



Leeds Well School Partnership

• Physical Activity • Physical Education • Sport

February Health and Safety Update

(Courtesy of AfPE)

Children's footwear, the general principles are outlined below:

Purpose of Footwear

Footwear must be **fit for purpose**, meaning it should match the activity and environment. This is essential for **student safety** because inappropriate shoes can lead to slips, trips, or injuries.

Security of Footing

Students need footwear that provide **good grip and stability**. This is crucial for maintaining balance during movement, especially in dynamic or high-impact activities.

Changing Footwear

All students are expected to **change into appropriate footwear** for the lesson.

For example, trainers for indoor sports or studded boots/ trainers for outdoor fields, the footwear must suit both the **location** and the **specific activity**. Please see FAQ 4 below for a practical example

Frequently asked questions:

Question 1: A parent has challenged the school several times over the wearing of *plimsolls* as an acceptable option during dance lessons or other indoor sports. What is your advice?

Answer:

Association for PE (afPE) in the latest Safe Practice online resource (2025) state under the section on footwear, page 141

Some activity-specific footwear considerations

In gymnastics and dance, barefoot work is safest, whether on the floor or apparatus, because the toes can grip. Barefoot work in both gymnastics and dance can improve aesthetics by allowing the foot and toes to move through a full range of flexion and extension, which in turn strengthens the muscles, bones and joints. Decisions about the appropriateness of bare feet for dance should consider the type of contact between the floor and feet, which is closely associated with the style of dance or nature of the movements being explored. Where the condition of the floor makes it unsuitable for barefoot work in gymnastics and dance, students should be permitted to wear clean, soft footwear.

The Association for PE do not provide a recommendation regarding the use of plimsolls/ pumps. It will be an individual school decision if they choose plimsolls/pumps as a footwear option alongside bare feet for pupils participating in gymnastics and dance

Question 2: A child is taking part in gymnastics and has no pumps; he has a verruca so is unable to go bare foot. Mum has provided 'grippy' gym socks. It doesn't state anywhere in the guidance about wearing such an item, so we need advice in writing please as to whether they are suitable or not

Answer:

It appears, just as we advocate, that you have a policy for bare feet which is considered best practice for gymnastics and dance as it helps with safety in gripping the apparatus (the student will 'feel' the apparatus and floor as they work their muscles in their feet). It also supports the student in achieving high quality work. They can point their toes and produce aesthetically pleasing movement.

However, if children have a verruca, it will be a school decision how to manage this based on a risk assessment and your employer guidance.

We recommend having a clear and robust PE Policy regarding this issue. Do you have access to our online Safe Practice document? In Chapter 1 we share an exemplar Primary PE policy. In the Clothing and Footwear section, we recommend writing what your practice is regarding this issue so that parents know what to expect. Some schools cover verrucae with plimsoles, and others use grippy socks. Our concern about using socks is that we feel teachers have enough to do with checking jewellery etc so to check if the socks are the correct ones is another thing to do.

In summary, it will be a school decision based on a risk assessment process and any local guidance from your employer.

Please [click here](#) if you would like to access the AfPE Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity, it costs £45 per year.

