



The Poplar Adolescent Unit  
Therapeutic Education Department

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## PE POLICY

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Physical education is that aspect of education which makes use of organised physical activities to achieve the aims of education. These activities are those that make use of any sports facilities available – eg. Gymnasium, sports hall, sports centre, swimming pool, outdoor sports areas.

It also includes outdoor education which is a means of approaching educational objectives through guided direct experience in the environment, using its resources as learning materials.

### **Curriculum Statement**

Our overall aim is to create a suitable learning environment that provides stimulation and the opportunity for interaction with others; enables individuals to realise their own needs and, encourages development of self-esteem. We aim to make each child believe in his/her own abilities thus, gaining self-confidence.

### **NICE Guidelines – depression in children and young people**

We support the NICE guidelines regarding exercise:

- “Offer advice about the benefits of regular exercise
- Encourage patients to consider a structured and supervised exercise programme of typically up to three sessions per week of 45 minutes to 1 hour for 10-12 weeks.”

### **The Sports Council Research**

The Sports Council conducted a research project where they studied inactive people who started taking moderate exercise for at least twenty minutes, three times a week. They noted the following benefits:

#### ***Physical changes***

- Better posture – this may help with lower back pain.
- Stronger muscles – this will help with unexpected strains. Also helps with the stability of joints.
- Improved transport and use of muscle oxygen.
- Improved function of the heart and blood vessels.
- Increase in the concentration of enzymes in the muscle cells and an increase in the density of the small blood vessels in the muscles. This means each muscle can take more oxygen and therefore is capable of more work.
- Physical work can be performed at a lower heart rate. This results in less strain being placed on the heart and blood vessels.
- Physical work can be sustained for longer so endurance and stamina are improved and the person finds work easier and gets less tired.

#### ***Psychological changes***

- Many people reported an improvement in the quality of their lives. The physiological changes brought about by exercise and the feeling of elation that follows exercise may produce long-term psychological benefits.
- Controlled studies have observed psychological benefits such as increases in extroversion, self-confidence, self-awareness and improvements in recall.

## **Summary**

The report states *'Exercise is of general benefit because it maintains muscles, joints and the cardiovascular system in good working order. This ensures that activities are not curtailed by a low physical working capacity and that moderate physical demands can be met without undue effort. Exercise may also be of psychological benefit. Positive attitudes towards exercise should be encouraged from adolescence onwards in order to establish active lifestyles which will be sustained into middle life and old age.'*

## **The relevance of physical education for young people**

Research has shown that physical activities can be beneficial to emotional health, particularly for those with behavioural difficulties, providing there is a programme of suitable activities that cater for individual needs and bring out individual strengths. Physical activity can be used for the spontaneous expression of positive feelings and the discharge of aggressive tensions.

Physical activity programmes have been shown to produce an improvement in personal relationships due to a combination of:

- The effort of achievement and success and improved confidence which is associated with these feeling.
- Improved adjustment and the happier atmosphere that arises from it.
- Improved general fitness and the feeling of well-being that goes with it.

All young people are expected to attend the programme and are entitled to two activity sessions a week. Exceptions to this expectation may be made on medical grounds i.e. if a young person has a physical problem, is too unwell mentally or has a food related difficulty and is not complying with their Care Plan. Missing a meal is not a sufficient reason for non-attendance on activities where no food related difficulty is present.

The Department of Education states that 'If children can be brought through a programme of physical activity, to feel ease and satisfaction in using their bodies, the reaction on their mental outlook is likely to be healthy.'

Outdoor education is also relevant for young people. It is not a subject but an integrated approach to learning, to decision making and the solution to problems. Apart from opportunities for personal fulfilment and development of leisure interests, adventure stimulates the development of self-reliance, self-discipline, judgement, responsibility, relationships and the capacity for sustained endeavour.

## **The Physical Education Programme**

The PE programme takes place during school term time. A qualified teacher or instructor takes the sessions, with nursing support, if required.

Every week we offer:

- A swimming session for all young people

- A fitness session for 4 young people
- An outdoor pursuits session for 4 young people (weather permitting)
- An indoor activity session for 4 young people.

We encourage each young person, if they can, to take part in swimming plus one other activity.

### **The overall aims of the PE Programme**

- PARTICIPATION
- ENJOYMENT
- IMPROVED SELF-CONCEPT

### **The Activities**

#### ***Clements Hall***

*FITNESS* - The young people learn how to use the exercise machines to improve their fitness. Their progress can be measured.

*SWIMMING* - The young people work on the STA Award Scheme starting at an appropriate level and working up. They can choose from skills and distance awards. There is also time for swimming, relaxation and water games.

#### ***Belchamps Outdoor Activity Centre***

These include aerial runway, climbing wall, low ropes, archery, mountain bikes, assault course, caving, roller blades, trampoline, orienteering, high ropes and paint ball targets. The aim is to experience a range of activities, building self-confidence and promoting team-work.

*WALL CLIMBING* - The aim is for each young person to decide for themselves how high they want to climb. Getting to the top is not the main target, although the young people often set themselves this aim. They have to develop trust with the person who holds them as they climb.

### **Recreational Activities**

The Education Team support the recreational activities at Poplar although they do not usually become actively involved because they take place outside school time. Any education sports equipment can be loaned by prior arrangement.

Poplar has four areas available for recreational activities:

- Hawthorne Centre
- Poplar Garden
- Lawn at front of Hospital
- Multi-activity room in Hospital

There is readily available equipment in Poplar Education storeroom.