

Health & Safety Fact Sheet

SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INVOLVING SCHOOL STAFF Safety & Wellbeing for staff engaging in and directing physical activities in schools

When staff are supervising sport and physical activity, it is important to plan ahead to ensure the safety of themselves and students involved in the activity. Sprains and strains can easily occur if physical activity is undertaken infrequently and without adequate preparation.

Start slowly - Stretch/Warm Up/Warm Down

- Start slowly and allow your body to warm up before undertaking physical activity or sport
- Build up your level of activity over a number of weeks, rather than over-exerting yourself too quickly. This will assist in avoiding muscle soreness and injury
- Do some gentle stretches before participating in sport, walk through demonstrations first. Hold stretches for 10-20 seconds and repeat each stretch 2-3 times. Don't bounce into your stretches.
- Try a short jog to warm up – enough to raise a light sweat
- Take some time to warm down after your activity – some gentle stretching will help.

Wear comfortable/suitable clothes

- Ensure that you wear appropriate footwear and clothing for the activity
- Remove excess clothing and jewellery to prevent injury
- Use appropriate sporting gear and personal protective equipment where required.

Know your limitations

Factors to consider when you are playing or demonstrating sport or physical activities are your:

- Expertise
- Fitness
- Age
- Medical health.

Hydration

Remember to drink water before, during and after activities. Don't wait until you are thirsty or start sweating.

Dehydration can contribute to headaches, fatigue, decrease in performance, cramps, heat stress and heat stroke.

- Drink 150-200 ml of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes, rather than consuming large volumes every now and again.
- Choose water rather than tea, coffee, milk or soft drink.
- Increase your intake of fluids if your urine is dark as this is a clear indicator of dehydration (normal colour is pale yellow).
- If you suffer dehydration, ensure you rehydrate as soon as possible.
- Don't share water bottles (as this could be an infection control issue).

Consider your environment

- Carry out regular safety checks and maintain equipment
- Ensure equipment is suited to the size and ability of the staff/students using it
- Check out the area you intend to conduct the activity in taking into account things such as area, surface, obstructions and neighbouring classes

Sun Safety

- Schedule outdoor activities where possible for the early morning or late afternoon to avoid peak exposure times
- Rotate activities that use natural or artificial shade with tasks that are in the sun
- Plan outdoor activities around the movement of the sun; work on the western side of a building in the morning and the eastern side in the afternoon
- Refer to HLS-PR-15: Managing Heat Stress in Schools
<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/epr/health/hlspr015/>

Creating Healthier Workplaces www.education.qld.gov.au/health

