



Physical Education Plan

Introductory Statement

This Physical Education policy for Rathfarnham Educate Together National School was formulated by the Principal and staff after whole staff input and discussion. It was reviewed in 2015 and has been ratified by the Board of Management in 2015 and again in 2017. The policy was reviewed and ratified again in May 2022.

Rationale

Physical Education 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. Our goal in Rathfarnham Educate Together is to support children in every aspect of their life and development and we place a major emphasis on health and wellbeing, including physical wellbeing. This plan 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. This document will serve as a basis for each teacher's long and short term planning. It will also serve as a source of information for parents and Board of Management.

Vision

We envisage that through PE children will be given the opportunity to develop their physical skills and competencies to their full potential, appropriate to their age and ability, in a safe and supportive environment. The planning and management of the PE curriculum in our school will always have the children as the focus of attention through the provision of a broad, balanced and differentiated programme of physical activities.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for PE

- 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.

Strands and Strand Units

The curriculum is divided into six strands:

- Athletics
- Dance
- Gymnastics
- Games
- Outdoor and adventure activities
- Aquatics.

Each strand is subdivided into strand units.

The children will experience all six strands in each year.

- It was acknowledged that as a school we need to look more closely at the following areas:
 1. The 'Understanding and Appreciation' element of all strands
 2. Gymnastics
 3. Orienteering and Outdoor challenges

Approaches and Methodologies

We use a combination of approaches for teaching PE:

- the **direct-teaching** approach, in which the teacher tells or shows the children what to do and observes their progress. This approach entails the teacher making all, or most of, the decisions concerning the content of the lesson and the child responding to instructions. It allows for practice of skills within a games situation where the teacher decides on the nature of the practice and the time allocated to it or the number of repetitions
- the **guided-discovery** approach, which involves the teacher in designing a series of questions that will eventually lead to one or more appropriate answers and ultimately the discovery of a particular concept or 'solution'. It is one of the approaches that offer children the opportunity to make decisions, solve problems or take initiative. The use of this approach promotes discussion among children and enhances the child's capacity to evaluate
- **integrated** approaches.

Integration

Some of the objectives in PE can be developed through other subjects such as Gaeilge, English, art, drama, music, mathematics and especially social, personal and health education. Teachers are aware of opportunities for integration and can enrich these other subjects by following a programme of physical education which is broad and balanced.

In every strand children will be given opportunities to:

- Become skilful and intelligent performers
- Acquire and develop skills, performing with increasing physical competence and confidence
- Learn how to select and apply skills
- Develop their ideas in a creative way
- Set targets for themselves and compete against others individually and as team members
- Understand what it means to persevere, succeed and acknowledge others' success
- Take the initiative, lead activity and focus on improving aspects of their own performance.

We will use methods that encourage maximum participation by the child:

- Individual, pair, group and team play -younger children and children with additional needs will need more individual attention
- Station teaching -groups moving around different stations and having one teaching station.

Structure of a PE lesson:

Most of our lessons will follow the following format:

Warm Up

Main Activity

Cool Down

Assessment and Record Keeping

In PE lessons we constantly assess as we identify progress and difficulties by observing, listening, asking questions and giving feedback to pupils. This will ensure that ongoing achievements are recognised and areas of difficulty are identified. Children may be asked to self assess and peer assess where appropriate. Teachers report annually to parents at parent-teacher meetings and end of year reports. Any concerns about a child's progress in PE will be communicated to the Principal and parents as necessary.

- We will 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 an activity
 - Willingness to cooperate in individual, pair and group activities
- Our assessment tools are:
 - Teacher observation
 - Teacher-designed tasks
 - Tablets could be used to record tasks and aid assessment

Children with ability/talent for PE will be encouraged and supported by acknowledging their talents and creating additional challenges for these children in the strands of the PE curriculum they excel in. These challenges will be based on the activity being pursued by the rest of the class. In addition, the children will be encouraged to maximise their talent by joining school teams and local clubs so that children can bring their talent to a higher level (periodic surveys of participation will be undertaken by the Active Schools Team). The children will, on occasion, be encouraged to assist their classmates in achieving proficiency in the activities they are undertaking.

All children will be encouraged to participate in all PE activities through the use of co-operative fun activities. We will also give encouragement and acknowledge good effort wherever possible. Our main aim is to set activities close to each child's ability level while at the same time challenging them to improve their performance. Reasonable targets will be set for all children at individual, pair and small group levels.

Children with Different Needs

The child with additional needs will experience the enjoyment of participation and progression through the various stages of the PE programme according to their ability (often with the assistance of the ANA). A safe and secure environment will be provided for PE appropriate to the child with special needs. Specialist advice may be sought (e.g. OT) to identify the appropriate activities.

Equality of Participation and Access

- In planning for PE we will pay attention to the following areas in order to promote equality and inclusion throughout the physical education curriculum and consideration is given, on an equitable basis, to the needs and interests of both girls and boys.

All children will participate in all six strands of the curriculum.

We will provide equal access for all children to physical education equipment and facilities and the use of the playground during breaks will be incorporated as an integral part of the school's programme

Children with additional needs will participate as fully as possible in our PE programme. Lessons and activities will be adapted to suit the needs and abilities of these children.

- 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 his/her participation.
- Pupils are charged a nominal fee for swimming lessons. No child will be denied access to swimming lessons due to lack of financial resources.
- Specialist equipment (e.g. we-play and balance board) is available for children with additional needs in the area of motor skills. Dedicated motor skills sessions are provided where necessary.

