

HEWETT HOUSE - NAPIER GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

POLICY ON BODY PIERCING

Preamble

- 1 The same rules governing safety issues in Hewett House apply to body ornaments. The only acceptable body piercing is a plain gold or silver stud in the ear.
- 2 There are serious health and hygiene issues associated with body piercing. Because of the expense of body piercing, some young people will try to do it themselves. There is a risk of Hepatitis B, septicaemia, Hepatitis C and AIDS. Navel piercing can quickly become infected under belts and tight clothing. About 20% of people are allergic to metals such as nickel. The cartilaginous part of the ear above the lobe can become very disfigured if infected and many people are prone to keloid scarring which can leave a hard, ugly lump.
- 3 Decision making. Young people need to consider the possible and permanent consequences of body piercing and the wisdom of leaving such a decision until they are older. Factual information about the health issues involved should be available to boarders so they can make an informed decision.
- 4 Body piercing other than studs in the ear is unacceptable at Hewett House
- 5 Decisions about body piercing should be made when the boarder has left school.

(Please note the information from King's College reprinted below).

Medical Information on Body Piercing

- *Piercing should always be done by a professional under sterile conditions.*
- *Local anaesthetic performed by people who are not medically qualified can be extremely dangerous as well as being illegal.*
- *All piercing should be done with disposable needles and syringes from a pre-sterilised packet. These should not be re-used.*
- *All surgical instruments in contact with broken skin and all jewellery to be inserted should be sterilised in a steam steriliser.*
- *To reduce the risk of skin and soft tissue infection the skin should not be touched except with sterile disposable rubber gloves.*
- *Jewellery should be made of top-grade surgical steel or high carat gold. Nickel and silver are to be avoided.*
- *Once inserted the jewellery and the pierced area should be kept dry and touched as little as possible. Disinfectant and antibiotic creams should be used only with the advice of a medical practitioner. (Old disinfectants in the bathroom cupboard can harbour organisms).*
- *Pierced areas of the body like the navel should be kept clean and dry and covered by loose clothing.*

(Acknowledgment: Department of Public Health and Epidemiology, King's College, London).