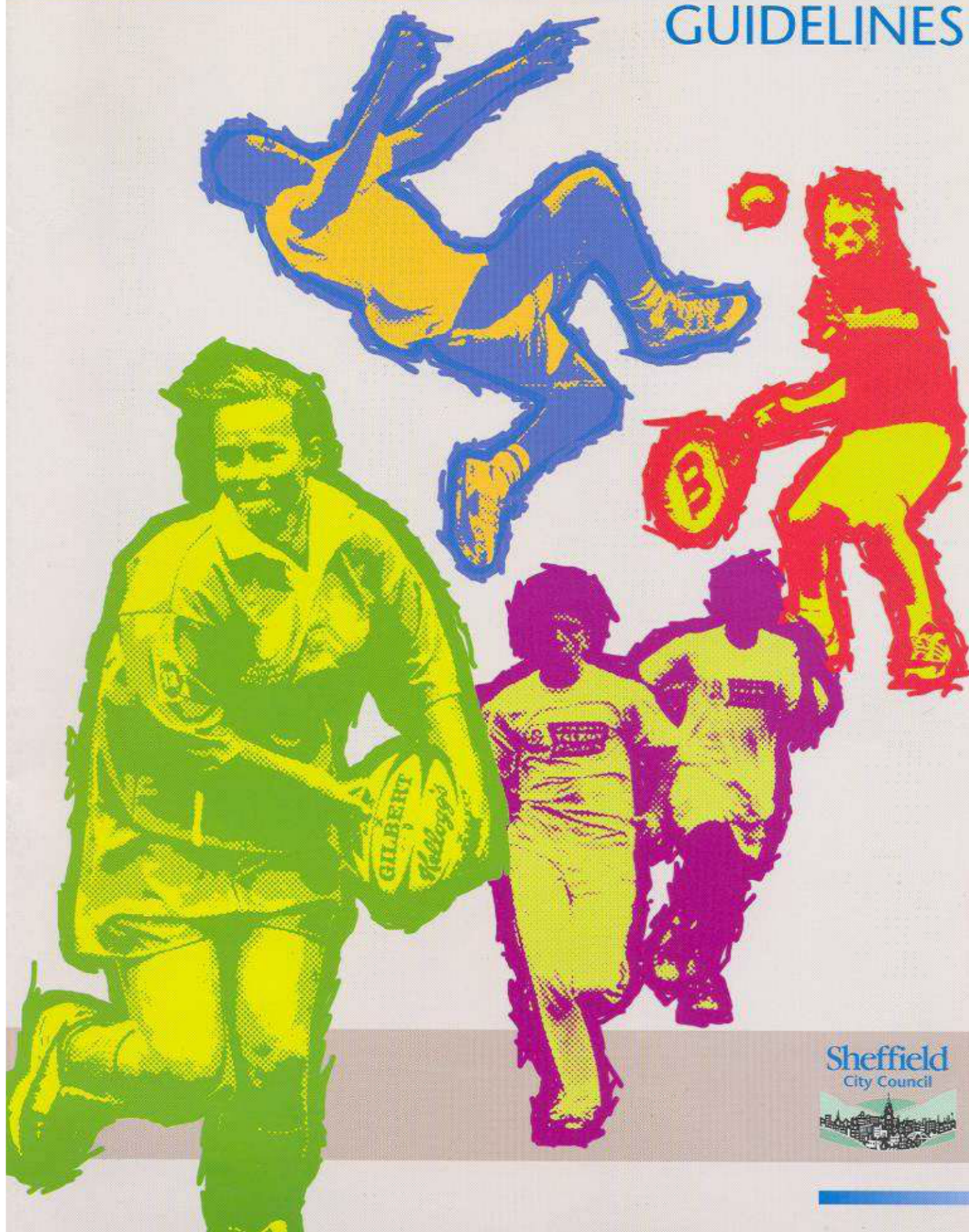


Jewellery and Body Piercing

GUIDELINES



Sheffield
City Council



Jewellery and Body Piercing Guidelines

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1. Objectives of this document

- To provide relevant information and guidance.
- To minimize the risk of injury and ill health associated with the wearing of jewellery during PE sessions and related out of hours activities.
- To seek compliance with relevant statutory requirements.

