



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA

JUNIOR CYCLE

PHYSICAL
EDUCATION

THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

Aims and Principles

1. The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in community and for leisure.
2. The Junior Certificate Programme is designed to meet the needs of all students in second-level education. Arising from this, every subject is offered at two levels, ordinary and higher. In the case of English, Irish and Mathematics a foundation level is also available.
3. The Junior Certificate Programme aims to
 - reinforce and further develop in the young person the knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies acquired at primary level;
 - extend and deepen the range and quality of the young person's educational experiences in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies;
 - develop the young person's personal and social confidence, initiative and competence through a broad, well-balanced general education;
 - prepare the young person for the requirements of further programmes of study, of employment or of life outside full-time education;
 - contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the young person and to develop a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others;
 - prepare the young person for the responsibilities of citizenship in the national context and in the context of the wider European and global communities.
4. The Junior Certificate Programme is based on the following principles:
 - Breadth and balance**

At this stage of their school careers, all students should have a wide range of educational experiences. Particular attention must be given to reinforcing and developing the skills of numeracy, literacy and oracy. Particular emphasis should be given to social and environmental education, science and technology and modern languages.
 - Relevance**

Curriculum provision should address the immediate and prospective needs of the young person, in the context of the cultural, economic and social environment.
 - Quality**

Every young person should be challenged to achieve the highest possible standards of excellence, with due regard to different aptitudes and abilities and to international comparisons.
5. Each Junior Certificate Syllabus is presented for implementation within the general curriculum context outlined above.



JUNIOR CYCLE

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Physical education 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, and emphasises the contribution of physical activity to the promotion of individual and group wellbeing. Learning in physical education involves the acquisition of knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes central to physical education, together with recognition of its potential for integration with other curriculum areas.

The general aim of physical education is to contribute to the preparation of the student for a life of autonomous wellbeing. This aim will be pursued through the

- enhancement of the student's sense of self through the development of skilful and creative performance of practical activities
- development of the student's understanding of physical activity and awareness of the links between physical education and other curricular areas
- motivation of the student to choose a lifestyle that is active, healthy and meaningful
- the personal enrichment of the student by developing personal and social skills, and encouraging positive attitudes and values in her/his interaction with others.

Physical education syllabuses, at all levels, seek to build on movement skills previously developed through the student's participation in physical education. These skills will form the basis for further learning. The student will develop the capacity to create more complex movement patterns in a variety of settings and modes. Knowledge and understanding of certain key concepts will be

required to enhance the student's experience. The syllabus will allow her/him to engage in an examination of human movement from different perspectives. For example, the senior-cycle student will study the physiological basis of human movement, the nature of human performance or will examine human movement from an aesthetic perspective. She/he will be enabled to develop a critical perspective on physical activity, while enjoying active and creative participation. In attempting to promote a positive and constructive attitude to physical activity, it is critical that the student learns to value physical activity and demonstrates positive attitudes towards participation. Participation in physical education should promote recognition of individual capacities, a positive attitude towards participation and an appreciation of the benefits of interaction with others.

Students with Special Educational Needs

Many students have different personal resources from those whose profiles fit normative ages and stages. Attempting to precisely define and delineate this category of student is difficult. It can be said of such students that, as a result of particular difficulties, they experience a range of barriers to learning. The barriers experienced should be viewed as a social issue where the onus is on society, in this instance the school, to adapt to the needs of the individual student.

Participation for students is an essential prerequisite to learning in physical education. Schools should facilitate, as far as possible, the inclusion of students with disabilities in all physical education activities. While participation should be inclusive of all students, it is essential to present each student with activities not only for participation but also for progression.

Physical education syllabuses underline the principle of inclusion. They subscribe to the basic goal of meeting the needs of all students, regardless of ability or level of development. The accompanying *Teacher Guidelines* will offer advice and support on how inclusion can be achieved.

