

Physical Education Plan.

Nicker National School

■ Physical Education Plan, Nicker National School

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

The PE plan for Nicker National School was formulated in consultation with the teachers, BOM and parents. Support was provided in the form of insights from teachers who attended CPD in the area of PE and those who are facilitating the Active Flag and Health Promoting Schools programmes in the school.

Our whole school approach to Physical Education is developed with cognisance of the statistic that just 1 in 5 children in Ireland exercise for the recommended minimum of one hour per day (HSE 2019). We also take into consideration, the positive benefits which physical exercise offers for the mental health of all children in our school community.

(b) Rationale

Physical education provides children with **learning opportunities** through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall well-being and 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.

(c) Key Messages

Physical Education activities will adhere to the general principles of the P.E. curriculum of the school as follows:

- The importance of enjoyment and play
- Maximum participation by all children
- The development of skills and understanding
- A balance between competitive and non-competitive activities
- A balance between contact and non-contact activities
- Providing opportunities for achievement for each child
- Providing activities equally suitable for boys and girls.

■ Vision and Aims

1. Vision

We seek to assist the children in Nicker N.S. in achieving their potential through the opportunities they receive to physically educate themselves through the strands of the PE curriculum and to promote physical activity throughout the school.

2. Aims

We endorse the aims of the [Primary School 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.

[The Broad objectives of the PE curriculum](#) have been considered, (Pages 10 to 12 of the Curriculum Document).

Curriculum Planning

1. Strands and Strand Units

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

Physical Education Curriculum

- ★ **Infant classes pp. 16-23**
- ★ **First and Second classes pp. 24-34**
- ★ **Third and Fourth classes pp. 38-46**
- ★ **Fifth and Sixth classes pp. 48-59**
- ★ **Aquatics: Junior Infants-Sixth pp.62-64**

Teachers will be guided by the [PE Curriculum Teacher Guidelines](#).

Teachers will choose a range of activities from the PE strands for each class. Children will have access to the following five strands each year – Athletics, Dance, Gymnastics, Games, Outdoor and Adventure Activities. Classes from First to Sixth class will experience the Aquatics strand each year in the third term. Our engagement with both the Health Promoting Schools Initiative and the Active Schools Flag processes support and overlap with the PE curriculum in a variety of ways. Further detail can be found below.

The school will also avail of the PE lesson plans prepared by the Primary School Sports Initiative as recommended by the Active Schools Flag initiative. [PSSI Lesson Plans](#)

Middle and Senior Classes will have access to the Aquatics Strand in Sean Treacy Sports , Tipperary during the Third Term each year.

We will endeavour to create a PE rich environment in the school:

- Active School Notice Board
- Suitable videos to support the teaching and development of Fundamental Movement Skills as informed by the Move Well Move Often programme
- Suitable Websites
- Posters/Photographs/Newspaper cuttings
- Age and level appropriate PE equipment to support children in unstructured playground activity
- Age and level appropriate PE equipment to support the teaching of the PE curriculum

We will ensure there is continuity and progression from class to class by:

- Developing appropriate warm-up activities for indoor and outdoor work at each level using PSSI warm-up and cool-down resource banks – with strand specific mobility, strengthening and flexibility exercises appropriate to each class level.
- Taking a whole school approach to the gradual development of the Fundamental Movement Skills as promoted and informed the Physical Literacy programme.
- Recording the content covered at each level which will briefly detail the level of engagement with each strand (Cúntas Míosúil)

2. Approaches and Methodologies

- We will use a combination of the following approaches:
 - ★ Direct teaching approach¹
 - ★ Guided discovery approach²
 - ★ Integration³
 - ★ Visiting coaches or experts

We will use methods that encourage maximum participation by the child by employing the following strategies:

- ★ Individual, pair, group and team play⁴
- ★ Station teaching⁵
- ★ Using a play area divided into grids⁶

Structure of a PE lesson:

- **Warm Up**
- **Main Activity**
- **Cool Down**

Running, jumping, throwing, rolling, striking an object, kicking, playing small sided games, orienteering, dancing etc. This main activity will take place at individual, pair and small group levels. Station teaching will be used to teach a specific skill and to enable the children experience a variety of activities in the PE lesson. We will divide our yard/play area into grids to allow for small group activity and yet all children will be involved.