Linkage and Integration

Every attempt will be made to link the various strands of the PE curriculum and to integrate the other subject areas with PE, where appropriate, e.g. Language development through following instructions, Gaeilge to give instructions, Dance with Music, Orienteering with Geography, Aquatics with SPHE etc.

Organisational Planning

A variety of specialist coaches (athletics, tennis, dance, rugby and gymnastics) are employed at various times to provide a specialist structured programme and upskill teachers.

Safeguarding

All coaches who work with the pupils must provide Garda vetting to the Principal prior to commencement.

Swimming

The local pool is used for the aquatics strand. In the third term pupils in sixth class may have the opportunity to access water sports such as canoeing through our school tours.

Dance

All classes cover the dance curriculum. A specialist dance teacher provides modelling of lessons and upskilling of teachers. Children learn Irish dances (Ionsaí na h-Inse /Haka Gaelach/ Ballaí Luimní) for the Seachtain na Gaeilge Céilí every March.

Cycling

Fifth class pupils take part in cycling lessons in the first term each year.

Skipping workshop

A skipping workshop is organised annually so that children can develop their skipping skills.

Lunchtime Games

All children are encouraged to play and enjoy their break times. Our ANAs are responsible for the play opportunities of our children with additional needs and ensure that these children are fully integrated into school playtimes wherever possible. All classes have yard boxes with a selection of bats, balls, skipping ropes, etc. for use at lunchtime. Sixth class children can also play basketball. Pupils have an opportunity to play hopscotch or create their own games. JI-First play in a separate yard and often use the games which are painted on the ground e.g. hopscotch, target games. In the summer term first class pupils have access to skipping ropes in their area of the playground to encourage, practise and improve their skipping skills, as well as for enjoyment.

COW/WOW/ SOW

Pupils are encouraged to cycle, scoot or walk on Wednesdays.

Walking Bus

A walking Bus initiative takes place every Friday. Children are encouraged to walk to school, or at least for part of the journey.

RETNS Walk/Active School Day

We participate in Active Schools Week each year and in the summer term we partake in a RETNS walk to St. Enda's Park, followed by games in the park.

Sports Day

A school sports day takes place each year in June.

After School Activities

A varied programme is provided by the Parents' Association (Extra-curricular Activities) and volunteer teachers.

PE Facilities

- School yard
- School hall
- Grass areas (weather permitting)
- Access to Meadowbrook pool
- Access to playing fields and astro pitch, Loreto Park, owned by Leicester Celtic Football Club

Health and Safety

We have a school Health and Safety Policy which will be adhered to at all times in PE activities. It is important to acknowledge 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:

- All children should 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
- Children will be taught how to lift and carry all PE equipment safely
- 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 other accidents in our Health and Safety policy. All accidents should be recorded and placed in the Accident/Incident book which is located in the staff room
- 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 e.g. use of mats during gymnastics.

The First Aid Kit is located in the staff room and the school has a number of trained first-aiders. Whole-staff training is also provided at regular intervals.

Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Teachers' preparation will be based on this plan and the planning of individual teachers will feed into the overall school plan.

Teachers will also be familiar with the content and methodologies outlined in the plan. There should be clear progression as children move from class to class.

Strands covered in PE each month are recorded on the Cuntas Miosúil. Short term planning is done on a fortnightly basis and describes how the objectives are met in the week-to-week delivery of the curriculum.

Staff Development

Staff will be encouraged to participate in in-service training. The Board of Management may fund these courses.

To date staff have engaged with the following initiatives:

- FAI
- Basketball Schools' league

- Upskilling in tennis teaching through observation of expert coach
- Upskilling in athletics teaching through observation of expert coach
- Upskilling in dance teaching through observation of expert dance teacher
- Summer Courses
- Internal CPD for all staff

Parental Involvement

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to support and encourage their children to participate in all strands of the curriculum. From the earliest years health and fitness is promoted in the school, with parental support. Information is passed on to parents/guardians about initiatives involving physical health and parents are encouraged to co-operate with the school to ensure that children pursue a healthy lifestyle and develop a healthy attitude towards physical activity. The BOM is fully supportive of initiatives to support the PE programme in the school.

Parents/guardians are actively involved in the annual Sports Day and the annual RETNS Walk. All parents/guardians are invited to attend both days.

Community Links

We encourage the children to take part in local sports activities and clubs and will always pass on information. We hope to pass on to the children that sport is for all and that there are many activities locally in which the children can take part e.g. swimming, athletics, soccer, Gaelic football and hurling, tennis, dancing. We have an arrangement with local club Leicester Celtic to use their grounds for home matches.

Success Criteria

The criteria for evaluating the success of our PE policy will be:

- 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.

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include:

- Teacher/parent/community feedback
- Children's feedback regarding the activity level, enjoyment and skill development of the classes
- Inspectors' suggestions/report.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

Each teacher is responsible for implementing this policy with their own class. All members of staff contributed to the formation of this document and it was completed and agreed upon at a staff meeting on May 21st, 2015. The plan was updated in February 2017 and April 2022.

Ratification and Communication

This PE plan was ratified by the Board of Management in March 2017 and was reviewed in spring 2022.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on 9 May 2022

**Organisational Planning
(Sample)**

Sept/Oct	Nov/Dec	Jan/Feb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games • Aquatics (Rang 5+6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games • Aquatics (Rang 5/6, 3/4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics • Aquatics (Rang 3+4) • Dance - Creative
Mar/Apr	May/Jun	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games • Aquatics (Rang 1+2) • Gymnastics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games (tennis) • Outdoor adventure activities • Athletics – Sports Day in June 	