Promoting participation and activity

Physical education plays a foundational role in developing pathways for physical activity participation, on a day-to-day basis and in the future. Physical education in the school should place as strong an emphasis as possible on opening up and reflecting on practical opportunities for students. These opportunities should be primarily based on the interests, talents, and decisions of the student. The availability of opportunities through the school and the wider community are important mediating factors. The existence of a clear, functioning policy on physical education and physical activity generally, and the role of the physical education teacher in implementing the policy, are also mediating factors.

The implications of this approach are that physical education will provide the student with the skills and insights necessary to choose from:

- recreational involvement in physical activity
- involvement in competitive sport
- the pursuit of individual goals in sport or dance, including high performance, if the desire and talent is evident
- the pursuit of study in physical education and related areas
- spectating in an informed way by being aware of the principles, skills, and appropriate attitudes
- officiating or administrating as a volunteer or as a career
- non-involvement.

AIMS

This syllabus for physical education at junior-cycle level is based on the general rationale, aim and outcomes for junior cycle education outlined in the opening section of this document. Further aims, objectives and learning outcomes are presented at the start of the sections outlining the various areas of study within the syllabus.

The aims of junior cycle physical education are to

- provide the opportunity for students to develop personally, socially, and physically through participation in physical activities in a safe, challenging and enjoyable environment
- reinforce and further develop the physical education knowledge, understanding, skills, and competencies acquired at primary level
- prepare students for the requirements of further programmes of study, of employment, or of life outside full-time education
- provide an opportunity for students to critically reflect on physical activity through participation in a broad, well-balanced programme
- develop in students an ability to make informed judgements in respect of physical activity
- encourage an appreciation of physical activity and of the benefits of an active lifestyle
- promote positive attitudes towards participation in physical activity and towards co-operation with others in that participation
- enable students to take responsibility for the organisation and development of their learning within the framework provided.

OBJECTIVES

Through their study of junior cycle physical education students will develop:

- competence in the performance of a range of activities and the ability to analyse these in the context of technical, physiological, and biomechanical implications for the performer
- the ability to invent, compose, and choreograph physical activity in structured, imaginative ways
- the ability to make decisions relating to physical activity while appreciating consequences in both tactical and moral contexts
- an understanding of the principles, rules, and purpose of different categories of activity, and the criteria for mastery of each
- an understanding of the psychological, sociological, aesthetic and biological knowledge relevant to physical education
- an appreciation of the value of participation in selected physical activities as a lifelong endeavour
- an understanding of the principles of fairness and tolerance in interaction with others
- the desire and the capacity to acquire a positive sense of self.

SYLLABUS STRUCTURE

The syllabus includes a number of areas of study representative of a range of practical activities, each of which has particular characteristics and contributes to the attainment of the overall aim of physical education. These areas of study are:

- 1. Adventure activities**
- 2. Aquatics**
- 3. Athletics**
- 4. Dance**
- 5. Invasion games**
- 6. Net and fielding games**
- 7. Gymnastics**
- 8. Health-related activity**

The areas of study are presented in greater detail on the following pages.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES	AQUATICS	ATHLETICS	DANCE	GAMES	GYMNASTICS	HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITY
Orienteering	Entry	Jumping	Basic actions	Games making	Themes	Activity and the body
Team challenge	Movement in water	Running	Movement quality	Attacking play	Movement vocabulary	Fitness
Campcraft	Aqua fitness	Throwing	Relationships	Defensive play	Qualitative focus	Training
	Water safety		Dance creation		Relationships	Lifelong activity

Aquatics has a unique place in a balanced physical education programme. It provides students with a water-based learning experience through participation in a range of structured activities. It provides opportunities for the personal, physical, and social development of each student in a safe, enjoyable environment. There is an emphasis on the students' movement in the water, either by means of identifiable strokes or combinations/adaptations thereof. The students' understanding of personal safety and life saving in the aquatic environment is also addressed.

