

Plean Scoile

St Fiacc's NS

Participation in Sports Policy



St. Fiacc's N.S.  
Fírinne le Misneach

Formulated/Approved/Reviewed	By
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Signed Chairperson BOM

*Lia Dooley*

## **Pupil Participation in Sport Policy**

Sport is of inestimable benefit for pupils and it is very much in the public interest that children participate in sport at school. However it is important that schools provide a reasonable duty of care to their pupils to ensure that they meet with no foreseeable harm. This policy will examine practical steps that the staff of St. Fiacc's will take to allow all our pupils to participate safely in sporting activities at St. Fiacc's NS.

### **1. Premises**

- Where sport's activities are permitted indoors, it is essential that the room is large enough for the activity. The room must be large enough to allow pupils participate in the sport, without the risk of continually colliding with each other.
- There should be no obstacles in the room which could cause tripping or other hazards.
- The floor surface should be reasonably firm and should not be slippery from over polishing or from wetness.
- Concrete or tarmac areas should be relatively level and free from potholes or other tripping or slipping hazards.
- A sports field should be level and free from debris or any sort of protruding stones. A check to ensure there are no sharp objects on a pitch should be carried out, particularly where the pitch is open and/or used by other persons.

### **2. Equipment**

- Sports equipment should be well maintained and checked regularly to ensure there are no defects. The equipment should be suitable for the age and maturity of the pupils involved. This is particularly important in relation to gym equipment.
- Participants in any sport should wear suitable clothing and footwear. Personal protective equipment should be compulsory where there is risk of serious injury. For example, participants in camogie or hurling should wear appropriate protective headgear. In addition, in contact sports gum shields should be worn. Pupils without such gear do not participate in the game.
- Goalposts of any size should always be anchored securely to the ground. In addition regular inspections of goalposts should be carried out to ensure they are properly maintained and any defects identified should be repaired immediately. Portable goalposts must be properly assembled and be secured by appropriate anchor weights to prevent them from toppling over. They should not be left in place. Nets should be secured by plastic hooks or tape and not by metal cup hooks. Homemade goal posts should never be used.
- Basketball posts should have padding on the shaft of the pole to prevent serious injury in the event of pupils colliding with the pole. Posts and rings should be regularly inspected to ensure there is no evidence of corrosion or disintegration. They may need to be painted annually with anti-rust paint to prevent corrosion.

### **3. Warm –Up Exercises.**

- All physical activity must begin with a warm up. Failure to engage in a warm up before vigorous sporting exercise can lead to the risk of muscular injury.

#### **4. Ensuring that a pupil is fit to engage in Physical Activity**

- Teachers should never ask a pupil to engage in sporting activity if the pupil is:
  - Unwell
  - Carrying an injury.
- While participation in sporting activities is mandatory, teachers should be flexible and sensitive to the needs of pupils who are manifestly physically incapable of participation. Consideration must be given and/or sensitivity exercised in the following situations:
  - An asthmatic pupil whose participation might have unhappy consequences.
  - A pupil who, owing to his/her build or other factors, may be incapable of playing.
  - An option for pupils who cannot take part in a boisterous game of football to engage in a more gentle form of exercise.
- The school may request a medical certificate of pupils who claim they cannot participate in certain sports.

#### **5. Teacher/Coach joining in a game/training session.**

- This poses the twin risks that the teacher will not be in a position to adequately supervise the game, and secondly that the teacher might injure a much smaller player.

#### **6. Teachers' Refereeing/coaching qualifications**

- Teachers who referee games must apply the rules to the needs of the pupils. Teachers must ensure that refereeing duties do not get in the way of supervision.
- The referee in any game must maintain good discipline and prevent any situations arising which could result in injuries. For example, allowing persistent fouling to go unchecked could constitute a breach of the duty of care, particularly if a serious injury ensued.
- The Board of St. Fiacc's will support teachers who attend courses run by the FAI; GAA and IRFU.
- All outside coaches must be Garda Vetted by the School Patron Body before commencing coaching at St. Fiacc's. Outside coaches must have basic coaching qualification certification.

#### **7. Supervision**

##### **Appropriate Levels of Supervision in relation to the activity, age and experience of the pupils.**

- It is important to demonstrate a technical skill to pupils to minimise the risk of pupils suffering an injury during the activity, for example, how to block in hurling or football or how to attempt a forward roll in gymnastics or a high jump in athletics.
- The level of supervision of the skill will be determined by the nature of the activity and the age and experience of the pupil i.e. the more dangerous the activity and the more vulnerable the person undertaking the activity, the more care that must be taken by the teacher.
- Teachers must have a clear lesson plan for a PE activity.

##### **Supervision before school**

- Pupils are not permitted to play with Footballs before school. Offending Footballs will be confiscated.

### **Supervision away from the school grounds**

- Where school games are played outside normal school hours, the responsibility to supervise continues with the school. Adequate arrangements for supervision must be made particularly for 'away' fixtures.

### **8. Pupil/ Teacher contact**

#### **The extent to which teachers can physically touch pupils in demonstrating exercises**

- Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary: When comforting a distressed pupil; to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; to administer first aid.
- Physical contact between school personnel and the child should always be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult.
- While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child the following should be factors in determining its appropriateness:
  1. It is acceptable to the child.
  2. It is open and not secretive.
  3. The age and developmental stage of the child
- School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

#### **The extent to which a teacher can be alone with a pupil.**

- All sports tuition must take place in an open environment. If a pupil has a toileting accident or requires first aid of an intimate nature, two members of staff must be present.
- Visiting coaches should never be left alone with pupils.
- Changing for games/ PE / Swimming

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Games/ PE/ Swimming. Where assistance is needed this will be done in the communal area and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/ volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child in a cubicle/private area. St. Fiacc's will endeavour to have a male member of staff/ volunteer in the male changing area and a female member of staff/ volunteer in the female changing area for Swimming.

### **9. First Aid in the event of injury or illness.**

- A Fully Stocked First Aid Kit is in the First Aid Room. A First Aid Kit is always brought with the teacher when travelling off site. The teacher is responsible for administering basic first aid to a pupil if the injury occurs during a PE Lesson. If the teacher is unable to administer the First Aid, the teacher must return the class to the main building to seek assistance. If the pupil is unable to move, the teacher must send two responsible pupils to the lobby to seek assistance.

- An accident report form is completed in respect of all pupils who are injured during sporting activity.
- In the event of a head injury, the child's parent is contacted to collect the pupil.

### **Linkage to other policies**

Safety Statement

Supervision Policy

PE Policy

Administration of Medication Policy

School Tours Policy

Code of Behaviour

Child Safeguarding Statement

Inclusion Policy

Intimate Care Needs Policy

### **References**

Allianz (2004) *Sporting Activities*, Schools Journal Issue 01, pp.6-7

Ruddy, D. (2010) *School sports/the teaching of Physical Education*, Leadership Plus, April, pp. 12-14