



Sensory Impairment Service: Guidelines for Schools for the Safe Use of All Types of Hearing Aid Devices During Swimming and Other Physical Education (PE)

General Physical Education (PE)

PE With a Cochlear Implant or Bone-Anchored Hearing Instrument (BAHI):

Always use a safety line in sports lessons.

Widened Vestibular Aqueducts (WVA) or Enlarged Vestibular Aqueducts (EVA):

If a child has WVA/EVA, you **MUST** consult with your Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD). There are strict management guidelines for these children. This is because any knock to their head could worsen their hearing loss.

- **Non-Contact Sports (Such As Tennis):**

Cochlear implants (CI) can be worn but must be protected from knocks.

- **Vigorous Sports (Such As Football)**

- Cochlear Implant Users: Seek individual advice from the Auditory Implant Centre (AIC). They might recommend the use of a rugby skull-cap.
- Bone Conduction Hearing Instrument (BCHI) Users: BCHI users can take part with a safety line.

- **Contact Sports (Such As Judo):**

Cochlear implant or BCHI users should not take part since blows to the head are likely or inevitable.

- **Trampolining and Assault Courses:**

Cochlear Implants (In Line with Advice Given by the Auditory Implant Centre) - We recommend removing equipment and limiting the number of people on a trampoline to minimise any chance of bumping heads. If a pupil's head gets knocked in any way, staff should follow normal medical school procedures (e.g. ice pack) and seek advice if they have any concerns. If there are any signs of redness, impact to the implant site, or reports of pain, staff should contact the Auditory Implant Centre (AIC). The centre may request a photograph so a nurse can check it.

- **Helmet Sports (Such As Cycling):**

The external parts of cochlear implants can be worn with a comfortable, well-fitting, good-quality helmet. BCHIs should be removed.

- **Gymnastics**

- Cochlear Implant Users: Seek individual advice from the Auditory Implant Centre.
- Bone Conduction Hearing Instrument (BCHI) Users: If the pupil is rolling on their head, external equipment should always be removed. Especially if they're working on plastic mats, because these can cause static electricity.

PE With Hearing Aids: Behind-the-Ear (BTE), In-the-Ear (ITE), or Bone Conduction Hearing Aid (BCHA) on a Band

- **Contact Sports (Such As Judo):**

Hearing aids should be removed when there is a high risk of contact to the head. Generally speaking, pupils can wear hearing aids for most sports activities (as long as they don't cause the wearer any discomfort). School staff should seek hospital advice for specific queries, either directly or through the QToD.

- **Trampolining and Assault Courses:**

For users of hearing aids (including middle ear implants) - discuss the activity with your QToD beforehand.

Swimming

- **Swimming with Hearing Aids:**

All types of hearing aid need to be removed before swimming and kept dry at all times.

- **Swimming with Cochlear Implants:**

Cochlear implant (CI) devices are only considered waterproof if they're used with an aquatic attachment kit. Each manufacturer supplies advice on how to use equipment. Many cochlear implant users may have an 'aquatic kit' that enables them to use their CI underwater. Speak with your QToD for advice. Always use rechargeable batteries.

- **Swimming with Grommets:**

- Hospital advice should be sought following surgery. Generally, it may be safe to go swimming from one month after grommet insertion - seek hospital advice.
- Do not swim in any pool which is not chlorinated.
- Swim-plugs are not required for grommets unless the individual is swimming beyond a depth of 1 metre. In which case, seek hospital advice.

Class teachers and schools are responsible for the physical activity a deaf child participates in. They may need to do a risk assessment with the QToD about the safety of the deaf pupil and their peers.

Finally, if you have any more queries, always go to your QToD first. They can either give you the answers or signpost on the best way to get an answer.

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