Dance seeks to provide a context for aesthetic and artistic experience and enables the students to develop personally, socially, and physically through participation in dance in an enjoyable environment. At junior cycle, students are presented with opportunities to extend their understanding of a variety of dance forms. Students will be exposed to learning situations where they interpret ideas and feelings and respond to stimuli using dance movements.

Gymnastics seeks to provide a context for aesthetic experience and the opportunity to develop personally, socially, and physically through participation in gymnastics in a safe and enjoyable environment. In this activity, the student aims to develop body management and awareness through movement, with a focus on precision and form. This latter emphasis distinguishes the learning in gymnastics from that in the majority of other physical education activity areas.

Adventure activities at junior cycle provide students with the opportunity to develop personally, socially, and physically in a safe and challenging environment. Presenting the student with an element of adventure and challenge in a controlled environment can lead to the development of qualities such as self-reliance, self-confidence, responsibility, regard for others and respect for the environment. In this way, aspects of holistic development that are generally not emphasised in other areas of physical education can be addressed.

Athletics at this level involves learning through participation in the fundamental athletic activities of running, jumping, and throwing. The skills associated with these activities can, at junior cycle, begin to be applied to modified forms of standard events. The element of competition inherent in athletics is presented here with reference to the abilities of the individual student. Hence the students' experience of competitive situations is in the context of personal goals rather than relating performance to that of others.

Through participation in a variety of games in a safe and enjoyable environment, students will be presented with the opportunity to develop personally, socially, and physically. The teaching of skills and technique is given less priority than the development of tactical awareness through the exploration of principles of play. Skill acquisition is seen in the context of the students' involvement in the game situation and of enabling them to make appropriate decisions based on their evolving level of tactical awareness.

This aspect of the syllabus is distinctive inasmuch as it attempts to draw together the other physical education activities in order to provide students with the opportunity to develop an understanding of health-related fitness and to apply its principles to actual participation. Its inclusion is reflective of the view that promotion of skilled movement and fitness is an important means of developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Junior cycle education incorporates the principles of breadth, balance, relevance, and coherence. These principles should also be reflected in any course derived from this syllabus in physical education. In the *Teacher Guidelines*, which accompany this syllabus, content is presented at two levels, reflective of the student's previous experience of physical education.

Level one incorporates content and methodologies appropriate to the student's first experience of the particular area of study at post-primary school. It is introductory in nature and is accessible to students with a variety of physical education backgrounds. This level presupposes experience of the area of study in primary school, but such experience is not viewed as a prerequisite.

Level two builds upon learning attained at level one. The selection of content and suggested teaching approach is designed to deepen the student's understanding of the activity and enhance the level of performance.

The syllabus can be described as an enabling structure through which a wide variety of courses can be developed and implemented as appropriate to the circumstances and resources of the school. However, it is recommended that all courses derived from the syllabus should be based on the following parameters:

- the junior cycle course should comprise one activity from each of at least seven areas of study
- three of these activities should be taken to level two
- two further activities should be taken at the discretion of the teacher (at either level one or two)
- if health-related activity is chosen as an area of study, it is recommended that its study is integrated with other areas of study.

It is recognised that the availability of facilities and resources will, to some extent, determine the ability of schools to offer a fully-balanced course. Nonetheless, every effort should be made to ensure that students receive a comprehensive range of activities.

The parameters provided, while ensuring a broad and balanced programme, offer the teacher considerable flexibility. The following examples illustrate how the parameters might be applied

Example

<p>Course A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven activities pursued at level one Athletics, Adventure activities, Invasion games, Health-related activity, Gymnastics, Dance, Net and fielding games • Three activities pursued at level two Athletics, Adventure activities, Invasion games • Two further discretionary activities Dance (level two), Gymnastics (level two)
<p>Course B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven activities pursued at level one Athletics, Adventure activities, Net and fielding games, Health-related activity, Gymnastics, Aquatics, Dance • Three activities pursued at level two Adventure activities, Net and fielding games, Aquatics • Two further discretionary activities Athletics, Gymnastics (level two)

Time

This syllabus is developed on the basis of a time allocation of two hours per week.

