



Physical Education Curriculum Plan

This curriculum plan was developed by the staff to provide guidance for all teachers and to ensure whole-school collaboration in relation to the PE curriculum.

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1. Introductory Statement

This plan was formulated by all staff to provide a coherent approach to the teaching of Physical Education (PE) across the whole school. It is envisaged that this plan will benefit the teaching and learning of PE in Knocknacarra Educate Together National School. This curriculum plan is aligned with the PE curriculum documents. As the school is developing, currently with classes only up to third class, the plan is aspirational and will be modified and updated regularly over the coming years.

2. Rationale

Physical Education (PE) provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement. Through PE we aim to help children develop physically as well as socially, emotionally and intellectually. This plan describes the importance which we give to PE in our school, which is, to support children in every aspect of their lives and development. It describes the way in which we use PE to achieve that goal, our agreed approach to teaching PE and the content of the programme of the curriculum at each year level. It conforms to the principles outlined in the 1999 Primary Curriculum documents. This document will also serve as a basis for each teacher's long-term and short-term planning. It will also serve to inform new or temporary teachers and parents and other partners in the education process of the approaches and methodologies which we use in PE.

3. Vision

As an Educate Together national school, the school's ethos seeks to develop the whole child, and PE is an essential component towards achieving this goal in a manner that is inclusive and child-centred. Children, regardless of their ability, will enjoy a rich variety of experiences using a balance of individual, team, co-operative and competitive activities aimed to cater for individual pupils' needs and abilities that enables them to enjoy physical activities. It is envisioned that children will:

- develop kinaesthetic awareness;
- take enjoyment out of physical activities;
- establish a personal, potentially life-long habit of participating in aerobic and anaerobic exercise;
- learn skills for games;
- practice cooperation and teamwork; and
- use physical activities for personal and shared creative expression.

The school's PE motto is:

We learn together,
We play together,
We get fit together,
In Knocknacarra Educate Together.

4. Aims

- To promote the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the child.
- To develop positive personal qualities.
- To help in the acquisition of an appropriate range of movement skills in a variety of contexts.
- To promote understanding and knowledge of the various aspects of movement.
- To develop an appreciation of movement and the use of the body as an instrument of expression and creativity.
- To promote enjoyment of, and positive attitudes towards, physical activity and its contribution to lifelong health-related fitness, thus preparing the child for the active and purposeful use of leisure time.

When planning, teaching and evaluating PE lessons, the staff will remember the following key ideas:

- The importance of enjoying physical activity.
- The importance of play in its many forms in the learning and developmental process.
- Maximising active participation by all children in the physical education lesson.
- The development of skills.
- Providing a balance between competitive and non-competitive activities.
- Providing a balance between contact and non-contact activities.
- Providing opportunities for achievement for each child.
- Providing activities equally suitable for girls and boys.

5. Approaches, Methodologies and Content

5.1 Strands and Strand Units

The Physical Education Curriculum is divided into six strands, and each strand is divided into strand units. The curriculum is designed to be spiral in nature. As they progress through the school, they experience opportunities to refine and develop their skills, abilities, knowledge and appreciation in each strand. We measure progress in the level of participation by the child, in the degree of difficulty mastered and the quality of movement performed as the child passes through each level. The strands Athletics, Dance, Gymnastics, Games and Outdoor and Adventure Activities are taught at each class level. The pool-based section of the Aquatics strand is taught from first class to second class.

Athletics

- Running
- Jumping
- Throwing

Understanding and appreciation of athletics

The athletics strand aims to provide children with a variety of opportunities to develop the techniques of running, jumping and throwing as they progress through the school.

Aquatics

- Hygiene
- Water safety
- Entry to and exit from the water
- Buoyancy and propulsion
- Stroke development
- Water-based ball games
- Understanding and appreciation of aquatics

The aquatics programme is concerned with gaining competence and confidence near, in, under and on water. A major component of this strand will be water safety, which will be taught each year, often integrated with SPHE. In our school aquatics is taught from first class and up for an eight-week period. During this period the children attend weekly swimming lessons in Leisure Land swimming pool in Salthill. The lessons are taught by qualified swimming instructors and are accompanied to the lessons by members of the school staff. In line with Department of Education and Skills recommendations, it is our policy not to charge for in-school curricular activities. However, when organising the aquatics programme strand, the school is unable to meet the cost of running an adequate aquatics programme. As a result, the Board of Management has given permission to charge a nominal fee to each child. No child will be denied access to swimming lessons due to lack of financial resources, and the school has made provisions for such children to attend classes.

Dance

- Exploration, creation and performance of dance
- Understanding and appreciation of dance

The dance strand involves the children in creating performing and appreciating movement as a means of expression and communication. Creative dance and folk dance are involved in our programme.

