



Parkour - Updated afPE position statement (Jan 2010)

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Background

Some three years ago it became apparent that a number of schools and Sports Partnerships were beginning to introduce parkour type programmes as a means of providing challenging physical activity to secondary pupils not attracted to more mainstream provision.

Although benefits of parkour activity were obvious in terms of engagement and enthusiasm by pupils for whom more traditional PESS had diminishing appeal the risks to safety and well-being were a cause for concern – particularly since the popular perception and understanding of parkour tended to dwell upon more extreme versions of the sport observed to take place in the urban environment.

With a view to providing the afPE membership with helpful safety guidance afPE entered into discussion with parkour provider representatives and British Gymnastics (BG). Although recognised as an emerging sport in its own right the type of parkour activity afPE was prepared to support at this time consisted of indoor (gymnasium/sports hall) activity using traditional gymnastic equipment, primarily boxes, mats and benches. It was also evident that much of the movement associated with parkour had a gymnastic connection.

In the absence of a parkour governing body afPE was obliged to seek a 'best fit' solution to safe practice. Whilst never assuming that BG had aspirations to assimilate parkour in any way, afPE decided to adopt gymnastic coach (L2) as an interim means of accreditation for those wishing to lead parkour activity within an educational setting.

Subsequently, BG has developed an additional gymnastic discipline, known as 'Free Gymnastics' with a newly established BG coaching requirement for those wishing to lead this activity within the club environment. It should be clearly understood that this development remains quite distinct from parkour with Free Gymnastic coaching accreditation having no relationship or currency in relationship to parkour.

Alongside these developments, the emergence in 2009 of a National Governing Body for parkour – Parkour UK – with its own designated leadership/governance and coaching structure provided afPE with an appropriate frame of reference for reviewing its existing position in relation to parkour. Recommendations arising from this review are set out below.

The Provision of Parkour within an Educational Setting: afPE Recommendations

Lead body

afPE recognises Parkour UK (ref website) as the lead body for the governance and regulation of parkour throughout the UK and will continue to work closely with this Body in encouraging schools and other educational organisations to apply safe practice in their delivery of parkour. The term 'parkour-related activity' previously used in afPE's original position statement is no longer necessary.

Qualifications and experience

afPE recommend that staff working within an educational setting wishing to lead parkour sessions should acquire coach/leader accreditation through Parkour UK. However, staff with a specialist physical education qualification may feel confident to instruct basic parkour after appropriate 'top-up' training offered through their initial training institution; employer e.g. Local Authority; or through a training agency recognised by Parkour UK. More advanced work should only be undertaken by leaders/instructors holding Parkour UK coaching accreditation.

Location

afPE recommend that the parkour experience within an educational setting is restricted to:

- Indoor work areas using selected gymnastic equipment in an appropriate way and suitably deployed to present meaningful challenging activity;
- Purpose-built indoor parkour apparatus;
- Purpose-built outdoor parkour parks/installations

Supervision

Parkour sessions within an educational setting should always be directly supervised by a suitably qualified and experienced adult.

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