3. Assessment and Record Keeping

(In accordance with PE Curriculum pp. 68-74, Teacher Guidelines pp. 98-100)

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

- We will assess:
 - ★ Willingness to participate in activities

¹ Page 43, PE Teacher Guidelines

² Pages 43,44, PE Teacher Guidelines

³ Page 45, PE Teacher Guidelines

⁴ Page 51, PE Teacher Guidelines

⁵ Page 51, PE Teacher Guidelines

⁶ Page 54, Teacher Guidelines

- ★ Readiness to engage with a certain activity
- ★ The level of competence of a child in carrying out an activity
- ★ Interest in and disposition towards activity
- ★ Willingness to cooperate in individual, pair and group activities
- Our assessment tools are:
 - ★ Teacher observation
 - ★ Teacher-designed tasks
 - ★ Peer assessment
- Assessment is used to provide information on individual children, assist the teacher in planning a programme and facilitates communication with other teachers, parents and other professionals.
 - ★ **Assessment for learning** to provide feedback to children, improve learning and inform practice
 - ★ **Assessment of learning** which helps to identify the milestones children reach and the progress they make to report to parents, other teachers and the children themselves.
 - ★ **Assessment during learning** involves teaching the children how to self assess and peer assess.
- The assessment criteria used for each activity forms part of class and school planning.
- Parents are informed verbally of children's progress through the year and on the child's written report at the end of the year.

4. Multi-Class Teaching

- As we have 5 class teachers in our school, all classrooms are multi-grade. P.E. lessons are structured to reflect this e.g. Station teaching, mixed ability group activities etc..

5. Children with Additional Needs

All children will be encouraged to participate in all PE activities through the use of co-operative fun activities. We will also give encouragement and acknowledge good effort wherever possible. Our main aim is to set activities close to each child's ability level but at the same time challenging them to improve their performance. Reasonable targets will be set for all children at individual, pair and small group levels.

Teachers will endeavour to scaffold and encourage the participation of children with additional needs by planning to include all children in PE activities, with a particular planning focus where required on the additional needs of these children. We will also plan to include children who may have physical disabilities by planning to include them in all PE activities and by adapting the activities as necessary using a variety of resources, differentiating by task or by outcome with the required levels of adult support.

Children with exceptional ability/talent for PE will be encouraged and supported by acknowledging their talents and creating additional challenges for these children in the strands of the PE curriculum they excel in. These challenges will be based on the activity being pursued by the rest of the class. In addition, the children will be encouraged to maximise their talent by forging links with local clubs (if links have not been established already) so the child(ren) can bring their

talent to a higher level. The children with exceptional ability will, on occasion, be encouraged to assist their classmates in achieving proficiency in the activities they are undertaking.

All children will be encouraged to avail of appropriate opportunities to represent the school on various teams: football, hurling, camogie, athletics, dancing, etc.

6. Equality of Participation and Access

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

- All children from infants to sixth class will partake of all strands of the curriculum, with Aquatics beginning from First Class onwards.
- We will provide equal access for all children to PE equipment and facilities and the use of the playground during breaks will be incorporated as an integral part of the school's programme.
- The children use allocated playground spaces to be active within their peer groups at break times.
- Playground Leaders has been established to run for defined periods during the school year. This is part of the Active Flag programme and is operated on a basis whereby all children have an opportunity to participate, either in a leadership or player role.
- All class teachers undertake a variety of active movement breaks each week with their class group. A four week period in November is assigned annually to develop focus on movement breaks by recording the type of break over a four week period. The breaks encompass dance breaks, stretching breaks, breaks which focus on the development of the Fundamental Movement Skills as per the Move Well Move Often resources.
- When grouping children for physical education the school will endeavour not to group children solely on the basis of gender whenever possible.(occasionally this is necessary for Hurling/Camogie/Football training)
- As a staff we will help children to build positive dispositions towards all activities.
- We will take into account the needs of girls and boys when promoting the health-related fitness of children.
- We will enter both boys' and girls' teams in inter-school competitions (Hurling, Camogie and Boys' and Girls' Football, mixed soccer competition, attendance at trials for East Limerick teams is also organised through the school).
- Large sporting events such as the Olympics, World Cup, Rugby World Cup, Special Olympics etc will be used to look at the customs and sporting culture of some of the participating countries.

7. Linkage and Integration

(Reference: Curriculum p. 13, 18, 37, pp.45-47 Teacher Guidelines)

- Linkage can take place within physical education in that many activities transcend strands and are of benefit to the child irrespective of the strands or subjects being covered. Within the content of the curriculum, footnotes below the strand units suggest where linkage and integration might take place in the PE class.
- 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.