Games

- Sending, receiving and travelling
- Creating and playing games
- Understanding and appreciation of games

The games strand involves the playing of a variety of games to develop basic skills. The children will be introduced to soccer, basketball, rounder's, tennis, hurling and Gaelic football to enhance social tradition in Gaelic games; our traditional field games form a prominent part of this strand.

Gymnastics

- Movement
- Understanding and appreciation of gymnastics

The gymnastics strand is concerned with the use of controlled movement in a creative way in response to set tasks both individually and in groups. Children will refine and enhance their movement skills through a sequential programme of activities.

Outdoor and Adventure Activities

- Orienteering
- Outdoor challenges
- Understanding and appreciation of outdoor and adventure activities

The outdoor and adventure activities strand is concerned with walking, water-based activities, orienteering and outdoor challenge activities.

5.2 Whole School Plan for Teaching Strands

Sept - Oct	Oct - Nov	Dec - Jan
Games Outdoor & Adventure Activities	Games Athletics	Games Dance Gymnastics
Feb - March	April - May	May - June
Games Gymnastics Dance	Games Outdoor & Adventure Activities Aquatics	Games Outdoor & Adventure Activities Athletics

The Games, Outdoor and Adventure activities and Athletics strand are done at a time when it is hoped the weather will be fine and will allow the PE lessons to be based outside.

5.3 Approaches and Methodologies

All lessons throughout the school are taught as class groups following the individual class plans, though teachers are encouraged to collaborate with their colleagues and combine classes for shared activities as appropriate. Some lessons may on occasion be taught by a sports coach from a local sporting body. Aquatics lessons are always taught by a qualified swimming instructor with class teachers present.

We intend to approach PE by:

- Providing a physical education curriculum which is accessible to all pupils irrespective of their abilities;
- Providing a progressive curriculum covering areas of games, gymnastics, dance, athletics and outdoor adventurous activities;
- Preparing activities which are enjoyable, stimulating and challenging for all pupils; and
- Enabling pupils to enjoy success and be motivated to develop further individual potential.

We will attempt to develop positive attitudes towards PE by:

- Promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyle and an understanding of the beneficial effects of exercise,
- Introducing competition and good sporting behaviour in an age-appropriate manner as well as success and limitation in performance,
- Working with others and being part of a team and
- Establishing safety procedures and exploring the importance of rules.

The class teacher will be responsible for delivering the P.E. curriculum to the pupils in his/her charge. Specialist teachers/parents may deliver certain parts of the programme, e.g. aquatics. All support coaches work under the supervision of the class teacher in planning and implementing the PE programme. The class teacher will be present to supervise all activities organised by visiting/supporting coaches and will retain ultimate responsibility for the class. In addition, it is expected that staff members will participate in the lessons to the best of their ability.

Teachers recognise the value of using a variety of teaching approaches in order to enhance the achievement of the curriculum objectives. The teaching approaches which we will use for teaching P.E. are:

- Direct teaching approach – involves the teacher in telling or showing the children what to do and in observing their progress.
- Guided discovery approach – involves the teacher designing a series of questions for the children that will eventually lead to one or more appropriate answers and the discovery of a particular concept or solution.

Lessons are usually structured in three phases: Warm Up, Main Activity and Cool Down.

In addition, teachers are encouraged to explore the “sandwich” approach to introduce fundamental movement skills. First, children participate in an activity. In the middle of the activity, an explicit lesson regarding a related fundamental movement skill is introduced and practised. Then, the children return to the original activity and apply the knowledge from the mini-lesson.

We use methods that encourage maximum participation by the child through the following strategies:

- Station teaching: Station work works very well in our school and lends itself to the space and equipment available and the number of pupils partaking in P.E. It provides continuous practice for groups working on different tasks at the same time.

- The teacher will use methods that encourage maximum participation by the child through group work.
- Teachers will plan for children to work individually, pair, group and team play, co-operatively and competitively.
- Using a play area divided into grids will allow for individual or pair practices, group work and small-sided games.

5.4 Integration

Integration is encouraged in our school across the curriculum. PE lessons should integrate elements of other subjects such as Gaeilge, English, Music, Maths, SESE and SPHE. Movement is encouraged as a vehicle for teaching throughout the day outside of explicit PE lessons. Our swimming lessons promote safety considerations developed in the SPHE strand unit “Safety and Protection”. In addition, movement breaks are introduced throughout the day as transitions between activities.

5.5 Facilities and Equipment

The following facilities are available to the children and staff for physical education:

- Large school yard – suitable for catching and throwing activities and some playground games as well as with a basketball court.
- Large greenspace on the school campus – suitable for all outdoor games, athletics and some out-door and adventure activities.
- Multi-purpose room – a large room with a wooden floor and adjacent storage.
- Cappagh Park and Barna Woods – pitches, playground and woodland within walking distance of the school used for a variety of activities, particularly outdoor and adventure activities.
- Leisureland swimming pool – used for the aquatics strand.

