements listed in this document, and
 - comply with the relevant **Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines**.
- The safety conditions outlined in the **Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines** apply whether the activity is undertaken as part of school sport, school excursions, physical education lessons or any other school event.
- The safety conditions for specific sports and activities must not be varied unless experts in the particular sport or activity advise accordingly.
- If no safe conduct guidelines exist for a sport or activity, the principal must comply with the **Principal Endorsed Activity Procedures** on the Health and Safety website.

1.1 Duty of Care

The department and its staff have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of themselves and others. This duty includes assessing and appropriately managing any and all foreseeable risks of an activity.

2. Banned activities

Due to the assessed level of risk involved, the following activities are banned by the Department of Education:

- Boxing and other 'one on one' combat sport
- Break Dancing
- Bungee Jumping
- Hang Gliding
- Quad Biking
- Rock Fishing
- Rodeo
- Tobogganing

However, training and fitness programs involving boxing and combat sports (for example, boxercise) are considered to be acceptable activities in schools.

3. Child protection

- Staff must comply with the **Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and Procedures** while supervising any type of school activity, including those not on school grounds.
- Teachers should only use physical contact if the aim is to develop sport skills or techniques, treat or prevent an injury, or to meet the requirements of the sport.
- Additional information on **Child Protection in Sport** is available in the **further information section**.

4. Coaching competency

- Teachers and instructors (including external providers) who coach teams should possess the relevant competencies to safely and effectively manage the proposed activity, as specified in the **Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines** on the School Sport website.
- Additional information on **Coaching Competency** is available in the **further information section**.

5. External providers

- Prior to engaging the services of a non-staff member, principals must:
 - ascertain their level of expertise or experience, qualifications and training
 - ensure all child protection requirements are met, including completing a **Working with Children Check**.
- Where an adult other than a teacher accompanies the group to provide instruction or assist with supervision, a teacher must still take overall responsibility for the supervision of students.
- Additional information on engaging **External Providers** is available in the **further information section**.

6. Infection control

- A number of blood-borne infectious diseases can be transmitted during body contact. If an injury involving blood occurs, staff must comply with the Department's **Infection Control Procedures** on the Health and Safety website.
- A player who is bleeding must leave the playing arena until the bleeding has stopped and the wound is cleaned and securely covered with a waterproof dressing. All contaminated clothing and equipment must be replaced prior to the player resuming play.
- Teachers and officials treating bleeding players or participants should wear disposable latex gloves. The gloves must be changed and discarded if they are torn or punctured, or after contact with a player or participant.
- Officials must report all significant cuts and abrasions to medical staff or the supervising teacher at the first available opportunity.

- All clothing, equipment and surfaces contaminated by blood **must** be viewed as potentially infectious. Staff **must** comply with the **Procedures for spills of blood and other body substances** on the Work Health and Safety site.
- Students **must** not share personal items including towels, and drink containers.
- Additional information on **Infection Control in Sport** is available in the **further information section**.

7. Injury management

- Staff must comply with the Department's **First Aid Procedures** on the Health and Safety website and not allow students to play or continue to play if they are injured or visibly distressed.
- Well-equipped first aid kits including an asthma emergency kit (containing a blue reliever puffer and spacer) must be readily available at all sport and physical activities conducted on school grounds and at community venues and locations.
- Appropriate safety equipment should be worn as detailed in the **Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines** on the School Sport website.
- Teachers and coaches who coach sports and physical activities:
 - should ensure contraindicated exercises or actions are avoided during sport and physical activities
 - are required to select students for sports teams on the basis of ability and suitability according to the specific strength and physical requirements of the activity (for example, a front row forward in rugby league or union)
 - should modify rules appropriately for younger students.

Additional information on **Injury Management** is available in the **further information section**.

8. Further health considerations to be aware of

- All students are to have the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity.
- Principals must ensure that appropriate permissions are obtained for students with disabilities and medical conditions prior to participating in sport and physical activity. Additional information on **Inclusion** is available in the **further information section**.
- Principals must adhere to any request from a medical practitioner considering a student's participation in sport and physical activity.
- Teachers should be aware of the requirements of **Individual Health Care Plans** for students in their care, as described on the Health and Safety website.
- Requirements relating to students with specific medical conditions are provided below.
- Further information on specific conditions is covered in the **Health and Physical Care** section of the Wellbeing and Learning website.