★ **Language:**

- The effective use of questioning from the teacher will develop the vocabulary associated with PE. Allowing the children to analyse their own performance will allow them understand and appreciate the activities of PE better and thus physically educate themselves in a more meaningful way – as opposed to something that just happens with time.

★ **ICT:** The effective use of ICT will create opportunities for pupils to discuss and talk about their own and others' performance in PE.

- Use of videos demonstrating age appropriate fundamental movement skills as per Physical Literacy Programme
- Gymnastics strand: use of tablet to photograph the children engaging with balance/rolls. This will enhance the possibility of the child achieving better quality movement in the future as they have a better image of what they need to do.

8. Organisational Planning and Timetable

The Games, Athletics and Outdoor and Adventure strands are carried out at a time when it is hoped the weather will be fine and will allow the PE lessons to be based outside. A number of whole school Games and/or Outdoor and Adventure Activities take place at various times through the school year at various local amenities – e.g.

Pallasgreen GAA Club field and Astroturf (with linkage with GDA from County Board and representative of Pallasgreen Juvenile Club), the school grounds, school tour sites, Pallasgreen Playground facility and surrounds.

Gymnastics takes place in the main lobby area of the school and can be coordinated among teachers for scheduling on the same day of the week in order to facilitate movement of equipment.

Dance (Sean Nós) is taught at the same time to the whole school, to facilitate visiting teacher and maximisation of use of time and facilities.

Basketball –in association with Basketball Ireland will be taught to 3rd to 6th class initially commencing Nov 2021

Swimming takes place in the 3rd term and classes from 1st-6th travel at appropriate times on the same scheduled swimming day.

Overleaf is an example of the grid used for all classes

September-October	November-December	January-March	April-June
Games	Gymnastics	Athletics	Aquatics
Athletics	Games	Games	Games
Dance	Dance		Athletics
GAA Coaching (2 nd – 6 th Class)	GAA Coaching (3 rd – 6 th Class)		Outdoor and Adventure activities
Outdoor and Adventure activities	Outdoor and Adventure activities	Outdoor and Adventure activities	Active School Week
Plan of work for PE.			

Note: due to the year-round nature of endeavours towards the Active Flag, the children will regularly use athletics throughout the year across a range of Active Flag Activities. Integration across other subjects allows for use of the Outdoor and Adventure strand when completing Maths trails and observing seasonal change from season to season as part of SESE. For more information on Active Flag and Health Promoting Schools activities, please see Appendix.

The school will facilitate an “Active School Week” annually whereby the discretionary curriculum time for the period in question is used to promote physical activity for all children in the school encompassing as many of the strands of the PE curriculum as possible. A School Sports Day is held in June each year. Children participate individually or in teams as appropriate. Every child is encouraged to participate to the best of his/her ability on Sports’ Day and to have fun while doing so. Special events will take place at Halloween, Christmas and Easter each year as part of the Active Flag Programme aiming to promote fun physical activities among the children eg. Halloween Sopoky Circuits, Santa Dash. Playground Leaders will take place at intervals over the course of the year.

9. Code of Ethics

(In accordance with the School’s Child Protection Policy).

- If coaches from a local or a national sporting organisation are invited into the school to work with the children as part of their PE class, they will be used to support the class teacher in the implementation of some of the PE curriculum strands in the school. They will not replace the class teacher and ultimate responsibility for the class lies with the class teacher. The class teacher will in turn support the coach on certain occasions when this will lead to maximum benefit for the children in the class.

- Any coaches working in the school context should undergo Garda Vetting and will be expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics of Irish Sport, produced by the Irish Sports Council. ‘Adults interacting with children in sport (referred to as Sports Leaders in this Code) are in a position of trust and influence. 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. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind or threat of such abuse is totally unacceptable within sport, as in society in general’⁷
- If there is a suspected case of child abuse in the class (even if it becomes apparent in the context of a PE class), all teachers will adhere to the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines to be used with the NEW ‘Children First Guidelines’ (2011) produced for all personnel working with children, in accordance with the School Child Protection Policy.