Teachers

Qualified, specialist teachers of physical education should be responsible for the development of the physical education course at junior cycle.

Facilities

The teaching and learning associated with junior cycle physical education will require that access be available to a variety of facilities on a regular basis. Ideally, facilities for the implementation of the physical education syllabus should include some, or all, of the following:

- suitable indoor space – sports hall with changing and shower areas
- suitable outdoor space - grass pitch and hard-court areas large enough to work efficiently and in safety
- access to swimming pool
- access to areas suitable for the teaching of adventure activities
- access to classrooms, audio-visual and ICT equipment as required.

JUNIOR CYCLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

TOPICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Area of study 1: Adventure activities

Adventure activities provide students with the opportunity to develop personally, socially, and physically in a safe and challenging environment. Presenting the student with an element of adventure and challenge in a controlled environment can lead to the development of qualities such as self-reliance, self-confidence, responsibility, regard for others and respect for the environment. In this way, aspects of holistic development that are generally not emphasised in other areas of physical education can be addressed.

Adventure activities seeks to develop in the student:

- the skills and techniques which will facilitate enjoyable participation in adventure activities
- decision-making skills and leadership qualities, and awareness of positive group dynamics
- an understanding and appreciation of the need for environmental protection
- an awareness of personal safety and a basic knowledge of first aid with particular reference to the outdoors.

The areas of content identified below represent a proportion of the activities which might be included in a study of adventure activities. By presenting this area of study in this way, the intention is to render it as accessible as possible to schools, irrespective of particular school circumstances. The activities are viewed as representative of the area while not demanding a high level of resources or facilities. This approach does not preclude schools, if circumstances allow, offering other activities in the area of study of adventure activities. For example, objectives are provided in the *Teacher Guidelines* accompanying this syllabus for rock climbing/bouldering, hill walking, caving, snorkelling, surfing, kayaking, and dinghy sailing.

TOPICS

<p>Orienteering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognition of symbols • orientation of the map • feature recognition • basic route planning • map memory • event organisation
<p>Team challenge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation • planning • safety issues • effective communication • review
<p>Camp craft</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction of shelter • erecting/striking a tent • country code • safe practice • clothing and equipment • ropework

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this area of study, students should be able to

- **participate in a variety of adventure activities with a view to fostering a positive attitude towards further involvement**
- **achieve a level of technical competence commensurate with individual experiences and potential**
- **demonstrate an understanding of the need for safety procedures, both personal and group**
- **appreciate the necessity for appropriate personal equipment**
- **develop a respect for the natural environment with an understanding of important environmental issues**
- **demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviour in adventure activity settings**
- **reflect on and evaluate adventure experiences.**

JUNIOR CYCLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

AQUATICS

TOPICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Area of study 2: Aquatics

Aquatics has a unique place in a balanced physical education programme. It provides students with a water-based learning experience through participation in a range of structured activities. It provides opportunities for the personal, physical, and social development of each student in a safe, enjoyable environment. There is an emphasis on the student's movement in the water, either by means of identifiable strokes or combinations/adaptations thereof. The student's understanding of personal safety and life saving in the aquatic environment is also addressed.

Aquatics seeks to develop in the student:

- confidence in the water
- competence in, and an understanding of, basic water safety and life-saving skills and an ability to make decisions having assessed hazards which relate to water activities
- an awareness of the value of aquatics as a fitness-promoting activity.

