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**Introductory Statement and Rationale – Physical Education**

1. **Introductory Statement**

The PE plan outlines our aims and objectives and states how PE is delivered throughout the school. This PE plan was formulated in consultation with the teaching staff, parents and pupils of Letterkenny Educate Together NS through in service days, in-school planning days and surveys. Copies were given to all teaching staff, BoM and a copy is kept in the School’s curriculum Policy folder which is available to parents and other interested parties.

1. **Rationale**

***‘Physical education in Irish schools applies a holistic approach to the concept of physical activity for young people. It recognises the physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of human movement. It emphasises the contribution of physical education to the promotion of individual and group wellbeing’. (NCTE)***

Letterkenny Educate Together NS recognises the importance of PE in the primary curriculum. Physical Education provides children with **learning opportunities** through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives. We aim to provide these learning opportunities to the children in our school to maximise active learning experiences and approaches to the benefit of each individual child.

Through PE, children are provided with learning opportunities which contribute to their overall development. In implementing this plan, we placed significant emphasis on the following seven key messages.

* The importance of enjoyment and play
* Maximum participation by all children
* Development of skills and understanding
* Balance between competitive and non-competitive activities
* Balance between contact and non-contact activities
* Providing opportunities for achievement for every child
* Providing activities equally suitable for boys and girls

It was decided to focus on these key messages in light of the new move well move often programme which goals are to lead to a physically literate pupil, who has the movement competence, confidence and understating to continue participation in physical activity throughout their lives. (Whitehead, 2016) (Appendix)

**Vision and Aims**

1. **Vision**

**Child-centred**: Children are supported by teachers and SNAs to develop an understanding of PE concepts and processes to his/her appropriate level of development and ability. Teaching methods will be varied to suit different learning styles and concrete materials used as much as possible.

**Co-educational**: All pupils are supported according to individual need in their learning. The school does not subscribe to stereotypes regarding gender and ability in PE.

**Democratic**: All staff teaching, supporting or assessing learning are consulted in drafting policy and decisions about curriculum delivery. Regular meetings with parents and information from the school help them to maximise opportunities of supporting their children’s learning.

**Multi-denominational**: Every day links within PE will respect diversity.

LETNS aim to achieve the physical potential of every child and promote a positive attitude towards active and healthy lifestyles within themselves and others within the school and local community. Through teaching PE we believe pupils learn how to discover their aptitude, abilities and preferences and to promote lifelong physical activity.

1. **Aims**

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for PE:

1. To develop the children’s enjoyment of physical activity through creativity and imagination;
2. To increase children’s ability to use what they have learnt in PE to improve the quality and control of their performance;
3. To teach children to recognise and describe how their bodies feel during exercise;
4. To develop an understanding in children of how to succeed in a range of physical activities and how to evaluate their own success.
5. To ensure children are confident, safe and enjoy physical activity.
6. To develop a range of physical skills, strength and stamina.
7. To develop an ability to select, link and apply skills, tactics and compositional ideas and perform them with control, co-ordination and fluency.
8. To develop a sense of fair play and sportsmanship
9. To cooperate and work collaboratively with others in pairs or as part of a team
10. To express ideas in dance form and appreciate the aesthetic qualities of movement
11. To encourage children to actively play games with others fairly during playtime.
12. To motivate and retain a lifelong interest in PE and to recognise the importance of living and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Curriculum Planning

Strands and Strand Units

The Physical Education Curriculum was also presented in six strands for development and with each strand are strand units:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Athletics**-Running-sprinting-relays-Hurdling-jumping-throwing-Understanding athletics | **Gymnastics**-Movement-Understanding and appreciation of movement | **Outdoor and adventure** activities-walking-orienteering-Outdoor challenges-understanding and appreciation of outdoor and adventure activities |
| **Dance**-Exploration, creation, performance.-understanding and appreciation of dance. | **Games**-sending, receiving and traveling-Creating and playing games-Understanding and appreciating games. | **Aquatics.**-Hygiene-Water safety-Entry to and exit from water-Buoyancy and propulsion-Development of stroke-Water based ball games-Understanding and appreciation of aquatics. |

The children will experience all 6 strands each year. As the pupils progress throughout the school they will experience opportunities to refine and develop their skills, abilities, knowledge and appreciation in each strand. The five strands, Athletics, Dance, Games, Gymnastics and Outdoor and Adventure Activities will be taught at each class level. Aquatics will be taught to 3rd class for a 6 week period each year and all other classes will deliver land activities in accordance with the Irish Water Safety (IWS) association. (Appendix 1).

Physical Resources-Facilities and Equipment

The following facilities are available to the children and staff for Physical Education.