10. PE Equipment, Facilities and ICT (Reference: P. 104-105 Teacher Guidelines)

- (a) Our school has a detailed inventory of equipment and resources available for PE. This list is compiled by the Active School’s Co-ordinator (M. Blackwell) with the help of the Active Schools Flag committee and is checked and updated at the beginning of each school year.
- (b) It is stored in the store at the end of the corridor in the old part of the school. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to ensure that all equipment is returned to the room after each lesson. Any breakages should be reported to the Active School’s Co-ordinator as soon as possible. Each teacher will be given a copy of the equipment list (included at the end of this Plan) and will be informed of any changes to it throughout the year.
- (c) PE equipment in the school will be updated regularly as deemed necessary by the Staff and Principal and with the approval of the Board of Management.
- (d) Outdoor Facilities include a Basketball Court and general playground space which have been enhanced with playground markings including target practice, hopscotch, aspects of literacy and numeracy, adventure trail. In the absence of a designated indoor PE area the main lobby area is cleared out on appropriate days to facilitate the teaching of the Gymnastics and Dance Strands during the winter months.

ICT (Reference: P. 101 Teacher Guidelines)

- In order to ensure a PE rich environment, the school will have a dedicated Active School’s Notice Board where school and local events will be advertised. The use of the school’s tablets will be vital in recording PE activities. The display of these pictures on the notice board will give an opportunity to children to see themselves and others in action.

⁷ Page 9, Section 1.3, Code of ethics in Irish Sport, Irish Sports Council

- The use of the tablet as a diagnostic tool for teacher is extremely valuable as children can view their own performances while still involved in a PE lesson. They can make immediate changes to the quality of their movements which in turn will enable them assess themselves in a more meaningful way.
- All internet usage follows the strict guidelines laid down by the school in our Internet Usage Policy. This covers the use of appropriate software and the access to safe websites. Teachers will visit websites prior to children being referred to them and much of the websites will be visited by the teacher and shown to the children through a data projector.
- We currently use the following ICT aids to teach PE... Dancin' Time, Let's Dance, PDST Move Well Move Often Fundamental Movement Skills videos, expose the children to footage of national anthems, the Haka, world cup match footage, athletics championship footage (and other similar Dance websites/Youtube channels etc)

11. **Health and Safety** (in accordance with our School Health and Safety Policy)

- Issues identified as being health and safety issues in a PE context include warm-up at the start of all physical activity, practising in confined spaces, use of equipment, accidents, supervision, activities involving the whole school yard, procedures for dealing with accidents ...etc
- It is important to acknowledge from the beginning that while the following procedures will eliminate unnecessary hazards they cannot remove all risks due to the physical nature of the subject. When engaging children in PE all members of staff will ensure that the following safety aspects will be taken into consideration:

- All children must wear suitable footwear and clothing during a PE lesson. Children will not be permitted to wear any jewellery during a PE lesson. School PE Tracksuit will worn by all pupils on PE day.
- The equipment used will be suitable in size, weight and design to the age, strength and ability of the child and be of good quality and in good repair.
- Children will be taught how to lift and carry all PE equipment safely.
- In all PE lessons, children will warm up and cool down. This develops good practice and the children will return to class relaxed after activity.
- Should an accident occur in the PE lesson we will follow the procedures outlined for other accidents in our Health and Safety policy.
- Best practice is safe practice and the teacher should ensure that the children understand that the rules and procedures are there for their safety.
- We will endeavour to have an appropriate surface for the activities in the PE lesson
- Children will not be forced to do activities they are not physically or psychologically ready for.
- Children are not allowed to retrieve balls from the Car Park.

The First Aid Kit is kept in the office and is restocked regularly. A second portable kit is also available when children are participating in PE outside the school grounds. Staff are provided with First Aid talks/workshops

regularly in line with best practice. The medical conditions of all children are detailed by their parents/guardians on the school enrolment form.

Teachers, and other school personnel, involved with these children are made aware of these conditions by the Principal and also through direct contact with the parent through e mail. Every September parents are encouraged through the school's newsletter to provide new information regarding their child's medical condition if necessary. Teachers will not treat a child unless absolutely essential. Their parents/guardians will be contacted and if necessary, their family doctor as outlined on the aforementioned enrolment form. Detailed leaflets are made available to all staff on specific conditions such as asthma, diabetes and allergic reactions and appropriate up skilling is completed regularly as required.

12. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

The whole school plan and the curriculum documents for PE will lay out the structure and format that teachers will follow in addition to the aims and objectives of the primary school curriculum. While these documents are vital for planning, it is important that teachers do not rely on them exclusively as it is necessary to adapt the PE plan to your own class level and experience. It is vital that all teachers plan individually while at the same time ensuring that their class plans co-ordinate and feed into the overall school plan.

Teachers will plan based on the strands as outlined on the yearly timetable and can explore the use of themes in their planning especially in Gymnastics where themes such as balance and travel can provide a great stimulus for lessons.