TOPICS

Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe entry • feet first (assisted) • from sitting • step, jumps • head first • turns and starts
Movement in water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travelling - walking, glide • propulsion - front and back, kicking, sculling • stroke - arm action, kick, breathing (front and back) • synchronised • games
Aqua fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • warm up - pulse raisers, flexibility • aerobic activity • local muscular endurance • simple circuits
Water safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rules – skills - treading water, staying afloat, signalling for help • rescue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rules and procedures – talk rescue – reach and throw rescue

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this area of study, students should be able to

- **participate in a variety of simple water games, and swim, competently and safely, on front and back**
- **perform at least one swimming stroke competently and safely**
- **select and perform appropriate water entry methods**
- **perform basic personal survival skills**
- **demonstrate a knowledge of elementary principles of land based rescue**
- **display an understanding of the benefits of swimming as an aerobic exercise**
- **co-operate with others in the learning environment.**

TOPICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Area of study 3: Athletics

Athletics at this level involves learning through participation in the fundamental athletic activities of running, jumping and throwing. The skills associated with these activities can, at junior cycle, begin to be applied to modified forms of standard events. The element of competition inherent in athletics is presented here with reference to the abilities of the individual student. Hence the student's experience of competitive situations is in the context of personal goals rather than relating performance to that of others.

Athletics seeks to develop in the student:

- the ability to participate in running, jumping and throwing activities in a variety of contexts
- enhanced knowledge and understanding of athletic activities
- the capacity to set personal goals and understand and appreciate the concept of fair play
- love for and enjoyment of athletics
- enhanced social development through participation in group activities.

TOPICS

<p>Running</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities to develop the idea of running for speed or endurance • basics of relay running • starting procedures and reaction to stimuli • introduction to running over low obstacles
<p>Throwing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities to develop the fundamentals of throwing from the chest, behind head, over-arm, using a variety of implements, e.g. balls of all sizes, shots and foam javelins • safety procedures for handling and using equipment
<p>Jumping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction of standing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – long jump – triple jump – high jump • introduction of one step <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – long jump – triple jump – high jump

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this area of study, students should be able to

- **to run at a steady pace, suitable to level of fitness, for a set length of time**
- **jump for distance and/or height**
- **throw for distance using modified as well as standard equipment**
- **display an understanding of the principles relating to the performance of athletics activities**
- **apply the safety procedures associated with participation in athletic activities**
- **demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of the rules governing participation in events**
- **display an appreciation and enjoyment of athletics**
- **set personal challenges and compare performance to previous personal attempts.**

TOPICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Area of study 4: Dance

Dance seeks to provide a context for aesthetic and artistic experience, and enables the student to develop personally, socially, and physically through participation in dance in an enjoyable environment. At junior cycle, students are presented with opportunities to extend their understanding of a variety of dance forms. Students will be exposed to learning situations where they interpret ideas and feelings and respond to stimuli using dance movements.

Dance seeks to develop in the student:

- skilful and creative mastery of the body in a dance context
- enhanced knowledge and understanding of dance as an aesthetic and artistic experience
- enriched personal and social development while interacting with others.

TOPICS

<p>Development of basic body actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel • elevation • stillness • gesture • turning
<p>Movement quality</p>	<p>Attention to movement quality through examination of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technique • expressive elements – time, space, level • continuity • phrasing
<p>Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual • partner work • group work
<p>Dance creation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • movement composition • creation of dance phrases • mastery of technical set study

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this area of study, students should be able to

- **develop knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of dance forms**
- **plan, compose, perform, extend and refine movement in various dance contexts**
- **perform dances showing control and sensitivity to the style of the dance, and to the music and/or accompaniment**
- **perform short dances including dances from different traditions**
- **describe, analyse and interpret dances, recognising differences**
- **explore and compose movement motifs/phrases with clarity**
- **co-operate in groups to discuss, select, and perform dances.**

JUNIOR CYCLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GAMES

TOPICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Areas of study 5 and 6: Invasion games and net and fielding games

Through participation in a variety of games in a safe and enjoyable environment, students will be presented with the opportunity to develop personally, socially, and physically. The teaching of skills and technique is given less priority than the development of tactical awareness through the exploration of principles of play. Skill acquisition is seen in the context of the student's involvement in the game situation and of enabling her/him to make appropriate decisions based on their evolving level tactical awareness.