1. School yard – suitable for ball games, athletics and small sided games
2. Aura Swimming Pool. (3rd class)
3. School Hall – suitable for ball games, athletics and small sided games
4. Letterkenny Gaels football pitch
5. LYIT – An Dánlann

Our school has a well-resourced Physical Education shed containing the necessary equipment for the implementation most strands. (list in appendix 2) Equipment is checked regularly and stock replenished as often as budget allows. Teachers keep literature, DVDs, CDs, books and lesson ideas in their own individual classrooms.

Methodologies

We use a combination of the following approaches

Direct teaching approach (p. 43 TG)

Guided discovery approach p. (43-44 TG)

Integration pp. (45-49 TG)

Individual, pair, group and team play (p. 51)

Station teaching pp. (51-53)

Using a play area divided into grids (p. 54)

The teaching methodologies which are particularly appropriate for teaching physical education include:

* **the direct-teaching approach**
* **the guided-discovery approach**
* **Integrated approaches.**
* Direct-teaching method

The direct-teaching approach involves the teacher in telling or showing children what to do and in observing their progress. It entails the teacher making all, or most of, the decisions concerning the content of the lesson and the child responding to instructions. Direct teaching is appropriate too for use when organising activities, ensuring that

safety practices are being applied and in the handling of PE equipment. Thus, it can feature as part of the teacher’s approach in a wide range of lessons.

* Guided-discovery approach

This methodology affords 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. The guided-discovery methodology can be used where the teacher wishes to place an emphasis on leading the children to explore and experiment with movement challenges. It may be utilised as a child explores movement through informal play experiences. It can be used when the teacher wants children to think about the application of concepts or tactics in games, where appropriate questioning can lead to a deeper understanding of how a skill can be employed in a games situation.

* Integration

Physical education has many objectives which are developed by other subjects such as Gaeilge, English, art, music, mathematics and especially social, personal and health education. The development of these subjects can be enriched through a programme of physical education which is broad and balanced.

Approaches

The importance of enjoying physical activity cannot be underestimated in a PE lesson. The child who associates fun and enjoyment with PE lessons and who gains a sense of achievement will develop the positive attitudes necessary for ensuring continued participation in PE lessons and lifelong involvement in physical activity. The importance of play is also an integral part of the learning and developmental process as it encourages children to move effectively, to think, to interact socially with others and to express their own feelings.

Station teaching and Grid teaching

Use of Grid teaching is an approach that enables teachers to organise small individual games at the same time. It is also helpful when teaching positions in team games. Station teaching allows maximum participation, provides opportunities for continuous practice for group work on different activities at the same time and is particularly incorporates children working with specific equipment. Our school endeavours to adopt these approaches where appropriate and at all times our emphasis is on participation for all.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Teachers will assess the children in their class on an on-going basis through their own observation, through specific teacher-designated tasks, and through consultation with other teachers and outside partners.

We shall assess the children’s

* willingness to participate
* interest in activities
* enthusiasm and attitudes
* skill level
* ability to perform in groups
* willingness to co-operate within a team game
* fitness and health

This information will then be used to help the individual children to progress and improve in their skill levels, their attitude, their level of participation and their own health. The information will be shared with parents and children through parent/teacher meetings and through the school report card.

The aim of assessment in PE is to improve the learning experience of the child. Therefore it is of vital importance that any form of recording of assessment should not detract from teaching time or hinder this learning experience.

Multi-Class Teaching

Multi-class teaching is a facet of life in our senior end of the school. Teachers may adapt the curriculum and group children as they deem necessary to cater for the various levels in such classes.

Children with special Needs

It is important to concentrate on pupils’ abilities and needs and not on their disabilities. In accordance with our school’s Special Needs Policy and ethos, children with special educational needs are included in all lessons. Wherever practicable, provision will be made for pupils with special educational needs, where it affects their ability to take part in PE lessons. It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to ensure that any special equipment for a lesson is available. At times it may be appropriate to have the help from a Special Needs Assistant to assist with the management of a particular child during PE.

Differentiation

Children are given personal and realistic goals for self-improvement. Teachers aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. For pupils whose ability fall significantly below expected levels at a particular class, a much greater degree of differentiation will be necessary. For pupils whose attainments significantly exceed the expected levels of attainment, Teachers will plan suitably challenging work.

General Adaption Suggestions:

Equipment Rules Prompts, Cues:

Larger/lighter bat Demonstrate/model activity

Use of Velcro Partner assisted

Larger goal/target Disregard time limits

Mark positions on playing field Oral Prompt

Lower goal/target More space between students

Scoops for catching Eliminate Outs

Vary balls (size, weight,colour,texture) Allow ball to remain stationary

 Allow batter to sit in chair

 Place student with disability near teacher

It is recognised that some children have exceptional talents in PE areas, while others struggle with any physical activity. These will be accommodated and supported.

