

Health and Safety Update - March 2019

Trampolining:

In keeping with recent Health and Safety updates we have been focusing on questions which members are asking through the health and safety helpline. Over recent months there have been several enquiries regarding the teaching of trampolining and it seems like an opportune time to remind members of some of the key issues to consider when teaching trampolining.

What trampolining qualifications should I hold?

In the first instance, schools need to check with their employer to clarify if they have a specific trampolining policy, and if so what the requirements are in relation to qualifications and refreshing those qualifications. Even those employers who follow Association for PE health and safety guidance in the main, may still have a separate policy for trampolining, so it is necessary to check this out, and to ensure that the requirements are adhered to. In the absence of a local policy, schools should be steered by Association for PE guidance which reflects that of the NGB.

The employer should ensure that students are taught by adults competent to fulfil the demands of the tasks to which they are deployed. If a member of staff is not competent to undertake the responsibility placed on them, but has been placed in that situation by the employer, or by the employer's representatives (e.g. a head teacher) the employer may be directly liable for any negligence. This is useful information to use in discussions if employers do not see the importance of the decisions they make in this area, for example by not investing in appropriate professional development.

The Association for Physical Education's position is that all those involved in the teaching of trampolining (including those with QTS) should hold a qualification which demonstrates their technical competence and their ability to progressively teach this aspect of the curriculum. This is because it is a high-risk activity and, as with any high-risk activity, staff are strongly advised to be able to show up to date and appropriate qualifications and expertise that demonstrates knowledge of the basic skills, techniques on mechanics of the moves they are helping students to learn. Courses organised or approved by British Gymnastics are recommended (www.british-gymnastics.org). Where alternatives to governing body or sport qualifications are offered, the employer needs to determine clearly the standards and expertise offered by external agencies before agreeing to accept them. Members should remember to check with their employer/insurance provider about any local requirements which may be in place and potentially go further than the afPE position.

Further detail on the range of qualifications available can also be found in [Safe Practice](#) (2016) page 416 (4.6.31).

Members sometimes ask if they can attend training and then cascade this information to other teachers. This is usually an attempt to save money from a small allocated school CPD budget. This is not recommended for trampolining or, indeed, any other high-risk activity. Short cuts should not be taken. The cascading model could result in a 'watering down' of best practice and attendance at recognised

training usually results in some form of 'sign off' which is a good starting point for ensuring staff have been effectively trained.

Can I use students as spotters?

While the use of matting down the sides of the trampoline is recommended (see Safe Practice 2016 Chapter 2, Section 12, page 203), one or two student spotters may also be positioned at each side. It is essential that anyone fulfilling this role is:

- suitably strong
- mature
- responsible
- trained in spotting

Spotters should:

- not distract the performer by giving vocal encouragement
- pay attention to the trampolinist at all times when spotting – this is essential for personal safety, whether assisting a faller or not
- move out of the way of the falling trampolinist if the spotter feels unsure or unable to assist (ie a trampolinist falling with great momentum); experienced trampolinists can sometimes make adjustments more successfully themselves to reduce the impact of a fall.

Where a spotter is capable of assisting a falling performer, they should:

- reach as high as possible, to contact the chest or shoulders of the faller
- make contact with the faller as early as possible if this will reduce the momentum of the faller
- only attempt to slow down the performer.

Finally: End Decks!

These were advised in 2010 by the NGB. For school usage the association for PE advise that you as a school check for trampolines that:

- the wheeling devices are operating smoothly, and the pivotal housing on the frame holds the hub of the wheeling mechanism at right angles without any movement of the hub and the housing
- the floor surround has 25mm non-slip **matting two metres wide along the sides of the trampoline**
- each end of the trampoline has safety mats, supported where possible at trampoline level, of a sufficient size and weight absorbency to meet the requirements of body impact in the event of unwanted travel forwards or backwards; to achieve this, 'spotting deck platforms' or '**end deck platforms**' may be purchased, either with or separately from the mattress
- safety matting is placed on the floor behind the end mats
- where trampolines are positioned in a line, weight-absorbing mattresses are be placed on the frame and springs between each trampoline; specific 'middle mats' can be purchased for this purpose or standard large safety mats used.

What constitutes safe teaching in trampolining?

The following good practice principles are taken from Safe Practice (2016) page 418 and should be used by schools and shared with staff who are teaching trampolining to ensure consistent safe practice. These have been re-worded into a series of statements which could help you to self-check your practice and could be embedded within any risk assessment template you may use (see last month's newsletter for an updated template).

Trampolining safe practice teaching principle	This is our practice. Tick once confirmed
Students are never left unsupervised .	
Suitable clothing is similar to that used in gymnastics, with a long-sleeved top used to prevent friction burns when performing a front drop.	
Non-slip trampoline slippers are used to prevent toes entering the gaps in the webbed bed. Alternatively cotton or wool socks are allowed. Nylon socks on a webbed nylon bed are not permitted as they may not provide adequate traction.	
Only one student at a time is normally allowed on the trampoline. Work begins only when everyone is appropriately positioned and ready	
Rebounding takes place as near to the centre of the bed as possible and at a height that enables the maintenance of full control.	
Should loss of control occur, the student is taught to flex at the knee and hip joints on the very next contact of the feet with the bed to deaden the bounce.	
Teaching emphasises the basic skills, correct techniques and quality of movement, with graduated progression according to the ability, confidence and responsible attitude of the individual student, avoiding unnecessary risks and over-rapid progress. Skills are learnt and consolidated in isolation before being combined into routines.	
Basic straight jumps are mastered before any performer progresses to rotational movements.	
Typically, beginners work for about 30 seconds, gradually increasing to about a minute, but know to stop if tired or if they are losing concentration.	
Tag-on-type games , in which students in turn add a movement to the routine, are not used as they may encourage students to jump beyond their ability or endurance	

What are the most appropriate principles of supervision?

With experience, staff can safely **supervise a number of trampolines** at once. In such instances, the importance of appropriate positioning in order to maximise observation and allow frequent scanning of the whole activity area cannot be overemphasised. Appropriate positioning enables prompt intervention and advice to be provided where necessary.

It is recommended that trampolining activities are carried out with smaller groups, dependent on the number of trampolines and qualified teachers available. In some instances, where staff are very experienced and students at a level where they can work independently, it may be acceptable for half the class to be doing trampoline-related practices on the floor while the teacher is supervising the other half of the students on the trampoline.

Safe practice is compromised where one teacher supervises half the class working on the trampolines as well as the other half doing a different activity, even when this is in the same space (for example badminton occurring in the other half of a sports hall).

One final note. Any competition or display routine should consist only of movements successfully **practised and consolidated** as a result of learning and practice. It is not acceptable to place students at risk by changing their routines in a bid for higher marks during a competition.