Games seeks to develop in the student:

- the knowledge and understanding which will enable her/him to make appropriate decisions based on her/his current level of tactical awareness
- the ability to have an active role in the games lesson at her/his own technical level, thus enhancing self-esteem and sense of personal fulfilment.
- insights into a variety of games through experiencing samples of different types of games
- a sense of personal fulfilment by achieving a level of success through participation in games.

TOPICS

<p>1. Games making</p> <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • naming • devising rules • formulating re-start procedure • identifying specific roles 	<p>3. Net Games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skilled performance in context <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modified game form • game appreciation • decision-making <p>Attacking play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passing • serving • supporting • creating space • recognising defence <p>Defensive play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positioning • denying space • creating time • regaining time • returning serve
<p>2. Invasion games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skilled performance in context <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • variety of game forms • game appreciation • decision-making <p>Attacking play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possession (maintain/distribute) • penetration • width/depth • creating space • support • scoring <p>Defending play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling • intercepting • denying space • supporting (depth) • marking 	<p>4. Fielding games</p> <p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modified game form • game appreciation • tactical awareness • decision-making • skill execution <p>Attacking play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating space • use of deception • assessing time and space • supporting team-mates <p>Defensive play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forcing error • covering space • covering bases

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this area of study, students should be able to

- participate in a variety of games and develop the skills required for participation in games
- display a knowledge of basic principles and rules
- demonstrate technical competence commensurate with individual potential
- make appropriate responses (relative to her/his own ability) to the particular problems posed by a game
- gain experience of various degrees of competitive play
- display an understanding of the dynamics of team efficiency
- acquire a level of confidence and enjoyment which will ensure that games are played outside of school time
- develop knowledge of how to modify games to make them work, how to practise and how to prepare for competition
- appreciate the benefits which participation in games can bring.

JUNIOR CYCLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

GYMNASTICS

TOPICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Area of study 7: Gymnastics

Gymnastics seeks to provide a context for aesthetic experience and the opportunity to develop personally, socially, and physically through participation in gymnastics in a safe and enjoyable environment. In this activity the student aims to develop body management and awareness through movement, with a focus on precision and form. This latter emphasis distinguishes the learning in gymnastics from that in the majority of other physical education activity areas.

Gymnastics seeks to develop in the student:

- skilful and creative mastery of the body in a gymnastic context
- enhanced knowledge and understanding of gymnastics as an aesthetic experience
- enriched personal and social development through interaction with others in a variety of structured contexts.

TOPICS

<p>Themes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travelling • balance • weight transference • symmetry/asymmetry
<p>Movement vocabulary</p>	<p>Based on the activities of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rolling • balance • inversion on hands • flight
<p>Qualitative focus</p>	<p>Involves attention to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technique • body poise • control of muscular tension • variety • appropriateness • continuity of action • phrasing • creativity
<p>Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual • partner work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – non-contact (matching/mirroring) – contact (assisted balance/obstacles etc.)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this area of study, students should be able to

- **perform appropriate actions relating to the themes of travelling, balance, weight transference, symmetry and asymmetry**
- **demonstrate control of muscular tension and body poise**
- **refine and increase the technical competence of their actions**
- **show an ability to link movements and demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts of space and time**
- **demonstrate an ability to select, create, and perform a short sequence based on specific themes**
- **observe and analyse the work of others, demonstrating an understanding of the criteria for appreciation.**

JUNIOR CYCLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITY

TOPICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Area of study 8: Health-related activity

This aspect of the syllabus is distinctive inasmuch as it attempts to draw together the other physical education activities, in order to provide students with the opportunity to develop an understanding of health-related fitness and to apply its principles to actual participation. Its inclusion is reflective of the view that promotion of skilled movement and fitness is an important means of developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Health-related activities seeks to develop in the student:

- an understanding of the role of health-related activity in the promotion of wellbeing
- an understanding of the scientific principles that underpin health-related activity
- the ability to measure and monitor her/his physical wellbeing
- a sense of responsibility for her/his own good health and wellbeing.