The Cuntas Miosúil will be very relevant in reviewing and developing the school plan for the following years.

13. Staff Development

Sharing of resources and ideas among staff members is encouraged and welcomed.

The staff members attending extra courses will be encouraged to share their new ideas with the rest of the staff. Like all other areas of the curriculum updates to all staff on the different areas and initiatives that are taking place inside and outside school are given regularly, at staff meetings etc.

Teachers can also benefit from their interaction with the local sports coaches e.g. G.A.A. who provide coaching in the locality. Any coaches invited into the school will be there to support the teacher with a view to promoting good practice.

14. Parental Involvement

We will ask all parents to support their children to participate in all strands of the PE curriculum. We will ask parents with recognised areas of expertise in the area of PE and/or Sport to support us in our efforts where appropriate. We will encourage them to become involved in the various Active School initiatives which we organise. We have a healthy eating policy in Nicker NS and we depend heavily on the support and goodwill of parents to implement this policy effectively. We will encourage sporting awards and achievements, however the emphasis will be on participation and good sportsmanship, and not on "winning at all costs". Parents of children representing Nicker NS in the Cumann na mBunscol leagues will be asked to endorse the **Code of Conduct** of Nicker NS. As with any curricular plan, parents can request same at the office or view online at www.nickerns.com

15. Community Links

We are very much aware of the school's role in the community and we are also conscious of the fact that the expertise of people in the community is an invaluable resource to any school.

The local GAA club are very supportive of the work we do in the school to promote Gaelic Games. Coaches from the local Hurling and Camogie Clubs support training sessions at various times through the school year when available.

Pallasgreen GAA club are also very supportive in terms of granting access to the GAA field and AstroTurf when requested by the school.

Limerick Sports Partnership has also been very supportive both in terms of CPD for staff members, as well as in providing equipment for sports days and seasonal events.

Representatives from successful club and county teams are welcomed to the school to speak to the children and to show Cups etc. Successful individual Sports people are also welcomed to our school.

Implementation.

This plan was developed by and will be supported by all teachers.

Teachers' preparation will be based on this plan and the planning of individual teachers will feed into the overall school plan. Therefore, the school plan needs to be reviewed on a regular basis. Teachers will also be more acquainted with the content and methodologies outlined in the plan. There should be clear progression as children move from class to class.

Success criteria

- The importance of enjoyment and play
- Maximum participation by all children
- The development of skills and understanding
- A balance between competitive and non-competitive activities
- A balance between contact and non-contact activities
- Providing opportunities for achievement for each child
- Providing activities equally suitable for boys and girls.

■ Review

This plan was reviewed 2019/2020 and also in Nov 2021

a. Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal in consultation with the Active Schools Co-ordinator, Marianne Blackwell, will co-ordinate the progress of the plan, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report to staff on findings. The plan be monitored and evaluated every two years. We can reflect meaningfully on how well the PE programme is being taught and delivered in the school. It will be amended as necessary following evaluation.

The following will be consulted in appraising the PE plan

- ★ Teachers
- ★ Pupils
- ★ Parents
- ★ BOM

■ Ratification and Communication

The PE plan was ratified by the Board of Management of Nicker National School in May 2005 initially.

It was reviewed in June 2006 and June 2008.

This version of the Plan was completed following a Review during the 2019/2020 School Year, to reflect our School Improvement Plan in the area of PE and our engagement with the Active School Process. Our Active School Flag will be completed in June 2022.

We were awarded ‘The Health Promoting School Flag’ in Oct 2019.

The plan is available to view by the parents on the school’s website.

Ratified by the Board of Management of Nicker National School

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix

Active Flag Activities	Health Promoting Schools Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground Leaders programme • Daily Active Breaks (Climb the mountains of Europe, Run around Ireland, Walk and Talk, GoNoodle dance breaks) • Halloween Circuits • Christmas Santa Dash • Summer Sports Day • Active Walkway - established Oct. 2019 • FitKidz Walking challenge prior to May Bank Holiday Great Limerick Run • Children taking leadership roles with responsibility for equipment, stock-taking, writing and reviewing inventory at start and end of school year • PE Homework • Priority strand selection for development each year • Staff CPD in area of PE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil and parent/family surveys • Healthy Lunch policy throughout the school • Healthy Eating Action day – raising awareness of fruit, veg and healthy lunch options such as Smoothies, Flapjacks, Protein balls etc.

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active Every Day November Challenge• Active School Week• Visiting coach/teacher• Sports/fitness/health talks from invited guest speakers | |
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