

School Sports, Recreation and Leisure Policy

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Policy Owner	Education
Policy Lead	Principals
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Purpose

To ensure appropriate emphasis is included within a curriculum to support the development of fitness and health.

Scope

This policy applies to all NAS Schools.

School Sports, Recreation and Leisure

One of the aims of schools is for pupils to be as fit and healthy as can be reasonably expected. Teaching for leisure is seen as an important part of the autism specific curriculum. Regular recreational and leisure pursuits have proved to:

- Support access to learning in many areas
- Improve focus
- Reduce levels of anxiety and hyperactivity (thus lessening challenging behaviours)
- Develop coordination and spatial awareness
- Develop skills in working with/against others, learning to win/lose
- Develop confidence and self esteem
- Enable problem solving, decision making and the ability to show initiative
- Promote wellbeing and emotional regulation
- Develop leadership skills
- Promote communication
- Enable emotional release

Sport and leisure activities and community links form part of all curriculum areas and are particularly relevant to support Personal, Social, Health, and Citizenship Education in England and Wales, and Health and Wellbeing Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland.

These activities can form part of positive strategies written into any individual Behaviour Support Plans and Individual(ised) Education(al) Plans/Programmes.

Sports activities could include regular aerobics sessions, brisk walking, jogging, swimming, visits to sports centres or other appropriate physical activities consistent with DfE recommendations. These are accessed by all pupils in addition to structured Physical Education sessions which are timetabled in accordance with DfE guidelines.

Leisure activities could include clubs, dance, yoga, teaching of relaxation techniques, theatre/cinema trips or other appropriate activity. Activities are risk assessed and appropriate for individual, group/team and competitive needs. Opportunities for choice and decision-making are part of each activity with support and clear structure provided to enable access by all pupils.

The rights of individuals to have access to a favoured activity are respected. However, as part of teaching and learning, pupils are encouraged to move on from repetitive obsessive activities which may be restrictive or those which are no longer age appropriate if possible. For example, some pupils may have a particular interest in 'Thomas the Tank Engine' which may not be considered appropriate but, as a genuine interest, is to be respected and allowed for at certain times each day. In this scenario 'Thomas' would perhaps be seen as a motivator after the completion of more adult directed work which creates a balance between this and the teaching of self occupancy and interactive skills.

Equal Opportunities

Pupils with special educational needs / additional support needs are entitled to the best possible education and the same opportunities as their peers. It should be suited and adapted where necessary to the individual's particular needs. Pupils should not be excluded from activities on account of their behaviour. However, it may be necessary to suspend an activity temporarily whilst an individual pupil's risk assessment is completed to ensure that individual can access pursuits safely and it may be that this safe access forms part of the pupil's targets, and learning opportunities are maximised.

References

Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998
Education Reform Act 1988
Education Act 1997
SEN and Disability Act 2001
Purchasers' Contracts
Children & Families Act 2014