

Advice for education settings

Sports day and athletics - including pupils with physical disabilities

Most schools will be planning for a sports day in the summer term – an event that should be an inclusive experience for all children, including those with a physical disability.

General Principles

Sports day should be a happy, fun, sharing experience for all and pupils should feel comfortable with the day. Pupils need to feel they have a part to play and everyone needs to have the opportunity to demonstrate skills. The child or young person needs to be at the heart of any decision making-process regarding inclusion in sports day or athletic activities.

Considerations

When planning for sports day or athletic activities consider the following:

- Will there be team activities or individual events?
- Scoring
- Prizes and awards
- Maintaining self-esteem
- Meeting medical needs
- Sports day is a public occasion
- Risk of being 'unfair' when differentiating



Practical Suggestions

Races

- Relays – alter the distance or the start/finish line
- Modify equipment – eg use a beanbag instead of ball in an egg and spoon race
- Record the time taken rather than the order of finish – this gives a personal best to aim for next time
- Consider the most appropriate surface – wheelchair users may need to be on the playground rather than the field
- Partner races – eg one person is blindfolded while their partner gives instructions
- Shuttle runs (those that include picking up objects) – reduce the amount of pick-ups, modify the height of pick up for a wheelchair user by putting the item on a chair or having a buddy hold the item out for them to collect (they would need to be in the outside lane)

Team Games

- Consider the order of pupils in team
- Use a buddy system so that the young person with reduced mobility is working with a peer
- Modify equipment – use lightweight and easy to hold balls, quits, beanbags, bats etc

- Positioning – consider whether the young person needs to be standing, sitting or perching (eg against a stool)

Throwing Activities

- Personal record (beat your personal best)
- Modify equipment – consider weight, size, ergonomics
- Hit a ball from a cone
- Consider position and stability for child when throwing



Jumping

- Manual wheelchair users – one push of wheels is equivalent to standing long jump
- Triple jump can be three pushes
- Electric wheelchair users – timed power burst
- Large step – perhaps supported by an adult
- Provide good thick mats for those with co-ordination and balance difficulties



Please ask your PNI Specialist Teacher if you require more support in planning your inclusive sports day or athletic activities.

Note: Images do not belong to ECC.