

Guidelines for Students Using Ankle/Foot Orthotics (Ankle Braces)

Ankle/Foot Orthotics (AFOs) or Supramalleolar Orthotics (SMOs) help to keep the foot in the proper position for weight bearing. Weight bearing happens in sitting, standing, and walking.

- When first wearing AFO/SMOs, a wear schedule will be recommended until the student can wear them for the entire school day. As the skin adjusts, the brace(s) can be worn for longer periods.
- AFOs are most comfortable when worn with a thin sock that goes to the knee (or above the top of the brace), avoiding direct contact between the plastic and the skin. Sock should be smoothed with no wrinkles. Pants should be on top of the brace to reduce fabric wrinkles under the brace.



To Put Brace(s) On:

- Bend the knee to roughly 90 degrees.
- Apply constant pressure (minimal to moderate) through the bottom of the foot to raise toes toward shin so the ankle is bent.
- Place the heel of the foot snugly into the heel space of the AFO/SMO.
- Secure the ankle strap first, this strap should be secured quite snugly so as to avoid the heel slipping forward.
- Once the ankle is fastened, other straps can be secured.
- Top strap, once secured, should allow for a finger to slide between the strap and the leg. This strap does not need to be as snug as the ankle strap.
- If toe straps are included as part of the strapping system, they will be fastened from the outside or from the inside, dependent upon each child's needs.
- When AFOs are removed it is not uncommon to see some pink areas on the foot/leg, these areas should disappear within 20-30 minutes. You can also gently press the red area which will blanch, but the blanched skin (white) should disappear before 5 seconds.
- If any areas are noticeably red lasting longer than 20-30 mins after the AFO/SMO is removed OR staying blanched for more than 5 seconds after being pressed, the AFO/SMO should not be put back on until it can be adjusted to fit correctly.

Report problem areas to parent/physiotherapy staff