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Physical Education Policy

1. Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

This Physical Education (PE) policy was formulated through staff collaboration co-ordinated by the Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management and parent representatives.

While the policy is constantly under review, it was fully revised in:

- 2014 – to reflect improved facilities and resources in the school.
- 2024 – as part of the school's Active Schools Flag initiative and as part of a review of all school policies.

Rationale

Our school has a long-standing tradition of promoting PE in its curricular implementation programme and has included PE activities within its annual programme of school community activities, e.g. Ag Sugradh le Cheile, North Sligo 5k, Marathon Relay Fundraiser and Active School Week. Teachers endeavour to provide PE homework throughout the school year. Teachers, the Board of Management and parents recognise the importance of PE in our school, noting particularly the importance of:

- enjoyment of physical activity and its development of a sense of achievement and a positive approach;
- physical play as part of the learning and development process;
- skills development and understanding;
- achieving a balance between competitive and non-competitive activities;
- individual and team participation and support
- health-related fitness.

The purpose of this policy is

- to benefit planning, teaching and learning through PE in our school
- to support the principles outlined in the Primary School Curriculum (1999).

2. Vision and Aims

Vision

We seek to assist the children in our school in achieving their potential in all areas. Through the PE curriculum we hope to provide opportunities for pupils to develop a positive attitude towards physical activities.

Aims

Through the implementation of this plan the school promotes the children's social, personal, physical, motor, creative and aesthetic development, their knowledge and understanding, and their health-related fitness.

We endorse the aims of the Primary 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;
- 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.

3. Curriculum Planning:

PE Curriculum	
Strands	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 and adventure activities	walking orienteering outdoor challenges understanding and appreciation of outdoor and adventure activities
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

Whole School PE Plan

Whole School PE Plan Year 1				
Month	September	October	November	December
Strand	Outdoor and Adventure	Games	Gymnastics	Dance
FMS	Walking	Catching	Landing	Balancing
Month	January	February	March	
Strand	Games	Gymnastics	Dance	
FMS	Striking with the hand	Jumping for height	Skipping	
Month	April	May	June	
Strand	Athletics	Outdoor and Adventure	Athletics	
FMS	Running	Hopping	Throwing	

Whole School PE Plan Year 2				
Month	September	October	November	December
Strand	Outdoor and Adventure	Games	Gymnastics	Dance
FMS	Running	Striking with an implement	Hopping	Side stepping
Month	January	February	March	
Strand	Games	Gymnastics	Dance	
FMS	Kicking	Skipping	Landing	
Month	April	May	June	
Strand	Athletics	Outdoor and Adventure	Athletics	
FMS	Throwing	Balancing	Jumping for distance	

A Whole School Plan is available for collaborative planning between teachers. Teachers often schedule their PE lessons for the same day to allow for equipment to be set up in the morning and left out throughout the day. The Whole School Plan does not have to be strictly adhered to. To ensure continuity and progression from class to class. A Record of Content Covered must be completed on an annual basis at each class level or as part of teachers own planning and Cuntas Miosuil.

Each year, children throughout the school have access to the six curricular strands – Athletics, Dance, Gymnastics, Games, Outdoor and Adventure Activities. 5th class have access to Aquatics (10 week swimming course). All strands are taught by Class Teachers and/or an outside expert.

The PAWS (Primary Aquatic Water Safety) programme, from Water Safety Ireland is also taught in 5th and 6th class. According to Water Safety Ireland, PAWS ‘teaches children how to be safe around water in homes, farms, pools, beaches and our waterways’.

A range of opportunities created to develop an understanding and appreciation of each strand unit includes discussion of activities, video material featuring activities, portfolios of information about sports in the form of websites/articles/posters/photographs/newspaper cuttings, etc. as appropriate.

Approaches and Methodologies

In our PE provision we hope to use a variety of approaches to aid pupils learning and experience and also to maximise participation for all children. The approaches we use are as follows

- Directed teaching approach
- Guided discovery approach
- Integration
- Individual, pair, group and team play
- Station teaching
- Using a play area divided into grids

Assessment and Record Keeping

Throughout the physical education lesson the teacher is involved in various forms of assessment of the children's work as a natural part of teaching and learning activities. Teachers assess: willingness to participate in activities, to 'perform', interest, enthusiasm/attitudes of children, skill level and willingness to co-operate.

