

14.2 What Staff Should Know

Jewellery and personal adornment

14.2.1 The wearing of non-essential personal effects continues to pose difficulties in many schools since such items should, ideally, always be removed in establishing a safe working environment. Staff have a duty of care to ensure that pupils are able to actively participate without unnecessarily endangering themselves or those working around them. Systems and procedures need to be in place within the changing area to check that pupils fulfil this obligation prior to participation.

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

- a. **All personal effects should be removed.** Staff should always give a verbal reminder to pupils and, where necessary, visually monitor the group and/or individuals. Particular vigilance may be required when dealing with body jewellery.
- b. **If they cannot be removed, staff need to take action to try to make the situation safe.** In some situations, this may mean adjusting the activity in some way or, where a risk assessment allows, protecting the item (eg a medical bracelet) with tape, padding or a wristband. Taping over ear studs, for instance, may offer a measure of protection in some physical-activity situations where individuals are required to work within their own personal space. This would not be acceptable, however, in swimming lessons where exposure to water can easily dislodge the tape, magnifying the hazards involved, nor is it satisfactory in situations where close contact is foreseeable. Where taping is utilised, the adult supervising the group maintains the duty of care to ensure that the taping is effective in its purpose.
- c. **If the situation cannot be made safe, the individual pupil(s) concerned should not actively participate.** Alternative involvement in the lesson may be possible.

Note: Recent developments in the manufacture of **medical-aid wristbands** have resulted in products with an acceptably low risk factor (soft materials used, Velcro fastenings etc). Such items should be acceptable for physical participation in most activities, largely avoiding the need for removal, provided there are no hard or sharp edges that may cause injury.

14.2.3 The wearing of **sensory aids** such as spectacles or hearing aids will usually be determined by:

- the nature of the activity (ie activities involving physical contact would not be appropriate)
- a balanced judgement as to whether wearing the item constitutes greater or lesser risk to the wearer and the group in those activities where physical contact is absent.

Where the sensory aid needs to be worn for safe participation by the individual, then the staff need to apply the procedure set out above in 14.2.2 in order to determine whether participation with the sensory aid is safe for the wearer and for others in the group.

14.2.4 **Long hair** worn by both staff and pupils should always be tied back with a suitably soft item to prevent entanglement in apparatus and to prevent it obscuring vision.