2. Introduction

Removal of Jewellery – Removal of Risk

- Sheffield LEA, along with each individual school and its Governing Body, have a responsibility for the health and safety of



pupils engaged in school activities. Consequently, the authority takes the view that there is a risk associated with the wearing of jewellery within physical education lessons and related out of hours activities, and the elimination of that risk can be achieved by the **removal of all jewellery**. Therefore the advice from the LEA is that jewellery should be removed for physical education and related out of hours activities.

- This is backed up by 'Safe Practice in Physical Education' – BAALPE 2004 (British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education) which states that;

'Personal effects (e.g. jewellery adornments, watches, hair slides, belts, spectacles, hearing aids) constitute a hazard if worn while participating in physical activity and should be removed beforehand whenever possible. Accidents have been recorded where the wearing of such items during physical education has caused injury.'

(Page 103 9.1.2 please see section 10 on spectacles and hearing aids).

- BAALPE advises that;
 - **no jewellery should be worn for physical education lessons or out of hours physical activities.**
 - **if the jewellery cannot be removed it must be made safe.**
 - **if the jewellery cannot be made safe then the pupil cannot participate.**
- Physical Education is a National Curriculum core subject and as such is a compulsory part of any pupil's education. This guidance is designed to support schools in developing their policies with regard to body piercing and the wearing of jewellery during physical education lessons. This applies both to curriculum time and related out of hours activities. It is also equally relevant for other subject areas including science, design and technology including food, and drama.
- Parents should be fully aware of the school's policy prior to admitting their child into the school. Schools are recommended to include a section in their prospectus, which explains the rationale for the removal of personal effects.
- Decisions about the removal of jewellery should not be the responsibility of individual teachers, but should be contained within the whole school policy. Any changes to such a policy should be properly communicated to existing, and new, parents / carers and young people.
- The information on removal of jewellery could also be included in the school's behaviour policy, and health and safety policy.
- Reference to this policy could be included within the Home School Agreement in order to obtain parental signature.

3. School Policy

- It is strongly advised that schools have a clear published whole school policy on body piercing and the wearing of jewellery. This should be formally agreed by the Leadership Team and Governing Body and included in the school prospectus. This will help in avoiding misunderstanding with parents and conflict between pupils and teachers.
- The policy could indicate that the wearing of personal effects is discouraged so that health and safety risks are reduced. It is important that parents are aware of why the policy is in place and the requirements for PE in this respect. Schools may wish to develop a policy that suggests jewellery is left at home, therefore removing the requirement for storage within school and the potential for loss.



- BAALPE 2004 advises that schools:
'Have a written policy on clothing, personal effects and personal protection for pupils in physical education, stressing the importance of safety and hygiene. All pupils and their parents should be informed of the policy. This will promote consistent practice across the school and minimize potential problems that may otherwise arise.'

(Page 103 9.1.4)

4. Making Jewellery Safe

- BAALPE 2004 states that;
'The following principles should be applied:
a) *all personal effects should be removed.*
b) *if they cannot be removed, the adult in charge should take action to make the situation safe (e.g. adjust the activity for the individual pupil or group).*
c) *if the situation cannot be made safe, the individual should not actively participate.*

(Page 105 9.3.2)

- Making 'safe' could mean that taping is used to cover the jewellery. However, taping is not effective against being hit by a ball or flailing arm. Therefore, the issue of the effectiveness of taping is questionable.
- Under no circumstances should any teacher tape jewellery for a pupil. By doing so they could expose themselves to accusations of assault. This becomes particularly relevant depending on the site of the jewellery.
- It is essential that the teacher exercise careful professional judgement with regard to taping. If a tape is applied and the child is participating **the teacher becomes responsible for ensuring the tape stays effective.** (BAALPE 2004 – *'Taping over ear studs is sometimes used to make the situation safe. However, the adult in charge should be confident that this strategy will be effective.'* Page 105 9.3.5)
- If jewellery is made safe by taping the teacher must still question whether what is planned can be done safely and where it is deemed not safe then the activity should be changed. If, after a risk assessment, it is deemed that the jewellery cannot be made safe enough for the activity planned, then the child





must not participate. In this case the teacher is accepting responsibility for making the final decision as to whether an activity is safe when jewellery has been taped.

