

Easthampstead Park Community School

Jewellery and Body Piercing Policy



The School believes that if the young person was deemed to be sufficiently mature to understand the risks to their health in obtaining a piercing and the need to maintain good hygiene over time, they should comply with any request to remove any piercings during the school day, recognising in not removing it they present a risk to others.

As parents are aware your child has exercised their right to obtain a piercing; we also expect your full support in ensuring their child complies with the school rules regarding piercings and that your child understands the risks they present to others if they do not comply. If asked by staff to remove a piercing that does not comply with this policy and a student refuses then they will either be excluded from an activity as they present a risk to others and or sanctioned. Resolution will be sought through parental consultation and cooperation over the longer term: our priority as a school is to work with you to educate your child whilst maintain a safe environment for learning. If in doubt about any piercing your child is planning please contact the school prior to ensure any concerns regarding compliance with school rules are discussed.

Objectives

1. To provide relevant information and guidance to parents and students regarding body piercings in the school environment
2. Wherever possible to minimise the risk of injury and ill health associated with body piercing.
3. Provide relevant information for the compliance of statutory requirements.

Context

It is not unusual for schools' policies on dress uniform to be challenged by young people, either through their style of dress, the wearing of jewellery or by unorthodox hairstyles. More recently these problems have extended to tattooing and the use of body piercing jewellery. The policy is designed to give clear guidance to parents, carers and students on what items are permitted to be worn by students in school.

Unless byelaws or local registration prohibits, the law does allow children under the age of 18 to consent to body piercing **provided** they are sufficiently mature to understand the nature of the request – exceptions are:

- Girls and boys cannot give consent to intimate sexual content under any circumstances – piercing of nipples or other genitalia can be regarded as an assault offence.
- The prohibition of Female circumcision Act 1985 which prohibits the cutting, piercing or otherwise surgically modifying genitalia for non-medical reasons is illegal.

Please note the school is aware that guidance is currently being prepared which may prohibit body piercing for persons under 18 years of age. As and when this information is published, these guidelines will be reviewed. In Wales the law, which came into force February 2018 practitioners are not allowed to carry out or arrange intimate piercings including to the tongue and breasts on anyone under 18. Ears, noses, navels and eyebrows are not covered by the ban. Chief medical officer for Wales, Dr Frank Atherton, said it was about protecting young people's health and wellbeing.

"It's concerning that a third of young people with intimate piercings have reported complications following a procedure. The child protection issues that could also arise from this scenario highlight even further the importance of implementing such a law," he said.

The chief dental officer for Wales, Dr Colette Bridgman, raised concerns about tongue piercing. "It can lead to lasting damage to teeth and gums, and can cause serious swelling in the mouth that can affect breathing.

England is yet to rule in as much detail and the current law stands.

Introduction

The school policy is to **prohibit** (not allow) the wearing of jewellery and body piercing jewellery at school with the exception of:

- Ear studs (one set) worn in the ear lobe only where a clear or flesh coloured retainer can be worn flush against the ear (in the case of a large hole style piercing) or a small plain single stud. Decorative, drop style and diamante style earrings are not acceptable.
- No fancy or diamante style earrings are allowed and hoops are not acceptable.
- Nose stud, to comply (be allowed) a **plain flathead stud** must be worn which must fit flush (flat) against the skin with no projection visible.*
- Lip stud, to comply a plain flat headed stud must be worn which must fit flush (flat) against the skin with no projection visible.*
- One plain ring with no raised setting can be worn on the finger.*
- One discreet bracelet can be worn.*
- One discreet necklace can be worn underneath a shirt or blouse.*
- Studs can be **gold, silver or clear** but must be discreet in size and appearance

**These items must be removed before participating in PE and PA lessons where the wearing of jewellery may be problematic (please reference the section on risk assessments).*

Risk assessments

Risks associated with body piercing to young persons are...