8.1 Anaphylaxis

- Information on **anaphylaxis** is available on the Wellbeing and Learning website.

8.2 Asthma

- All students with asthma should have their reliever medication handy while taking part in physical activity. An Asthma Emergency Kit containing a blue reliever puffer and spacer should also be available and accessible for use. If a student's own reliever medication is not available, another person's blue reliever medication can be used.
- If a student who does not have an individual health care plan develops asthma symptoms they should immediately stop exercising and teachers should commence asthma first aid. If there is no reliever medication available, medical assistance must be sought immediately.
- The student should only return to exercise if they are symptom free. A teacher should stay and monitor them to check the symptoms are not worsening. If symptoms do not go away or come back when the student starts exercising again, physical activity should cease and asthma first aid should be recommenced.
- Additional information on **Asthma in Sport** is available in the **further information section**.

8.3 Atlanto-axial instability in students with Down's Syndrome

- A small percentage of Down's Syndrome students may have a condition known as atlanto-axial instability which can expose them to a greater risk of serious neck injury.
- Principals must ensure students with Down's Syndrome do not take part in contact sports, or do forward rolls, diving, trampolining or other activities (including therapy programs) which could potentially injure the neck area, without first having a medical clearance that includes an X-ray.

8.4 Diabetes

Students with diabetes must not be permitted to participate in scuba diving or snorkelling until medical clearance is received because of the substantial risk of hypoglycaemia while underwater.

For cross country and long distance events, a diabetic student should carry some simple and complex carbohydrates.

Further information is available at **Diabetes NSW** website.

8.5 Epilepsy or seizure conditions

When a student with epilepsy or a seizure condition undertakes an activity, a staff member should be present who has read the student's epilepsy management plan and is able to respond appropriately in the event of a seizure.

When students with epilepsy or a seizure condition participate in water sport activities an individual observer (spotter) must be assigned to watch each student while in the water (meaning 1:1 supervision).

This individual observer must be additional to the activity presenter, leader or instructor and can be a parent, grandparent, assistant etc. If there are not enough individual observers available, students should be rotated to ensure the appropriate observer ratio is followed.

Further information is available at **Epilepsy Awareness** and **Epilepsy Action Australia**.

8.6 Concussion

- Principals must ensure that students who have suffered concussion injuries are cleared by a medical practitioner prior to participating in sport and physical activity.
- Principals must ensure that students who have suffered a suspected concussion injury on the day of participation do not participate in the sport or physical activity. Additional information on **Concussion** is available in the **further information section**.

8.7 Hypoxic blackout

- Hypoxic blackout can be fatal, it is a loss of consciousness during underwater activities.
- It is essential that when undertaking aquatic activities student's breath control is as natural as possible with no hyperventilation prior to submersion.
- While underwater students should be encouraged to gently exhale (blow bubbles) rather than hold their breath. This will allow as natural as possible breathing when student resurfaces.
- There is no safe number of breaths for hyperventilation.

9. Medical insurance

- Principals must advise parents that in the event of injury, no personal injury insurance cover is provided by the NSW Department of Education for students in relation to school sporting activities, physical education lessons or any other school activity. The department's public liability cover is fault-based and would only be applicable if the department were to breach its duty of care to students in a way that may result in claims for compensation. Parents should sign a consent form acknowledging awareness of this fact before students participate in sporting activities. A sample Consent Form is available on the School Sport website.

- The **NSW Sporting Injury Insurance Scheme**, funded by the NSW government, provides limited cover for serious injury resulting in the permanent loss of a prescribed faculty or the use of some prescribed part of the body.

10. Risk management

- Teachers must comply with the risk management process undertaken as part of the **Excursions Policy and Procedures** for all sport and physical activities programs conducted. The following tools to assist teachers can be found on the School Sport website:
 - Sample Risk Template - Outdoor Recreation

11. Safe use of equipment

11.1 Starting guns and caps

- Principals must ensure that the following safety requirements are met:
 - schools are not to use the older style starting guns which require a permit
 - when not in use, starting guns and caps are to be securely stored in a locked cupboard inaccessible to students or unauthorised persons
 - caps must be kept in a rigid plastic or wooden box that is labelled clearly until ready for immediate use
 - no student is allowed to operate a starting gun or have access to a starting gun or caps
 - caps are not to be carried in pockets or placed in situations where friction or static electricity may cause ignition.
- Staff members using the starting gun must:
 - fire the starting gun at arm's length above the shoulder
 - wear ear muffs
 - require other assisting adults to wear hearing protection
 - position all other people at a safe distance from the starting area
 - keep the starting gun and caps in their possession
 - securely dispose of all spent or partially spent caps.