Our school is developing a well-resourced physical education store containing the necessary equipment for the implementation of the six strands. Equipment is regularly checked and stock replenished as often as budget allows. Teachers keep literature, CDs, books and lesson ideas in their own individual classrooms or in the storage room. It is envisaged to repaint the basketball court and update the baskets as well as purchase permanent goals for the greenspace.

5.6 Health and Safety Considerations

Issues identified as being health and safety issues in a PE context include warm-up at the start of all physical activity, practising in confined spaces, appropriate use of equipment, preventing and responding to accidents, supervision, activities involving the whole school yard, etc.

It is important to acknowledge from the beginning that while the following procedures will eliminate unnecessary hazards they cannot remove all risks due to the physical nature of the subject. When engaging children in PE all members of staff will ensure that the following safety aspects will be taken into consideration:

- Children will be taught how to lift and carry all PE equipment safely.
- All children must wear suitable footwear and clothing during a PE lesson.
- The equipment used will be suitable in size, weight and design to the age, strength and ability of the child and be of good quality and in good repair.
- In all PE lessons, children will warm up and cool down. This develops good practice and the children will return to class relaxed after activity.
- Should an accident occur in the PE lesson we will follow the procedures outlined for accidents in our Health and Safety policy.

- Running activities will not finish at a wall or pole.
- Best practice is safe practice, and the teacher should ensure that the children understand that the rules and procedures are there for their safety.
- We will endeavour to have an appropriate surface for the activities in the PE lesson.
- Children will not be forced to do activities for which they are not physically or mentally ready.

There will be at least one person on staff with a current First Aid qualification and the BOM will fund the course fees. The First Aid Kit is kept in the office and is restocked regularly with items only recommended by First Aid personnel. A second portable kit is also available when children are participating in PE outside the school grounds. The medical conditions of all children are detailed by their parents/guardians on the school enrolment form, on the conditions and resulting procedures to be followed. Parents/guardians will be contacted and, if necessary, their family doctor as outlined on the aforementioned enrolment form. Detailed leaflets are made available to all staff on specific conditions such as asthma, diabetes and allergic reactions.

6. Timetabling

Timetabling for PE will follow the guidelines which specifies a minimum of 60 minutes per week for discrete PE lessons, usually in two 30-minute periods. A timetable is maintained for the multi-purpose room.

This school will use a portion of its discretionary time for the 8 weeks of the pool-based activities undertaken to facilitate the Aquatics programme in the school – in order to cover the time travelling to and from the pool.

The school facilitates an Active School Week whereby the discretionary curriculum time for the period in question is used to promote physical activity for all children in the school encompassing as many of the strands of the PE curriculum as possible. We introduce new physical activities to the pupils, e.g. tennis, badminton, athletics, soccer, Irish dancing etc. We invite specialist coaches and try to include parents who have skills or interest in a particular sport.

The school is currently working towards the Active Flag. Our ASF coordinator has established a committee of students, parents and teachers to oversee the progression. The committee meet once a month to discuss upcoming events and to plan physical activities for the following month. During our small break we have an Active Line activity that changes daily. Every class selects one child per day to lead this activity. The main goal of participating in this scheme is that a sense of health, wellbeing and physical activity will continue to be fostered in our school.

Annually, the school organises a Sports Day that involves children, parents and teachers participating in a variety of activities.

7. Homework

Discrete homework is not typically assigned for the PE curriculum, but all children are assigned Active Homework on Wednesdays. This means that children will do their reading and learning homework (spellings, litriú and tables) but will do something active of their choosing instead of written homework.

8. Extra-Curricular Programmes

After school activities are regularly organised by the school. All children of relevant age to the activities being offered will be invited to attend. Costs will be kept to a minimum by the school not charging rent to

facilitators. In the past years the following options have been offered: basketball, dance, athletics, hurling skills and Gaelic football skills. These activities will adhere to the general principle of the PE curriculum of the school as follows:

- The importance of enjoyment and play,
- Maximum participation by all children,
- The development of skills and understanding,
- A balance between competitive and non-competitive activities,
- A balance between contact and non-contact activities,
- Providing opportunities for achievement for each child and
- Providing activities equally suitable for boys and girls.

9. Teacher's Planning and Reporting

All teachers will develop yearly and fortnightly/weekly schemes that are based on the objectives of the Primary School Curriculum and this plan. These plans will not only indicate discrete SPHE lessons and activities but also show the connections between SPHE and the wider curriculum. Cuntaisí míosúla will also indicate the types of SPHE lessons completed over the period. These cuntaisí will be reviewed by the principal and stored for a two-year period. The Cuntas Míosúil will be very relevant in reviewing and developing the school plan for the following years. Once the individual Cuntas Míosúil have been evaluated it should be obvious to the staff which elements of the curriculum were being implemented.