TOPICS

<p>Activity and the body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heart; increased heart-rate, perceived exertion • temperature • lungs • muscles
<p>Health benefits of physical activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • energy levels • sense of well-being • self-esteem • risk of lifestyle illness • stress and anxiety reduction • lifelong physical activity
<p>Health-related fitness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contrast with performance-related fitness • muscular strength • muscular endurance • flexibility • cardiovascular endurance • physical education activities and health-related fitness
<p>Warm-up and cool-down</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles • distinction • plan and perform for general activity
<p>Introduction to principles of training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use/disuse • overload • F.I.T.T.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this area of study, students should be able to

- **demonstrate an understanding of the effects of exercise on the body**
- **identify the components of health-related fitness through involvement in relevant physical activity**
- **show an understanding of the role of physical activity in establishing and maintaining health**
- **plan for and participate in regular physical activity.**

JUNIOR CYCLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION
ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching/learning process. It seeks to establish the extent and quality of the student learning which has taken place. Assessment of student learning and achievement should provide information that informs future learning strategies and motivates the student in that context. At junior cycle, assessment modes and methods used in physical education will contribute directly to the formative development of the learner. The assessment modes and methods employed will also be consistent with the practical nature of physical education at this level.

Assessing student achievement

The assessment of student achievement in physical education at junior cycle provides an opportunity for the utilisation of a variety of modes and methods of assessment. A range of assessment modes is outlined below while further suggestions on methods of assessment will be provided in the *Teacher Guidelines*. It is accepted that varying school circumstances will give rise to a variety of approaches to assessment. However, the assessment modes and methods utilised should reflect the practical nature of physical education.

In recording student achievement over the duration of junior cycle, it is recommended that all assessment material be compiled and stored in the form of a **Student Portfolio**. The portfolio will contain assessment evidence obtained from the assessment approaches outlined below. The contents should also reflect achievements and attainments in other forms, to be agreed between the student and the teacher.

The portfolio will provide useful information to the teacher, school and parents, but will ultimately be of most value to the student as a record of personal achievement. It should be used very much as a vehicle for the formative assessment of student progress.

Suggested assessment modes

Formal assessment by the teacher

This structured assessment can be used at the end of a year, term or other significant period/unit of work. It will evaluate student performance of activities against a pre-determined set of criteria. The assessment might comprise the performance of teacher-prescribed tasks or completion of written assignments, or a combination of both.

Informal observation by the teacher

This assessment is ongoing as part of the teaching and learning process. The teacher continually makes judgements as to the progress and performance of the student in the lesson. The teacher will, where appropriate and practicable, record a number of these informal evaluations.

Peer assessment by students

The syllabus aims to extend the full range of skills displayed by the student. One way to improve the skills of the student in the area of analysis of performance is to facilitate the operation of peer assessment in the physical education lesson. It is important to note that this assessment activity should proceed on the basis of parameters and criteria agreed by both the student and teacher.

Self-assessment by students

It is widely accepted that students should take greater responsibility for their own learning and, by extension, for the assessment of what they have learned. As part of the process of self-assessment, students will be encouraged to reflect on their experience of physical education. Students might focus on a year or a term to identify, inter alia, areas where they experienced difficulty.

Recording individual achievement

Because of the congruence between physical education and physical activity outside of the formal class setting, participation in the latter area should be recorded as evidence of achievement in the student portfolio.

Frequency of assessment

To allow for adequate time to explore the areas in sufficient depth and detail, it is suggested that four activities be taught in each year of the junior cycle. In each year at least one formal assessment process or event should take place. The scheduling of other assessments is a matter for the individual teacher, having regard to particular circumstances.

