

Safety Rules - Providing Structure in Gym Class

Over the years at Aurora Waldorf School, I have found it helpful to take time during the first Gym class of the year, to read and explain the following "code of conduct" to each grade, and then to make sure students know where these rules are posted. For grades 1, 2 and 3, children seem to like to know that they're going to have "manners class" right along with Gym. For older grades, the wording can be simplified but the same rules need repeating... usually several times a year.

1. Every class begins with a quiet opening. This is not just a manners rule, but also a safety rule: Athletes who cannot quietly prepare, or quietly stop and rest, are not ready to be safe athletes.
2. There is never any free play in the gym. You are either waiting for the class activity, watching, or doing the class activity. If you don't know what the class activity is, go to the teacher or sit down.
3. You must stop an activity the moment a teacher calls for stopping.
4. We keep our hands and feet to ourselves except as part of an activity.
5. Do not go up in the bleachers unless we're having an assembly. The highest you can go unless a teacher says so that time, is the very bottom row.
6. No shrieking.
7. No kicking balls or anything else (even air!) in gym class – even outdoors. Also, no heading balls.
8. No forward dives or slides any time, including relays and the jump mat.
9. Never do gymnastics or equipment work without a spotter, unless with specific permission.

10. Never touch any equipment in the gym, until the teacher begins a supervised activity with it. This means: if there is a ball in a corner and the teacher hasn't started a ball game, you don't touch the ball. If there is a gym mat out, you don't go on it.
11. Safe clothing and hair. No jewelry or watches.
12. After class, walk quietly and carefully out of the gym, and stay in line all the way down the hall to your class. The rules, including no free play, hands and feet to yourself, etc., still apply in the hallway.

Children who fail to observe these rules may, at the discretion of the teacher, be given detention or be excluded from the gym for a period of time.