Pupils who display talents in specific sports will be guided towards outside clubs that can develop their skills further.

Some strategies which can be incorporated include:

* Varying the pace and speed of drills
* Varying distances to suit individual needs
* Varying the accuracy needed
* Varying the time given to complete exercises
* Adding extra targets to be attained by talented children
* Making use of the SNA during class to help a less able child
* Always encouraging and positively challenging children

It is recognised that it is important to encourage any child who is shy or self-conscious to partake fully in the PE programme and to enjoy it.

Equality of Participation and Access

All children have an entitlement to fully access all areas of Physical Education and School Sport. In implementing the aims and objectives, staff will need to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils and be aware of and take into account the school’s ethos, which recognises that each child should have access to the curriculum regardless of gender, race, disability or learning difficulty.

Teachers will differentiate activities according to the specific needs of the class, including children who are gifted and talented. A pupil may have special needs in physical education due to sensory, visual, auditory or movement difficulties. They may also have learning difficulties and medical conditions. Their overall emotional and behavioural wellbeing will also be taken in to account when planning and delivering activities. These difficulties may be temporary or permanent, mild or more severe and tasks will be adapted accordingly.

Linkage and Integration

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

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. Dance with Music; Aquatics/Games with SPHE; Athletics with Maths; Orienteering with Geography and Gaeilge used to give simple directions )

* Theme based activities will be used to support integration especially in the gymnastics strand where the language of movement can be developed in tandem with the practical activities under the theme of travelling. Further language development can take place under the theme of balance. Mathematical concepts in fifth and sixth class can be developed with the theme of symmetry and asymmetry in the PE class.

**Organisational Planning**

Timetable

Each class grouping has an allotted time for PE every week. The class may avail of the school hall or the outside yards during this period. A blank timetable is sent around to the classes at the beginning of each year to choose a block. These time-blocks vary from 1hour to 1hr 30mins. The timetable is sent to infants first and it works its way up the classes until it reaches sixth. This is then displayed in the staffroom and added to individual teacher files.

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| **September-****October** | **November-****December** | **January-March** | **April-June** |
| Games (playground games)Athletics | Gymnastics GamesDance | GamesGymnasticsDance | Aquatics – Land Activities Outdoor and Adventure activitiesAthletics |

Code of Ethics

* All teachers and coaches must be Garda vetted.
* All teachers and coaches working in the school context will be expected to adhere to the school Child Protection Statement. They should always ensure that they treat children with integrity and respect and that the self-esteem of children is enhanced.
* All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and carried out in the context of respectful and open relationships.

Extra-curricular Activities

The after school activities offered at LETNS include soccer, hurling, fun club, Gaelic football, athletics and Irish dancing.

It is important to provide children with after-school opportunities to develop their skills and interests. We provide training in a number of extra-curricular sports. This training ties in with inter-school competitions and obviously has a bearing on the PE programme. Activities include Gaelic training, hurling training (indoor and outdoor), athletics, rounders and soccer. These are used to prepare for the following competitions which are entered into regularly:

* Finn Harps Schools Soccer tournaments
* Letterkenny GAA Championship
* Athletics Events – Indoor Sports Hall, Track and Field, Cross Country

The school organises a sports day each year where parents and community members are invited to support, demonstrate and participate in specialists PE activities. Children are also encouraged to play games and practice skills during break-time. During Seachtaine na Gaeilge all classes practice Ceili dancing i nGaeilge and finally ‘Get active’ week every June comprises of many physical activities which include whole school dancing, walking, jumping, running, throwing etc. This in turn promotes healthy living and fosters positive attitudes to physical activity.

PE Equipment and ICT

* A full inventory of PE equipment is maintained and updated on a yearly basis.
* Pupils are given various opportunities to record sporting events and match reporting using the medium of ICT
* Interactive white boards are used for teachers to promote aspects of PE in a cross-curricular capacity.
* Photographs and school website, magazine to promote PE in our school.

Health and Safety

Safety precautions cannot remove all risks but should eliminate unnecessary hazards. Teachers will present the class with a warm up activity at the start of physical exercise and a cool-down activity at the end. Through consistent good practice children will acquire a practical knowledge and understanding of preparing the body safely for exercise and recovering afterwards. Emphasis will be placed on the maintenance of good posture throughout all activities especially when lifting/carrying apparatus. In relation to clothing, the clothes worn should allow mobility during all activities and should be appropriate for a variety of conditions. Appropriate footwear is especially important and pupils shall not be permitted to work indoors wearing only socks which do not grip the floor. Pupils shall not be allowed to work barefoot unless conditions are suitable. Bulky and loose jewellery shall be removed before physical activity.