- The NUT have stated that:
 - **taping cannot be accepted as reasonable if the teacher is held responsible for ensuring that the tape stays effective. The legal implications of something going wrong could be serious.**
 - **teachers should not have to change the whole of their lesson if a minority of pupils have taped jewellery. It is unrealistic when a teacher has already prepared a lesson.**
 - **the minority should not dictate the content of a lesson in this particular situation.**
- Taping is not the only strategy for making jewellery safe. A wide wristband could be used to cover religious bangles or medibracelets. The teacher is responsible for making a professional decision in these particular circumstances.

5. Body Piercing Checks

- Teachers **MUST NOT** make checks for body piercing other than that which is normally visible as routine. Any other action could be deemed to be assault. Teachers must constantly remind pupils to check that they have safely removed all their jewellery / items of body piercing. Body piercing not normally visible may include intimate piercings. The teacher would never be in a position to ensure that these piercings were removed or made safe.
- Teachers should ask regularly whether anyone is wearing body jewellery. If a pupil admits to wearing body jewellery that is not normally visible then the child must be asked to remove it. If it



cannot reasonably be removed then it must be made safe. If it cannot be made safe then the pupil cannot participate.

- A check consists of a verbal reminder to remove jewellery that is visible and that which cannot be seen as well. If a pupil did not remove a non-visible item teachers would have to prove that they had given the reminder.
- If a child does not admit to body piercing that is not visible, and this piercing is subsequently spotted by the teacher then the child must be asked to remove it. If the jewellery cannot be reasonably removed then it must be made safe or the pupil should not be allowed to continue with the activity. If the teacher is aware of the jewellery and does not ask for the removal, or making safe if appropriate, and an accident occurs then the teacher could be culpable as s/he has failed to protect the child.

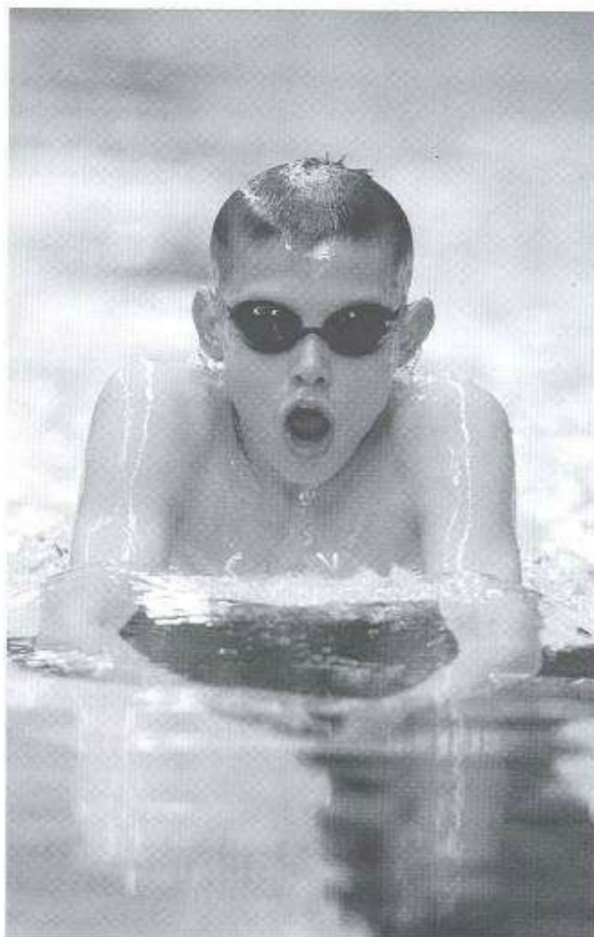
(See BAALPE Page 105 9.3.4)

6. Removal Of Items

- Teaching and non-teaching staff should not assist any pupil in the removal, or replacement of jewellery prior to, or following, a physical education lesson or out of hours activity.

