

25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## Guidance re Earrings.

Dear Parents/Carers

I thought I would write to confirm our arrangements in school around the wearing of earrings for PE as updated guidance has been received this week from the Association for Physical Education (afPE). This guidance will be included in the new Safe Practice 2024 document which is due to be uploaded onto the afPE website at the end of September.

As a school we have a duty of care to ensure that our children can participate actively without unnecessarily endangering themselves or others around them, with this in mind, we therefore intend to follow the recommendations made by the afPE.

The Association for Physical Education (afPE) strongly recommends the practice of removing all personal effects at the start of every PE lesson to establish a safe working environment. **This applies to all ear and body piercings, including retainer and expander earrings.**

I realise that some parents/carers may have purchased the flat backed earring retainers specifically for this purpose but as you can see, the recommendation also includes this type of earring. This means that on PE days children should come to school ready for the lesson, preferably with earrings removed or able to remove their own earrings in school. Staff are not allowed to help remove or insert earrings for children.

Parents have told us of other schools in the area that allow ears to be taped for PE. However, adopting this policy is not just as simple as allowing children to have their ears taped over for lessons.

Firstly, taping earrings is not recommended because it can create a false sense of safety and can still injure a child's ear if the earring is pulled out from under the tape.

The guidance also clearly states that staff are not required to remove or tape-up earrings for children.

However, most significantly, it also states that if a school does accept taping, the teacher supervising the children has the **legal responsibility** to ensure that the taping is fit for purpose. This means that teachers would need to assess whether the amount of tape is sufficient to prevent the piercing penetrating, for example, the bone behind



the ear should an unintentional blow be received from someone or some item of equipment, such as a ball.

In a worst-case scenario, where an accident occurred and the taping was deemed to be insufficient, our teachers could be legally liable for an action that had actually been undertaken by a parent.

As I'm sure you can appreciate, we also have a duty of care to our staff and it would be unfair of me to put any of our team in this difficult position. Therefore, we are continuing with our existing position that we cannot accept ears to be taped for PE.

This means that should you decide to get your child's ears pierced during term times, and the earrings are unable to be removed either before coming to school, or by the child at school, then our teachers will make adaptations in terms of how they take part in the practical aspects of the lesson. Please rest assured that exclusion from a lesson will also be always avoided but it may mean that rather than actively participating, the child can have different tasks assigned to them during the practical elements of the lesson (for example, peer coaching, observation and feedback tasks, videoing others to analyse at a later stage, or being a referee in a games context).

I hope this helps to clarify our school's position in respect of this matter and that you can appreciate that this arrangement is in place due to the significant risk of injury that can arise from loose jewelry during physical activity.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.



Mr. Roche

Principal

