

CHILDREN'S POLE AND AERIAL CLASSES

If you are currently teaching children's pole and aerial classes, or thinking about moving into this field in the future, below is a check list of the things you should have in place to ensure that you are adequately covered in the UK. For the purposes of the below information, a child will be defined as a person under the age of 18, as per HM Government – Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) and equivalent policies implemented in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

1. All those instructing should have a current and relevant DBS check (previously CRB check). For more information on DBS checks, head to: <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>. You can use an umbrella body to place the check for you, all approved umbrella bodies are listed on the government website. In N. Ireland this is known as an Access NI check. These need to be renewed every 3 years and there is a small cost involved. In some cases, if you have a check completed for 1 organisation, you may still need another check carried out by a new organisation if you instruct at different centres. Enquire for further information if this is the case to confirm.
2. The studio, or the venue you are teaching at should have a clear safeguarding policy and set of procedures to implement this policy. For more information on what your safeguarding policy should include, head to: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/>
3. You will need to display relevant information from this policy in your venue (things like who your child protection officer is and how people can report an incident) Displaying a photo and telephone number is good practice in case the designated person is unknown to children in your classes.
4. Have a clear children's code of conduct and parental code of conduct. Make sure both are signed by every child attending – and also signed by their parent - and are clearly displayed in your venue.
5. All staff and volunteers should have received child protection training. As a minimum, you should provide in each class one designated children's welfare/protection officer who should be fully trained (with renewal training every three years). The NSPCC do a great basic online course in child protection: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-expert-training/child-protection-introduction/>
6. Consider if you have sufficient knowledge of children's anatomy, physiology and psychology to adapt your class material accordingly. I would highly recommend a children's specific fitness qualification - such as: <http://www.ymcafit.org.uk/courses/kids-fitness-dance>

<http://activeiq.co.uk/qualifications-students/level-2-qualifications/level-2-award-in-adapting-fitness-instruction-for-adolescents-qcf>

7. Sport specific children's training courses are also available:
<http://www.verticaldance.com/kids-pole-fitness-training.html>
8. Insurance. Make sure your current insurance policy will cover you for teaching children. Be aware of any age limitations imposed, any ratios of children to instructors etc. Make sure you have all of this information in writing and that you have checked the full terms and conditions for any practice that may invalidate your policy in the event of a claim.
9. Make sure your First Aid Certificate covers you. A generic certification such as 'emergency first aid' may be sufficient (check with the individual training provider) or you may need to further your training with a specific Paediatric First Aid Course.
10. Make sure your PAR-Qs and Informed Consents are relevant and have sections outlining the need for physical contact for safety in spotting for skill learning and correcting technique.
11. Make sure you have the relevant risk assessments completed for these specific classes.
12. Check your equipment is appropriate for the age, size and development of the children you are teaching. Ensure your policies for moving of equipment are laid out clearly so that children only ever move what is safe to move and is taught and supervised.
13. Decide where you stand with parent's watching/attending/taking part - this is mostly down to choice but not having an 'open doors' policy may convey the wrong message. On the other side, parents in the room may create 'parental coaching' issues which may not be supportive to the instructor.
14. Make sure you are working to a good ratio of children to instructor. This number will depend on the age of the children you are teaching and is often based on Ofsted guidelines - for children between the ages of 9 and 12 for example, the ratio is 8 children to 1 adult.
15. Have a teaching assistant on hand where possible or a volunteer. This could be a parent that agrees to stay to aid class management - but mainly for child protection and for instructor protection from allegations. If male and female children are in the class, it is best practice to have a male and female adult present. Having an additional adult is best practice encase toilet runs are required and it is safer for the children to be accompanied to the toilet - but not inside the cubicle.
16. If you are a 'competitive' studio - you need to have procedures in place for transport and for competition codes of conduct. You must have business use on your car insurance if transporting children and have parental written consent for each event with clear details on pick up and drop off. You must not be alone in the car with one child, and where possible, you should have another adult in the car also.

17. Ensure children wear appropriate clothing for warm-ups and cool-downs for safety and modesty. Stretching should be done with shorts or leggings for further protection.
18. Photography policies - signed consent by parents must be obtained for using video and photography in sessions and for your own safety this should not be stored for longer than necessary. This also applies to any parents wanting to take photos or videos in a session - they should not record other children, without consent. It is advised that when possible - shorts or leggings should be worn for photos if to be used for public display.
19. Social media policies exist and you should have one - you should not be friends with children on e.g. Facebook. This needs to be communicated with the parents.

If you still feel you need further information then why not read up on the following recommended websites:

The Standards for Safeguarding Children in Sport

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/standards-for-safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport/> This site contains all the national standards each organisation has to meet under the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, Every Child Matters: Change for Children 2004, The Protection of Children Act 1999 and Working Together 2013.

The Self-Assessment Toolkit

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/self-assessment-tool/>

This explains how an individual or organisation can implement policies and procedures that meet the above legislation

Minimum Standards for Active Coaches of Children and Young People

<http://www.sportscoachuk.org/sites/default/files/MSD-guidance-tool-1-2.pdf#page95>

*For any questions that are unanswered, get in contact with your Children's Officer in your Sport England, Sport NI etc office. - Child Protection in Sport Unit CPSU. If in doubt - research and ask! **<https://thecpsu.org.uk/>***