



afPE Health and Safety Update - October 2010

National Governing Body Training and Independent Providers

afPE have always worked closely with the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport in drawing up policies and procedures relating to safe practice. This continues to be the case. When assessing the competence of coaches involved in the delivery of physical education and school sport it is to the NGBs, more specifically NGB coaching schemes – that ourselves and school managers turn to obtain verification of individual coach suitability. Clearly, an NGB qualification is not the be-all and end-all of a coach's fitness for purpose – there are other, perhaps more personal, qualities that we need to take into consideration. But, generally speaking, an NGB qualification pitched at the appropriate level, provides a reliable indicator of, at the very least, a coach's technical understanding.

It is fair to assume that in the future there could be an increase in the number of skilled and experienced personnel offering their services to schools – either directly through curriculum support or via their own professional development programmes – which do not fall under the auspices of an NGB.

Where alternatives to recognised and formal NGB provision are offered the local authority/employer needs to clearly determine the standards and expertise offered for it is their decision as to whether a provider is capable of meeting their particular need.

This process may be made more difficult in situations where the NGB reserves its judgement and approval of a training provider. To further complicate the issue, the vast majority of independent providers will also come with NGB coaching awards.

But, to repeat, where there is ample evidence that a 'non-NGB' provider meets the criteria of the commissioning agent in terms of skill, knowledge and understanding, then it is the decision of the commissioning agent (LA, School, SDP etc) as to whether to proceed with the contract.

Mat Maintenance

afPE's 'Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport 2008' para.12.2.19.b. states:

'Mats should be covered with material that is easy to clean. In order to minimise slippage, the underside will also need to be cleaned from time to time. They should be checked regularly for any embedded objects (e.g. stones, pins etc).'

Questions have been raised about how frequently mats should be cleaned, i.e. what exactly is the meaning of 'from time to time'. This certainly does not imply after every lesson. Periodic cleaning is advisable but on a practical basis.

It really depends upon how often the mats are used as to how often they merit a wipe over but as a general rule every half-term should be manageable for both primary and secondary schools. When purchasing new mats, incidentally please also ensure that they meet full fire retardancy specification and are fit for purpose (e.g. some mats have apparently been erroneously purchased for gymnastics which have only carried 'for sitting on' qualities.)

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