Assessment tools used to gather information about a child's progress

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks.
- The information gained from the assessments is used to pass on information to parents and other teachers.
- This information forms part of class and school planning.
- Records are kept in an End Of Year Report booklet. Each teacher has responsibility for own reports. Teachers share information with parents through the End of Year School Report and at parent-teacher meetings.

Children with Different Needs

'Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties; children with learning difficulties; children with physical disabilities; those with exceptional ability' (TG, pp19-38)

Every effort is made to accommodate and promote participation of all children in PE activities. Where relevant, those with special needs are given maximum support and activities are adapted to allow for the fullest involvement. Teachers support such participation through their direct involvement, SNA support (as available), and differentiation in use of resources (eg softer/bigger ball).

Pupils with particular needs often partake in Gross Motor classes (Sensory Circuits), which are coordinated by Special Education Teachers. These lessons place a focus on Fundamental Movement Skills using the PDST's programme, Move Well, Move Often.

Children with exceptional ability/talent for PE are encouraged and supported through the use of peer-tutoring for demonstration purposes and with more challenging activities available for those who are able.

Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunities are given to the pupils to participate in all classes/activities. Every pupil has equal access to and opportunities to experience all strands. All children have access to services, facilities, and amenities in the school environment, as appropriate.

Approaches to encourage participation in PE activities by children who are inactive/shy/self-conscious include pairing them with a friend/someone of their own ability, while avoiding competitive situations and singling-out during skills sessions. In deciding class groupings, decisions are made with consideration to ability and gender.

Linkage and Integration

Where appropriate, linkage and integration takes place within physical education. PE is integrated with other curricular subjects, as suitable, and is planned and organised through annual schemes and fortnightly plans. Theme-based activities are also used to support integration. Children are enabled to develop a vocabulary for discussing and critiquing PE activities through discussion before, during and after each session. Deantar iarracht fresin ordaithe a thabhairt as Gaeilge chomh minic agus is féidir.

4. Organisational Planning

Timetable

- One hour per week has been allocated as the minimum time allotted for Physical Education.
- Annually we have acquired a swimming slot in Cleveragh Sports Complex, with a 10 week block of 50 minute swimming sessions for 5th class.
- In school coaching of Tennis, Cycle Safety, Hurling and Gaelic Football skills take place with the help of outside coaches and internal coaches also.

The school facilitates certain periods whereby the discretionary curriculum time is used to promote physical activity for all children in the school encompassing as many of the strands of the PE curriculum as possible, e.g. in the run-up to the Active School Week, Marathon Relay preparation, Active School Initiatives most classes spend extra time practising for the event.

Code of Ethics

- Coaches are used to support the class teacher in the implementation of some of the P.E. curriculum strands in the school.
- There is a code of ethics as part of the training of outside personnel. The Class Teacher is always present to actively support the coach.

Competitions: We participate annually in Cumann na mBunscoil competitions, classes Fourth, Fifth and Sixth participate in these competitions. These take place in the third term. Children also participate in the Sligo Schools Cross Country Competitions held annually in October. Sligo Sport and Recreation organise an Inter Schools relay event in September at the I.T. running track. Our school participates annually. We also participate in the Primary schools Triathlon event.

PE Equipment and ICT

The school is fortunate to have excellent resources and equipment for PE.

RESOURCE	Suitable for Strands
PE hall	Athletics, Dance, Games, Gymnastics Team sports e.g. basketball, volleyball
Outdoor area – grass	Athletics, Games, Outdoor and Adventure Team sports, e.g. Gaelic football
Outdoor areas – hard surface	Athletics, Games, Outdoor and Adventure
Swimming pool (Sports Complex)	Aquatics – swimming lessons

PE equipment is purchased centrally, in consultation with the teachers, and is kept in a secure area adjacent to the PE Hall, where it is stored safely and available to staff. An inventory of equipment

and resources is displayed on the door of the equipment storeroom. Each class also has an allocation of equipment for play on the yard.

Human resources are effectively utilised to optimise the PE experience. As well as an enthusiastic and active staff, the PTA may fund external personnel to support the teaching of PE, e.g. PE teachers or representatives from specific sports bodies.