In the context of the education continuum, the junior cycle should establish continuity with the primary school programme and align itself with the appropriate senior-cycle syllabuses. In this way, the student will begin to appreciate the continuous and progressive nature of the physical education process. Where relevant, links with other subjects and educational programmes should be facilitated and encouraged.

Primary curriculum

The physical education curriculum at primary level outlines a balanced range of activities for children and allows schools considerable flexibility in planning a programme that meets the needs of the school. The curriculum is divided into six strands and these are closely related to the components of the junior -cycle syllabus. The strands are:

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

The physical education curriculum provides a framework for encouraging children to pursue healthy lifestyles and to develop positive attitudes towards physical activity. The learning experiences envisaged therefore, will not only address fundamental skill development, but also the child's attitude towards participation in physical activity. The junior-cycle syllabus seeks to progress this approach with developmentally appropriate methodologies and content.

Links within junior cycle

The emphasis in junior cycle physical education is on the participation of each student in purposeful physical activity and the learning associated with this participation. There is, however, significant scope for incorporating the learning taking place in this context with topics and themes in other areas and subjects of the junior cycle. The detailed exploration of such interaction and integration is beyond the scope of this document and more appropriately dealt with elsewhere. Some general points can be made however which may help to promote such links.

Learning in other areas of experience is frequently enhanced through presenting material in alternative modes. Thus approaching topics by referring to the student's spatial, kinesiological or interpersonal awareness might prove useful. Physical education can be related directly with many of the areas of experience mentioned in the opening section of this syllabus. In this regard, the relationship between physical education and other subjects can be fostered. Such initiatives have the additional value of embedding the learning outcomes of physical education in a broader range of educational domains.

In providing practical applications for what might otherwise be considered theoretical or abstract concepts in other junior cycle areas of experience or subjects, physical education may prove to be a strong and effective influence in presenting an integrated educational experience to students.

Physical education might, for example, be linked with aspects of:

Language, literature and communication

- e.g. reviewing the language used in sports articles, analysing prose related to sporting performance, commentary, communication of ideas in group work etc

Science and technology

- e.g. study of body systems (skeletal, digestive, nervous, respiration), use of ICT, digitally recording of performance (own and others) for analysis and practice prescription, compilation of electronic components for student portfolio

Arts education

- Physical education elements such as dance and gymnastics have as central aims the aesthetic and artistic development of participants. This contributes directly to the student's learning in this area of experience.

Links with the senior cycle

The nature of the physical component at junior cycle allows great flexibility in the design of the course in individual schools. Accordingly, when planning for coherence between physical education courses at different levels, it is through the structure of curricula and through the teaching approach adopted that continuity is underscored. The study of physical education concepts through participation in a series of activity areas, continued from primary school, is progressed through the junior cycle into a senior-cycle course which continues this process. Senior-cycle syllabuses focus on offering the student different perspectives on the same physical activities, many of which will have been studied at junior cycle.



This syllabus was drawn up by a combined junior/senior cycle NCCA Course Committee comprising members from the following:

- Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- Joint Managerial Body
- Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
- Irish Vocational Education Association
- Physical Education Association of Ireland
- Department of Education and Science (Inspectorate)
- National Council for Educational Awards
- Conference of Heads of Irish Universities
- National Parents Council (Post-primary)

On the basis of the brief provided by Council, the NCCA's Course Committees prepare the syllabuses.

Recommendations of Course Committees are submitted to the Council of NCCA for approval. The NCCA, having considered such recommendations, advises the Minister for Education and Science accordingly.

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Published by The Stationery Office

To be purchased directly from:

Government Publications Sales Office,
Sun Alliance House,
Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

Or by mail order from:

Government Publications, Postal Trade Section,
51 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01-647 6834/5 Fax: 01-647 6843

Or through any bookseller.

Price: €1.90

Designed by: Langley Freeman Design Group Limited
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