11.2 Ground markings

- Ground marking materials should be non-toxic, non-alkaline and non-hazardous.
- Ensure that flammable liquids or hydrated lime are not used in any circumstances.

11.3 Fixed playground equipment

- The following items of equipment are banned from use on Departmental premises:

- Swings (all types including ropes and tyres), although some items for students with disabilities may be exempt in specific settings
- See-saws, roundabouts (carousels) and maypoles
- Flying foxes (except in particular locations with the written approval of the relevant Asset Management Unit manager).

Further information on fixed play equipment guidelines is available on the Asset Management website.

11.4 Portable goal structures

- Principals must ensure portable goal structures are anchored and fitted with padding according to the **Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines**.

12. Staff - student ratios

- Teachers must comply with minimum staff to student ratios in the Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines.
- The teacher to student ratio for scheduled sport activities should not exceed 1:30.
- In certain circumstances, the number of teachers will need to be higher than in the stated ratio because of:
 - the age, experience or capabilities of the students
 - the dynamics of the relationships within the group
 - the combined experience or expertise of the staff
 - the nature of the area in which the activity is to be conducted
 - the extended nature of the activity.
- Any activity involving swimming or water activities is to be accompanied by a member of staff who possesses current training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

13. Supervision

- Principals are responsible for the development and implementation of a student supervision plan for all school sport and other physical activity programs, including weekly sport, integrated sport, outdoor recreation activities, as well as any other school events.
- The plan should clearly indicate the supervision arrangements and responsibilities at the various locations and venues, including supervision of student travel to and from these venues and locations.
- Principals should assess a number of factors in determining the level and type of supervision which needs to be provided during a particular activity, including:
 - nature and location of the activity (prior inspection of the location may be required to identify potential dangers),
 - number of students involved,
 - age and maturity of students,

- qualifications and experience of the adult supervisors, including ability to provide first aid, and
- travel to and from the venue.
- For weekly school sport and physical activities outside the school grounds, the school must:
 - inform parents or caregivers about the location, cost, mode of travel and supervision arrangements, activities to be undertaken and dismissal times,
 - obtain permission from parents or caregivers, and
 - refer to the **Excursion Policy and Procedures** in relation to transport and unsupervised activities.
- Every time a student or group of students change activities (for example, if a number of different activities are undertaken over the course of a weekly school sports program), the consent of a parent or caregiver must be sought.
- During excursions, schools must comply with the **Excursion Policy and Procedures**, which covers excursion supervision as well as:
 - consent,
 - unsupervised activities,
 - transport, and
 - overnight stays.

14. Weather and playing conditions

- The venue should be assessed before the activity commences to identify potential problems or dangers, including checking that the playing surface is of a standard that is fit for safe play and that it is free of obstructions and loose objects.
- Teachers should assess the dangers associated with extreme weather conditions including high heat and humidity, extreme cold or during electrical storms. In such instances, the activity should be restricted, or possibly cancelled to reduce the risk of injury.
- Teachers should refer to and comply with the **Sun Safety for Students Guidelines** on the Wellbeing and Learning website.
- In the event of extremely hot weather, principals must consider postponement of outdoor sporting or physical education activities that might put students under undue stress or expose them unnecessarily to the sun. Further information is available on **Supporting Students during Hot Weather**.
- In the event of being outdoors with a risk of lightning, teachers and support staff responsible for a group must direct students to seek shelter in:
 - solid buildings (staying well clear of windows, doors, electrical appliances, pipes and other metal fixtures), OR
 - hard top vehicles parked away from trees/tall objects. The group should remain sheltered for at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.

If no shelter is available, students should crouch down several metres apart with feet close together and head tucked down. The group must avoid:

- water and objects that conduct electricity, eg golf clubs, umbrellas, and baseball bats

- open spaces or tall objects such as trees, powerlines, poles or lightning towers
- using the telephone.