The whole school plan and the curriculum documents for PE will lay out the structure and format that teachers will follow in addition to the aims and objectives of the primary school curriculum. While these documents are vital for planning, it is important that teachers do not rely on them exclusively as it is necessary to adapt the PE plan to your own class level and experience. It is vital that all teachers plan individually while at the same time ensuring that their class plans co-ordinate and feed into the overall school plan.

10. Assessment

As physical education is a physical activity-based area, most assessment is done within the lesson by observing, listening, asking questions and giving feedback to pupils' achievement. They use these records to report annually to children, parents and relevant staff. Children may be asked to self-assess and peer assess where appropriate. Teachers will provide an overall assessment of each child achievements in PE in the school report at the end of their academic year and at annual parent-teacher meetings.

We assess:

- Willingness to participate in activities,
- Readiness to engage with a certain activity,
- The level of competence of a child in carrying out an activity,
- Interest in and attitude to activity and
- Willingness to cooperate in individual, pair and group activities.

Our assessment tools are:

- Teacher observation and
- Teacher-designed tasks.

Assessment is used to provide information on individual children, assist the teacher in planning a programme and facilitates communication with other teachers, parents and other professionals.

- Assessment for learning provides feedback to children, improves learning and informs practice.
- Assessment of learning helps to identify the milestones children reach and the progress they make to report to parents, other teachers and children themselves.
- Assessment as learning involves teaching the children how to self-assess and peer assess.

All staff members will endeavour to ensure continuity, progression and consistency from class to class by following the recommendations in the curriculum. Where appropriate, the Special Education Teacher or Inclusion Support Assistant may assist in PE lessons.

11. Equality of Participation/Access

We promote the needs and interests of all pupils regardless of ability, culture, gender or aptitude. Quality work to the best of the children's ability is the target for everyone. We promote social learning by enabling the children to use and share the space and equipment safely, to work co-operatively with partners or in small groups and to appreciate each other's work. Every child has access to all PE activities provided by the school and lack of financial resources on behalf of the child will not hinder their participation.

- Equal opportunities will be given to boys and girls to participate in classes/activities
- Boys/girls will have equal access to and opportunities to experience all strands.
- Boys/girls will have equal opportunities to enter competitions if part of extra-curricular programme.

12. Children with Exceptional Ability and with Special Educational Needs

We acknowledge that each individual has different needs and all are at different stages of their personal development. We also recognise that for some children, access to the Physical Education curriculum is problematic because of physical, intellectual or emotional difficulties. Every attempt, often with the valued assistance of additional staff (SNAs), is made to ensure that all children experience the richness and breadth of a full physical education and curriculum. Teachers will support and ensure the participation of children with special needs.

- Classes are organised / activities adapted to include children who may have physical disabilities.
- Children with exceptional ability/talent for PE will be encouraged and supported.
- We will encourage inactive/shy/self-conscious children to participate in PE activities.
- Every child will have access to all PE activities provided by the school and lack of financial resources on behalf of the child will not hinder their participation.

13. Continuing Professional Development

Teachers are encouraged to avail of suitable professional development experiences. The seminars and resources from the PDST are invaluable, and all opportunities will be pursued. The PE co-ordinator will update staff on PE developments. Research, reference books, resource materials and websites dealing with PE (including www.pcsp.ie, www.pssi.pdst.ie and www.irishprimarype.com) will be used to support teacher's personal development.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for implementing, supporting and evaluating this Curriculum plan rests with the principal as supported by the In-school Management Team. In addition, all class teachers are responsible for becoming familiar with and applying this plan when completing long- and short-term plans.

We will ask all parents to support their children to participate in all strands of the PE curriculum. We will ask parents with recognised areas of expertise in the area of PE and/or Sport to support us in our efforts if their talents will be of benefit. We will outline the benefits of the PE curriculum and stress the difference between

PE and sport and encourage them to become involved in our Active School Week or any initiative we will organise. We will encourage sporting endeavour at all times.

In order to partake in school sport, we will use buses as transport to all school activities.

We are very much aware of the school's role in the community and we are also conscious of the fact that the expertise of people in the community is an invaluable resource to any school, such links as the local GAA club (Salthill/Knocknacarra) and tennis/badminton coaching (Salthill Tennis Club).

15. Review

The plan will be reviewed by the staff and amended as required, and it will be reviewed formally no later than 2021.

16. Ratification and Communication

This PE curricular plan was ratified by the Board of Management as indicated below. It is included in An Plean Scoile. The plan is distributed electronically to all teachers and a hard copy is kept in the office.

Louise Shields, chairperson

Date of ratification: 20/12/2018