1. **Risks to health:** The risks to health are entirely associated with the individual concerned, these being infection and blood-borne diseases, for example, hepatitis, HIV, AIDS. If good personal hygiene practice is not adopted, then the risk of ill health to the individual concerns is significant.
2. **Potential injury:** Further injury due to inadvertent contact of the jewellery with other persons, clothing, fixtures and fittings, and so on. The extent of any injury is likely to be minor and would usually comprise tearing of the flesh. The risk is deemed to be greater if rings or projecting items are used.
3. **Risks to others:** The risks to health and safety of other persons not subject themselves to body piercing are low, with the exception of PE and PA, where injury could occur to others who come into contact with other person's jewellery.
 - **Ears** – Young persons who have had their ear lobe or lobes pierced should wear studs which comply with the school rule, rings or hoops are not allowed and remove them wherever possible. Ear studs where a clear or flesh coloured retainer can be worn flush against the ear (for large hole piercings) or a small single stud are the only type permitted. If they can't be removed for PE and PA then students have the option to tape their lobe but must bring in their own tape and apply it understanding that the risk is with them.
 - **Cartilage earrings- these type of earrings are not allowed in school at all (Years 7 – 11)** projections and loops present a risk of inadvertent contact
 - **Ear cuffs are not allowed to be worn (Years 7 – 11)**
 - **Eyebrows** – Eyebrow piercings are **not permitted (not allowed) in school** as jewellery is not flush to the face and projections and loops present a risk of inadvertent contact
 - **Nose** – Jewellery should be flush (flat) to the face. **Items should be removed for PE and PA lessons.**
 - **Lips** – If studs are installed, these should be flat to the face these **should be removed for PE and PA lessons** as above.

- **Tongue** – Tongue piercings are not permitted in school. Jewellery in the mouth is perceived to be high-risk for PE or PA activities and more general school activities. Risks involving swallowing damage/tearing of the tongue and roof of mouth, damage to teeth and so on.
- **Intimate areas** – In the majority of cases it is unlikely that staff will be aware that young persons have had more intimate parts of their bodies pierced. However, if staff are aware, then for PE and PA the jewellery should be removed and the parent informed of their child's failure to comply with school rules. Belly piercings come under this category.
- **Note: Linked body jewellery** – Chains linking jewellery in the mouth, nose, and eyebrow and also between fingers are not considered safe or appropriate for school and must be removed.

Notes for staff

The school will not seek or accept as an alternative to removal of jewellery a parent/carer's assurance that he/she will **not** hold the school or the local authority liable in the event of an incident/accident.

Some items can only be removed using specialised equipment. The removal and replacement of jewellery from a flesh piercing or unhealed site could lead to infection, injury and claims of assault. Plain single stud earrings (one set) in the lobe only can be taped by the student (not a plaster) not a member of staff, in taping their ear the student is accepting liability should the earring be caught. This is a change to the previous school policy.

Students will be expected to provide their own tape to use having made the decision that these studs can't be removed. This is the case in PE lessons currently.

Parents should be aware that there are risks from covering an item: there is a potential risk of infection to the wearer if the jewellery item is covered with a plaster or micro-pore tape, as well as issues of assault and criminal damage to property (*see Appendix 1*). *Staff will therefore not assist in this process.*

Control measures to reduce the risks to health and safety are contained within this policy and the BALPPE publication, 'Safe Practice in Physical Education'.

Removal of Items

Students should make sure they hand over necklaces, rings and bracelets that are worn **complying with our uniform policy** to the member of PE or PA staff in charge of the lesson as is the expectation now.

- One plain ring with no raised setting can be worn on the finger.*
- One discreet bracelet can be worn.*
- One discreet necklace can be worn underneath a shirt or blouse.*
- Studs can be gold, silver or clear but must be discreet in size and appearance

We would appreciate your support with this in order to ensure that we do not have any students missing out on the practical aspects of lessons. Any students refusing to remove jewellery will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour and Discipline policy. Please ensure if you agree to your son or daughter having a piercing that they can still comply with school expectations regarding removal and provide tape if necessary. Please note cartilage earrings can't be taped as they are not allowed in school and if seen they will be requested to be removed immediately.

Unfortunately, there may be occasions where an item of jewellery cannot be removed by the student. If the school believes this is the case, they will inform the parent of their concern to enable the parent to discharge their responsibility to ensure their child can participate in learning without any curriculum restriction.

If removal is not immediately possible, then the young person should sit out those activities where safety may be compromised or otherwise be involved in the lesson in ways which avoid direct physical participation. It is recognised that this measure is the last resort, and where the situation

persists, resolution will be sought through parental consultation and cooperation rather than confrontation. If in doubt about any piercing their child is planning parents have been requested to contact the school prior to ensure any concerns are discussed.

