

ECB safety guidance on the wearing of cricket helmets by young players

In February 2000 the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) issued safety guidance on the wearing of helmets by young players up to the age of 18. In brief, the guidance recommends that:

- helmets with a faceguard or grille should be worn when batting against a hard cricket ball in matches and in practice sessions
- young players should regard a helmet with a faceguard as a normal item of protective equipment when batting, together with pads, gloves and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box)
- young wicket keepers should wear a helmet with a faceguard when standing up to the stumps.

With the assistance of schools, cricket clubs and leagues, the wearing of helmets by young players is now standard practice in cricket throughout England and Wales. Helmets are widely available and are covered by a British Standard (BS7928:1998).

The original guidance allowed parents or guardians to give their written consent to allow a young player not to wear a helmet. However now parental consent not to wear a helmet should not be accepted in any form of cricket.

A face protector represents an alternative head protection system for young wicket keepers.

Face protectors are, at the time of publication of this guidance, a relatively new innovation. ECB is currently working with manufacturers in order to achieve a British Standard in relation to all face protection technology for juniors.

In the meantime The NZ and Australian cricket helmet standard AS/NZS 4499 is the closest standard for the faceguard. The standard has three parts to it – (4499.1) the helmet (4499.2) the temple pieces and (4499.3) the grill. The nature of the product is such that the only relevant part of that standard is part 3, and not all the parts of the test apply mainly because the faceguard does not attach to a helmet.

This guidance applies to all players up to the age of 18, both in open age group cricket and in all junior cricket played with a hard cricket ball. The guidance also applies during all practice sessions. Any individual taking responsibility for players should take all reasonable steps to ensure that this guidance is followed at all times.

The ECB asks that the guidance is communicated to the parents or guardians of all young players through clubs and schools, and that young players are not allowed to bat or stand up to the stumps when keeping wicket against a hard ball without wearing appropriate protection.