

British Gymnastics Trampoline Teachers Refresher course

Some explanatory notes

British Gymnastics recommend that a refresher course be undertaken by people who have qualified in either part one or part one and part two every three years to update their knowledge and understanding. The course is a one-day course (non-examination).

I have been asked whether this is mandatory/a requirement or just advice. This note is an attempt to clarify the situation. Please note this is my interpretation of the situation and any further queries should be directed either to British Gymnastics or to your current insurer's. You may, however, wish to share this with senior leaders since I am aware it can be challenging for you and them to facilitate time off school for courses. This is only for teachers and there is no recommendation for coaches active in clubs since British Gymnastics assume that coaches in clubs will continuously update their knowledge through a variety of other sources.

However, because teachers usually only teach trampolining for a limited number of weeks in a year and there are usually significant periods of time between delivery of trampolining on the syllabus, British Gymnastics recommendation is that knowledge is updated every three years. This is also recommended by the Association for Physical Education (AFPE)

Once you have a qualification (Teachers part 1 or part 2, or GCSEs for that matter!) The qualification is for life and unless some sanction is applied by a governing body you remain qualified. British Gymnastics do not and cannot insist that you must do the refresher course. They are the national governing body for the sport, but you are not directly subject to their rules and regulations since you are working in a school environment and your rules and regulations are those which are determined by the Local Authority, Academy Trust, your insurers. However, to ignore the national governing body recommendations would generally be unwise at best since in the event of some incident, the national governing body recommendations would be quoted as evidence against you!

Consider for a moment: in theory, you could drive a car without a valid MOT certificate. Indeed, some classic car owners do not need to, or choose to, have an MOT for their vehicle with classic status. Obviously a modern car is supposed to have a valid MOT certificate. None of this, is likely to become an issue until there is an accident! Even if the accident was not directly attributable to the tested item, then the absence of a valid MOT indicating the car has been tested as roadworthy would mean that the driver is uninsured (and likely to be subject to prosecution!).

Applying this philosophy to teaching trampoline in schools, there is no actual requirement to do a refresher, and nobody is going to check on you to see if you have done the refresher within the recommended three year period. **HOWEVER**, in the event of an accident in school on the trampoline, failure to have updated/refreshed your qualification within the recommended period would call into question your competence to teach, your recognition of health and safety requirements, and would almost certainly show a breach of duty of care which is one of the requirements for a valid negligence claim. On many of the refresher courses I have delivered over the last 20 years, some things have become apparent:

- Teachers frequently forget what they were taught on their initial course. This is not surprising given a six week block, every year, for example.
- Some teachers did courses with tutors who utilised old-fashioned or ineffective techniques which suggests that a refresher would be beneficial..

Consequently, some schools are putting themselves at risk of a negligence claim and should adopt more effective and less hazardous techniques.

I am happy to elaborate on any of the above should you wish (trampolinecoaching@gmx.com)

John Wotherspoon
British Gymnastics Tutor and Assessor
High Performance Coach, Trampoline and Double Mini Trampoline
Expert Witness Sporting Negligence