Exclusion from School

Young persons should not be excluded from school for the wearing of jewellery and personal adornments. DFEE Circular 10/99 contains guidance in this respect. Students may be internally excluded from lessons if they do not comply with the school's policy. They will complete work in a supervised environment to support their learning progress as part of the school's commitment to inclusion.

Staff Responsibilities

It is expected that staff would wish to offer appropriate role models and set good examples to young persons on matters of dress and the display of body ornaments. Clearly, staff want to consider the image they project to young persons in the context of the schools desire to present and maintain a professional learning environment. Teachers should also be mindful of the current teaching standards, which all teachers must meet in order to be judged effective.

Young persons are discouraged from bringing jewellery into school. However, if body ornaments and jewellery are removed in preparation for a lesson, it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure safekeeping of the items concerned. It is not appropriate to collect quantities of jewellery, watches, etc., in a box and then allow young persons to help themselves to their own property. A system is in place in departments to manage this process. Whilst the items are within the member of staff's keeping, he/she should be responsible for them, store the items securely and return them as soon as possible. Students are to comply with this arrangement and retain responsibility for the safety and security of their possessions at all other times.

Reviewed and Revised:	Spring 2019
Responsibility for Implementation and Review:	Headteacher Student Support Committee
Date of Next Review:	Spring 2021

Body Piercing – Health Aspects

For many hundreds of years people have undertaken body piercing. Ear piercing has been a common fashion procedure for females and more recently males.

However, more intricate forms of body piercing are now being undertaken and sites frequently pierced include facial, torso and genital areas, for example, nose, tongue, eyebrow, lip, septum, navel and various parts of the genitals in both males and females.

There are many problems associated with body piercing. Many people are familiar with ear piercing, but there are many differences with the healing process and the after-care required, and the jewellery used for sites pierced on the body.

Healing process

The healing process following body piercing can be very long – up to about one year. This long-lasting healing time is due to fragile skin (such as eyebrows) and constant rubbing of clothes on the site (such as waistbands in navel piercing). Body piercings can also get knocked very easily, therefore hampering the healing process. This delayed healing leads to additional problems of infection and migration. Additionally, areas such as the nose, which contains cartilage, tend to form scar tissue on healing.

Infection

There is the potential for infection to be acquired during the piercing procedure, in particular, blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis B or C and HIV. Other infections can occur from the natural bacteria that live on the skin that can get into the site and in extreme cases into the bloodstream causing blood poisoning.

Most risks come from 'back street' piercers and piercing done on holidays or in the local pub.

Because of the dirt that is around the body, such as hair follicles, the nose and in the navel, there is a high risk of acquiring an infection. Also, some body areas, particularly the genital area, are moist and large quantities of skin bacteria are normally present, thus increasing the risk of infection. To reduce the potential of infection the general advice is to

- touch as little as possible the jewellery/pierced area
- do not cover the jewellery, particularly with plasters
- in some cases, jewellery should not be removed from freshly pierced sites for at least six months
- apply only approved cleaning methods/solutions
- avoid tight clothing

Infection is considered one of the biggest problems with regard to the maintenance of body piercing and can often lead to a failure. Sites such as the navel may need several attempts to succeed. Although the advice of the body piercers is not to remove the jewellery, if person presents to a hospital accident and emergency department or their doctor with an infection, it will generally require removal as well as antibiotics.

Once healing has occurred, infection can still occur if the piercing site is damaged in any way, in particular, if it has been torn or stretched. This can also lead to an additional problem called migration where the jewellery gradually moves out of its original site.

Migration

Migration means the movement of the jewellery out of the skin. In the same way that the body forces out a splinter, it can cause the jewellery to migrate. The amount of skin taken by the initial piercing will decrease until the jewellery eventually grows out altogether. It does not matter how well the piercing is done initially.

Jewellery

There is a wide range of jewellery available for piercing. However, some of the jewellery should only be removed by a specialist or by special equipment.

There is also a risk of the site being torn by jewellery during sport and playground activities, causing potential risk to the person but also to other students from the jewellery and body fluids.