Curriculum support websites include:

NCCA	https://ncca.ie/en/primary
DES	www.education.ie
PDST	www.pdst.ie , https://pssi.pdst.ie/
INTO	www.into.ie
IPPN	www.ippn.ie
IPPEA	www.irishprimarype.com/
NPC Primary	www.npc.ie

ICT

- The schools ICT resources are used for demonstrating/explanation purposes, in teacher planning, and to help promote/advertise forthcoming events., e.g. Fun Day.

Health and Safety

- Health and safety issues pertaining to P.E. activities include warm-up at the start of all physical activity, practising in confined spaces, use of equipment, accidents, supervision on visits out of school, activities involving the whole school yard and procedures for dealing with accidents.
- First Aid Training for staff members is regularly updated. Staff members are aware that certain children have specific medical conditions, based on information received through parents and take this into consideration when planning PE lessons.

Code of Ethics

- Coaches from outside the school are used to support the Class Teacher in the implementation of some of the PE curriculum strands in the school, e.g. swimming (Sligo Sports Complex), Gaelic Football and Hurling (Sligo GAA), Tennis (John Conlon) and Cycling (John Conlon). Teachers actively support the coach by helping him/her so children can get the maximum benefit from the PE class.
- All coaches must be Garda Vetted prior to involvement with the school. Personnel (coaches) are expected to use appropriate language and behaviour at all times.

Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

- The whole school plan and the curriculum documents for PE provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short-term planning.
- The Cuntas Míosúil serves in reviewing and developing the whole school plan/ individual preparation for following years.
- Curriculum documents and the PE Policy assist teachers as they plan using the strands and strand units.

Staff Development

- Teachers have access to current research, reference books, resource materials and websites dealing with PE through whole school internet access.

- School personnel are encouraged to research new methodologies, attend demonstrations, attend PE courses and take opportunities to try out equipment/resources etc on an ongoing basis.
- Teachers are encouraged to share the expertise acquired at these courses during staff meetings and planning meetings. Teachers can also avail of internal and/or external expertise to inform and upskill in PE, as required, with the approval of the BOM.

Parental Involvement

- Parents can be involved in supporting PE by helping at events and by sharing their expertise in certain areas. The potential value of specialised support from parents is appreciated and should be utilised regularly.
- All parents involved in school activities must be Garda vetted.
- Parents are invited to view the children's achievements in PE, at events such as inter- school matches, athletics meetings, and other school sports event. Annual special events also endorse the principles of the PE curriculum, e.g. Marathon Relay.
- Parents' contribution to the PE programme is managed by the BOM, in consultation with the principal.

Community Links

- Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership, Sligo GAA, Sligo Sports Complex and Sligo Tennis Club support the school's PE programme by providing coaches.
- We have close links with local sports clubs.
- We make use of our local amenities/playing pitches Oxfield and swimming pool
- School Tours to Lough Key Forest Park, Bundoran Adventure Centre, Bay Watersports and Playgrounds among others ensure that children experience all aspects of outdoor activities in a fun and safe way.
- E-mail and telephone conversations are used to contact other schools and community groups regarding sporting events.

Extracurricular Activities

- The school is regularly entered into competitions, leagues, and interschool matches/games, including gaelic football, hurling, soccer, rugby and athletics.
- Some of these events are specifically for children taking part in after school activities, while others involve trials across our school classes to select teams. Competitions are held throughout the school year and occasionally take place during the school day.

Active School Flag

- Our school is engaging in the Active School Flag Initiative. An Active School Committee is set up each year. The committee is responsible for promoting a healthy lifestyle through physical exercise, implementation active ideas and keeping the PE storage cupboard tidy.
- An Active School Week is also run every year, culminating with Sports Day. This involves a timetable of activities, in which every class can participate in at least one activity per day.

5. Success Criteria

This policy is intended to guide the teaching and learning of PE in our school. Its implementation is evident through:

- teachers' preparation
- teachers' records
- procedures outlined in the plan consistently followed.

The outcomes of the plan are assessed through:

- feedback from teachers/parents/community.
- children's feedback regarding the activity level, enjoyment, and skill development of the classes.
- inspectors' suggestions/reports.
- feedback from parents.

The PE policy promotes the following key considerations:

- 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

6. Implementation

The plan will be supported, developed, and implemented by each teacher and feedback will be provided as necessary at Staff Meetings. The plan will be implemented from

Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the PE curriculum in the school.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy. It will be made available to parents via the school website.

Signed: ,
(Chairperson, BOM)