

LETTERFRACK NATIONAL SCHOOL

PHYSICAL EDUCATION POLICY

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This plan was formulated by the whole staff in May 2014 to provide a coherent approach to the teaching of P.E. across the whole school. It is envisaged that this plan will benefit the teaching and learning of P.E. in Letterfrack NS.

Physical Education (P.E.) provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement. Through P.E. we aim to help children develop physically as well as socially, emotionally and intellectually. This plan describes the place which we give to Physical Education in our school, which is to support children in every aspect of their life and development. It describes the way in which we use Physical Education to achieve that goal, our agreed approach to teaching P.E. 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.

RATIONALE

When teaching P.E. we, the staff consider the following:

- The importance of enjoying physical activity
- Maximum participation by all children in the physical education lesson – ACTIVE

PARTICIPATION

- 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

VISION

We seek to assist the children in our school in achieving their potential through providing a balanced programme of activities where each child is encouraged to participate at his/her individual level.

AIMS

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum in Physical Education.

- 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.

STRANDS AND STRAND UNITS

The strands across the P.E. Curriculum for all classes are:

Athletics

Dance

Gymnastics

Games

Outdoor and Adventure activities

Aquatics

These strands are further divided into strand units:

Athletics –

- Running
- Jumping
- Throwing
- Understanding and appreciation of athletics

Dance –

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

Gymnastics –

- Movement
- Understanding and appreciation of gymnastics

Games –

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

Outdoor & Walking

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

Aquatics –

- Hygiene
- Water safety
- Understanding and appreciation of aquatics

The strands/strand units/content objectives for the relevant class level(s) are found on the following pages:

Refer to Curriculum (also available on www.ncca.ie)

- Infant Classes pp. 16 – 33
- First and Second Classes pp. 24 – 34
- Third and Fourth Classes pp. 38 – 46
- Fifth and Sixth Classes pp. 48 – 59
- Aquatics: Junior Infants – Sixth pp. 62 – 64

N.B. Due to the lack of facilities and equipment, the gymnastic strand is limited for our pupils. However, Children do explore the strand unit of movement in their yoga lesson.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

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.

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:

- The direct teaching approach, in which the teacher tells or shows the children exactly what to do and observe their progress.
- The guided-discovery approach, in which the teacher designs a series of questions which will eventually lead to one or more appropriate answer, and finally the discovery of a particular concept or solution. This approach will lead the child to make decisions, solve problems and take initiative. Questioning can lead to a deeper understanding of how skills can be employed in a game situation.

ASSESSMENT

The teachers in the school constantly assess in the P.E. lessons delivered as we identify progress and difficulties.

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 any activity
- Interest in and attitude to activity
- Willingness to cooperate in individual, pair and group activities

Our assessment tools are:

- Teacher observation
- 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** to provide feedback to children, improve learning and inform practice.
- **Assessment of learning** which 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.

MULTI-CLASS TEACHING

All P.E. lessons will be taught in the context of multi-class teaching. Where appropriate, opportunity will be given to children to group according to ability levels. Outside agencies e.g. Renvyle GAA, Connemara Rugby Club, Clifden Leisure Centre (Swimming Pool), Cycle Ireland, Galway sports partnership may be used to support the implementation of the P.E. Programme.

CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS

Participation of children with Special Needs will be ensured through the use of S.N.A/Special Needs Teacher. Children will be allowed to participate in activities at their own level through the modification of tasks where necessary. Group and pair work and similar ability groups will be used in conjunction with a balance of activities from across the strands to encourage inactive/shy/self-conscious children to participate in P.E. activities.

EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION

In planning for PE we are going to pay attention to the following areas in order to promote gender equity throughout the physical education curriculum.

- All children from infants to sixth class will partake in all six strands of the curriculum, mindful of limited facilities.
- When grouping children for physical education the school will endeavour not to group children solely on the basis of gender whenever possible.
- As a staff we will help children to build positive attitudes towards all activities.
- We will take into account the needs of girls and boys when promoting the health related fitness of children.
- We will enter both boys and girls teams in inter-school competitions and where necessary (if we have insufficient numbers) we will take the opportunity to enter mixed teams.

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.

LINKAGE AND INTEGRATION

(Refer to Curriculum p. 13, 18, 37, pp. 45-47 Teacher Guidelines)

- Linkage can take place within physical education in that many activities transcend strands and are of benefit to the child irrespective of the strands or subjects being covered. Within the content of the curriculum, footnotes below the strand units suggest where linkage and integration might take place in the PE class.
- Integration in our school features hugely in our curriculum. P.E. integrates elements of other subjects such as Gaeilge, English, Music, Maths and S.P.H.E. Our swimming lessons promote safety considerations developed in the strand unit “Safety and Protection”.

ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING

TIMETABLE:

Each class is timetabled for one hour per week for P.E.

This school will use a portion of its discretionary time for the 6 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.

P.E. AREAS

The tarmacadam area

The grass pitch

Library Area

Astroturf Pitch

SPECIALIST COACHING TIMES/VENUE: *This timetable is subject to change annually*

Term 1:

5th/ 6th Class: Rugby

3rd/ 4th Class: GAA coach

Junior/ Senior Infants: Yoga

Term 2:

3rd/ 4th Class: Rugby

1st/ 2nd Class: Rugby,

Term 3:

5th/ 6th Class: GAA coach

1st/2nd Class: Yoga

Junior/ Senior Infants:

The following is a selection of Competitions/Leagues/Games the school will enter:

- Cumman Na mBunscoile GAA Blitz
- FIFA school Soccer Tournament
- Local Rugby Blitz
- Local Handball Blitz

The school will organise a sport day where pupils will enjoy fun activities during term 3.

CODE OF ETHICS:

(Refer to school's Child Protection Policy based on the Department of Education and

Science guidelines accompanying the 'Children First' guidelines. Also refer to SPHE plan;

Code of Ethics, Good Practice for Children's Sport)

- If coaches from a local or a national sporting organisation are invited into the school to work with the children as part of their PE class, they will be used to support the class teacher in the implementation of some of the PE curriculum strands in the school. They will not replace the class teacher and ultimate responsibility for the class lies with the class teacher. The class teacher will in turn support the coach on certain occasions when this will lead to maximum benefit for the children in the class.
- If there is a suspected case of child abuse in the class (even if it becomes apparent in the context of a PE class), all teachers will adhere to the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines to be used with the 'Children First Guidelines' produced for all personnel working with children.

P.E. EQUIPMENT

(Refer to pp. 104-105 Teacher Guidelines)

- It is the responsibility of each class teacher to ensure that all equipment is returned to the store room after each lesson. Any breakages have to be reported as soon as possible. Each teacher will be given a copy of the equipment list and will be informed of any changes to it throughout the year.
- The principal will have the responsibility to purchase the PE equipment for the school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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, use of equipment, accidents, supervision, activities involving the whole school yard, procedures for dealing with accidents...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;

- All children must wear suitable footwear and clothing during a PE lesson
- All children will not be allowed to wear any jewellery 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.
- 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

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 First Aid Area (Beside Junior Room Exit) 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.

INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS' PLANNING AND REPORTING

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.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

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.

COMMUNITY LINKS

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 with Local GAA/Rugby Club, Parents, Local National Park for Outdoor and Adventure Activities.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

When we are reviewing our plan we will take into consideration, the following points;

- 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
- Providing activities equally suitable for boys and girls

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
- Second level feedback

REVIEW

This policy will be subjected to periodic review.