7. Security of Jewellery

- If jewellery is worn to school then consideration should be given to a policy for the safe keeping of jewellery removed for physical education and other lessons. It should be made clear to the young person concerned and their parents / carers, that the safe



keeping of that item is not the individual teacher's responsibility. Schools could consider the use of a safe box or locked drawer where individual items can be placed hygienically and safely. If a teacher does volunteer to keep jewellery, it should be made clear that this is at the owner's risk. This statement should be included in the school's prospectus.

8. Staff Responsibilities

- It is expected that staff would wish to offer appropriate role models and set good examples on matters of dress and the display of body ornaments. Staff will want to consider the image they project in the context of the school dress code and policies.

9. Letters Of Absolution/ Indemnity Forms

- Schools cannot accept assurances from parents, which seek to absolve the school from any responsibility for injury from the wearing of jewellery during physical education and out of hours activities. Parental letters of indemnity or disclaimer have no legal standing in reality in that no adult, including a parent, may remove an individual's right to make a claim in law at a later date. Neither may a child (under the age of eighteen) give up her / his right to make a claim later in life. Whatever documents may be signed by a parent, the child, on becoming an adult, may retrospectively make an independent claim for damages up to three years after attaining adulthood (Twenty one years of age).



- BAALPE states that:

'Any willingness on the part of parents to indemnify teachers for allowing a pupil to wear personal effects should be declined. Indemnities have no legal status, as pupils may bring retrospective action against teachers in their own right within three years of reaching adult age.'

(Page 105 9.3.7)

10. Spectacles and Hearing Aids

- BAALPE 2004 includes the following statement regarding spectacles and hearing aids.

'Some pupils may need to wear personal effects such as spectacles or hearing aids. In these circumstances, the adult in charge should determine whether it is more or less hazardous for the pupils to actively participate wearing such items, both in terms of their own safety and that of other pupils.'

(Page 105, 9.3.3)

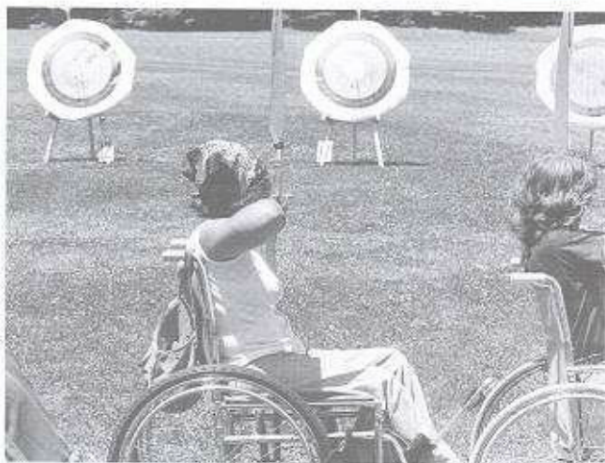
- In each individual case the teacher must take account of:
 - i the nature of the physical activity.
 - ii risk of injury which could be reasonably anticipated in the event of an accident.
 - iii the extent to which not wearing glasses/ hearing aids would hinder the pupil's participation in the activity.
- There is a balance to be achieved between the potential for injury through wearing spectacles or hearing aids, and the extent to which not wearing them would restrict the pupil's involvement in the activity. It is appropriate for schools to discuss with parents / carers either that spectacles / hearing aids will

continue to be worn for PE and out of hours related activities, or whether they will be removed. It is impossible to prevent every potential accident, however risks will be minimized by reasonable professional conduct.

- BAALPE 2004 states that:
'Glasses should be worn during physical education sessions if pupils find them helpful. They should have shatter proof lenses and should be adequately secured.'
(Page 76 7.4.71)
- When it is not possible for pupils to wear their glasses (e.g. during swimming lessons) pupils should be well informed of the geography of the area they are working in.

11. Medical Jewellery

- There are a very small number of pupils in school who have a medical condition which requires the permanent wearing of medical jewellery. Such items provide essential information in the event of the pupil having an accident or requiring medical treatment relating to their condition. A medical alert bracelet must be secured in such a way that it does not present a hazard to the pupil himself or herself, or to any other pupil. They should be covered with sweatbands secured by adhesive tape.



12. Exceptions

- Exceptions to this guidance and any school policy may be made under very specific circumstances. The head teacher is fully responsible for the discretion of such exceptions.

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