The equipment used for all activities should be suited in size, weight and design to the age, strength and ability of the children in question. All equipment should be of good quality and in good repair. When using a confined space e.g. classroom, all unnecessary hazards should be removed. Adequate supervision will be supplied on all visits out of school. The medical condition of individual children which may affect during a physical education lesson should be made known to the teacher by the parent. The teacher should then take appropriate precautions e.g. ensuring that a child with asthma brings their inhaler out during activity. Procedures for dealing with accidents contained in the school’s Health and Safety policy shall be adopted should accidents occur during the physical education lesson. Staff members who are trained in first aid shall be consulted if deemed necessary.

Individual Teachers’ Planning and Reporting

The whole school plan for physical Education in Letterkenny Educate Together will aim to provide a valuable reference for the staff and give teachers’ work a clear sense of direction and purpose. The individual teacher will strive to devise a broad and balanced programme by selecting appropriate strands and stand units in line with the whole school plan.

The class teacher will also plan a wide range of teaching methods and approaches i.e. direct teaching, guided discovery, integrated approaches etc. An integrated approach with other subjects will be adopted and the provision for children of varying abilities will be carefully planned for in the teacher’s fortnightly plans. Appropriate assessment methods will be adopted in accordance with the NCCA and Cuntas Míosúil will contain a report on PE taught each month.

Staff Development

A number of PE courses are run ever summer by the Donegal Education Centre in surrounding towns and staff members who wish to avail of these will be encouraged and supported. These courses are listed in the Staff Development folder in the Staff room. If staff members attended a PE course they will shared the expertise acquired with other teachers during planning days, staff meetings or through sharing notes received at the courses.

Parental Involvement

The understanding and engaging parents are crucial to the success of our overall delivery of the PE curriculum. A central part in involving parents is our advocacy of our ethos and promotion of our PE policy and philosophy. This is regularly communicated via Cogar, during parent teacher meetings and publicity through the school web-site.

Where appropriate, parents are offered examples and support in helping their children to be physically active when not in school. This help and support will be offered by identifying local clubs and circulating details of external agencies that offer coaching to children. Parents are also encouraged to get involved in ‘Get Active Week’ and ‘Sports Day’ in June. Parents with particular skill in the area of PE are encouraged to share their expertise with the school.

Community involvement

* Coaching

Most of the teaching in Physical Education will be conducted by the class teacher with the class group. However, visiting coaches may be available to support teachers in the implementation of some strands. In aquatics, a specialist swimming coach is employed by the school to teach swimming. 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/support coaches during class time and will retain ultimate responsibility for the class.

* Community links

Pupils are encouraged to take part in community sporting activities provided by other organisations and to make use of local facilities. Information from approved local clubs and providers that publicises activities organised outside school hours, during holidays and activities will be distributed to the relevant age group and in the Parents room. The use of external suitably qualified coaches is encouraged to offer activities and coaching sessions to enhance pupil and staff overall experiences.

There are many organisations that are currently supporting the schools PE programme. These include:

* Letterkenny Gales
* Finn Harps
* FAI
* Letterkenny Rugby club
* Letterkenny Community Centre
* Donegal GAA development officer
* LYIT
* Aura

**Success Criteria**

We will know that the plan has promoted the key considerations of a broad and balanced physical education programme if:

* The importance of enjoyment and play are treated as a main objective.
* There is maximum participation by all children.
* Skills and understanding are developed.
* There is a balance between competitive and non-competitive activities.
* There is a balance between contact and non-contact activities.
* Opportunities for acquisition of skill are offered for each child.
* All strands of the curriculum are integrated where possible.
* There is progression and continuity between classes.
* The correct amount of time is allocated to PE each week (i.e. 1 hour per week).

**We will know the plan has achieved its aims through the following indicators:**

* Teacher/parent/community feedback
* Children’s feedback regarding the activity level, enjoyment and skill development of the classes.
* Inspectors’ suggestions/report
* Second level and local community clubs feedback
* Receiving Active schools flag

**Implementation**

This plan will be supported, developed and implemented, by the teachers, pupils, coaches, instructors parents and wider community.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal and PE co-ordinator will co-ordinate the progress of the policy, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report to staff on findings. Each teacher is responsible for implementing this policy with his/her own class.

**Implementation**

From September 2012

**Review**

This Whole School Plan for Physical Education will be reviewed on an annual and any necessary changes will be made. All staff will be asked for feedback through discussions at staff meeting.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The PE Co-ordinator is responsible for the development and monitoring of the PE curriculum. The co-ordinator is also responsible for updating the School’s Policy in accordance with the school principal.

**Ratification and Communication**

This Physical Education policy was most recently reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 17th April 2018. A copy of the policy is available on the schools web site and in the principal’s office.

Appendices

* <http://www.aquaattack.ie/>
* <http://www.iws.ie/paws--jaws-page18823.html>
* The Concept of Physical Literacy(Whitehead, 2016)