



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme: Physical Education Elective Module

For introduction to schools in September 2025.

Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

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Introduction

The Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme (SCL1LP) consists of a range of curriculum areas, each designed on a modular basis. There are four curriculum areas at the heart of the SCL1LP: Numeracy; Communication and Literacy; Personal Care; and Electives. Physical Education is an Elective module.

Physical Education consists of one module. It is designed for a minimum of 60 hours of teaching time/class contact time over two years.

Module title	Recommended time in hours
Physical Education	60

Rationale

This elective module aims to develop and support students' physical abilities. It aims to motivate students to participate in physical activity in school, at home and in their communities through engagement in, and enjoyment of, a range of activities.

Physical Education (PE) contributes to the students' movement experiences, promoting physical and cognitive development and play. It aims to enhance students' motor skills through safely participating in activities. Physical exercise and movement improve concentration, sleeping and eating patterns and overall wellbeing. The ability to work as an individual and as a member of a team, as well as the opportunity to develop personal physical skills, are important aspects of PE. By having structure and guidance in activities and PE lessons, students will be supported in responding to new situations.

Students are enabled to engage with and develop their interpersonal, intrapersonal and communication skills. Participating in PE will boost students' confidence and overall wellbeing as they experience physical activities in a structured and supportive setting.

The development of students' understanding of how physical activity can be enjoyed, as well as its importance in life, contributes to the development of key competencies in senior cycle. When this happens, all learning across senior cycle is supported and the development of important life skills are promoted. Students stand to benefit in many ways as they progress in learning pathways and as they transition to life beyond school.



Continuity and progression

This module is designed to consolidate and progress students' learning and experiences in PE from junior cycle, as well as supporting their wellbeing and confidence. The module is structured to provide continuity from the Level 1 Personal Care Priority Learning Unit (PLU) at junior cycle, the Primary PE Curriculum and Junior Cycle PE specification and to progress, enhance and deepen their learning in senior cycle.

PE supports the progression of the student's junior cycle key skills of managing self, staying well, and communicating, and promotes development and learning in areas such as communication, language, numeracy, motor coordination and mobility.

As they engage in this elective, students are given opportunities to demonstrate how learning acquired here can be linked to prior learning, to other curriculum areas, wider school activities and life outside of school, applying their learning in areas across senior cycle such as Personal Care, Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, SPHE, Visual Art, Music, Drama, Being part of the community or their area of special interest. This helps to reinforce learning and progress students' ability to be active, communicate, express themselves, and it supports their interactions with others. This helps to provide a continuous learning experience for students throughout senior cycle. It helps to reinforce and progress students' learning which, in turn, enables them to develop a sense of achievement and confidence in their learning.



Teaching and learning

The PE module emphasises active participation, focusing on developing individual participation goals and strategies to achieve them. Issues such as safety, as well as students' medical, sensory and physical needs will need to be taken into account.

As some students may have unique needs and recommendations from a multidisciplinary team may need to be sought. This may apply to choosing equipment and movement activities appropriate to students' needs. Students may require preparatory exercises before engaging in physical activities. The initial learning point for some students may be to become accustomed and comfortable to the sensory elements of a PE environment such as acoustics, smell, temperature.

Sensory equipment or activities offering tactile stimulation can enable students to interact with their environment and learn about their world. Engagement in activities that involve squeezing, grasping or manipulating objects and elements such as sand and water, as appropriate to each individual student, can contribute to the student's physical development, eye movement, hand-eye coordination, dexterity, and strength.

Warm-up and cool-down games or exercises may be especially beneficial in engaging students' senses before the main activity. They may also be an excellent transition activity for the student before returning to the classroom or moving on to other learning activities.

Physical activities are the medium through which students achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers should endeavour to provide a variety of physical activities where possible, to enable students to experience a broad and balanced PE programme. Physical activity areas may include but are not confined to; Health related activities¹, Gymnastics, Athletics, Aquatics, Games, Dance, Cycling and Adventure.

These areas are representative of a wide range of physical activities, sports and exercises and each has particular characteristics. Activities may be teacher modelled, led or supported to the extent the student requires. Students should participate in individual, group or team activities as appropriate and should be given many opportunities to experience the fun, enjoyment and social aspects of physical activity.

¹ This physical activity area provides students with the opportunity to develop an understanding of health-related fitness and to apply its principles to actual participation. If undertaking health-related activity, it should be integrated with other physical activity areas.



Module: Physical Education

Module descriptor

This module enables students to experience the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing, identify engage in activities they enjoy, and develop their own personal talents and abilities. This module will build their confidence to engage in physical activities. All movements can be supported or prompted by others to the extent that the student requires.

Students learn about

Students should be able to

Movement, awareness of movement and a range of fundamental movement skills² within a space. Students build their knowledge of, and engagement with, various physical activities and their confidence to engage in a range of activities, with appropriate support.

- a. show awareness of their body and respond to movement fully supported or prompted by others
- b. move whole or some body parts (arms, legs, track with eyes etc) voluntarily and with intent
- c. move whole or some body parts to explore their immediate environment
- d. move whole body or individual limbs in a range of directions and at different speeds
- e. become aware of sensory signals as a prompt for movement
- f. demonstrate fundamental movement skills with support where necessary
- g. use relevant equipment safely, with appropriate support
- h. increase tolerance to equipment
- i. demonstrate an awareness of safe practices when engaging in physical activities
- j. imitate the movement of others
- k. explore a sequence of movement
- l. explore and/or recognise cause and effect of movement
- m. explore and/or identify emotional and physical state before and after a physical activity
- n. experience and/or identify ways to recover after engaging in physical activity

Health and wellbeing and how they are linked to being active and the enjoyment of activities.

- o. communicate personal preference for a physical activity
- p. maintain a physical activity in a structured environment
- q. experience simple relaxation techniques
- r. participate in or demonstrate simple safety instructions for physical activities
- s. identify and engage with opportunities in their local community for physical activities
- t. recognise and/or experience physical activity is essential to a healthy lifestyle

² Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) are, in general, gross motor skills that involve the large force producing muscles of the trunk, arms and legs. They do not develop naturally but are usually learned or practised. All other fine and advanced motor skills are progressed from these FMS and hence are vital for lifelong physical activity participation. Examples of FMS include walking, crawling, running, hopping, catching, twisting, turning, stretching, as appropriate for each student.



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