## Senior cycle

**The experience of senior cycle**

3

## Senior cycle physical education

**Introduction**

8

**Aim and Objectives**

9

**Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

10

**Inclusion**

10

**Related learning**

11

## The framework

**Structure**

13

**Which physical activities**

14

**Key skills**

16

**Teaching and Learning in senior cycle physical education**

18

**Differentiation**

19

## Instructional models

**Health Related Physical Fitness**

19

**Sport Education**

20

**Contemporary Issues In Physical Activity**

22

**Adventure Education**

24

**Personal And Social Responsibility**

26

**Teaching Games For Understanding**

28

## Assessment

**Portfolio assessment**

30

32

33
SENIOR CYCLE
Introduction

Learners in senior cycle are approaching the end of their time in school and are focusing on the directions they would like to take in their future lives. Senior cycle plays a vital role in helping learners to address their current needs as young adults and in preparing them for life in a changing economic and social context.

Senior cycle is founded on a commitment to educational achievement of the highest standard for all learners, commensurate with their individual abilities. To support learners as they shape their own future there is an emphasis on the development of knowledge and deep understanding; on learners taking responsibility for their own learning; on the acquisition of key skills; and on the processes of learning. The broad curriculum, with some opportunities for specialisation, supports continuity from junior cycle and sets out to meet the needs of learners, some of whom have special educational needs, but who all share a wide range of learning interests, aptitudes and talents.

The range and scope of the curriculum components offered at senior cycle—subjects, short courses, transition units and curriculum frameworks—have been developed to allow for choice and flexibility, for a balance between knowledge and skills, and for the promotion of the kinds of learning strategies relevant to participation in and contribution to a changing world where the future is uncertain.

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and can be used for a variety of purposes. It can be used to determine the appropriate route for learners through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment can support and improve learning by helping learners and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

The experience of senior cycle

The vision of senior cycle education sees the learner at the centre of the educational experience. That experience will enable learners to be resourceful, to be confident, to participate actively in society, and to build an interest in and ability to learn throughout their future lives.

This vision of the learner is underpinned by the values on which senior cycle is based and it is realised through the principles that inform the curriculum as it is experienced by learners in schools. The curriculum, including subjects and courses, embedded key skills, clearly expressed learning outcomes, and diverse approaches to assessment is the vehicle through which the vision becomes a reality for the learner.

At a practical level, the provision of a high quality educational experience in senior cycle is supported by:

- effective curriculum planning, development and organisation
- teaching and learning approaches that motivate and interest learners, that enable them to progress, deepen and apply their learning, and that develop their capacity to reflect on their learning
- professional development for teachers and school management that enables them to lead curriculum development and change in their schools
- a school culture that respects learners, that encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning over time, and that promotes a love of learning.

Senior cycle education is situated in the context of a broader education policy that focuses on the contribution that education can make to the development of the learner as a person and as a citizen. It is an education policy that emphasises the promotion of social cohesion, the growth of society and the economy, and the principle of sustainability in all aspects of development.
Overview of senior cycle

VALUES
- human dignity and respect
- equality and inclusion
- justice and fairness
- freedom and democracy

resourceful
confident
engaged
active
LEARNERS

PRINCIPLES
- quality
- inclusive education
- continuity
- choice and flexibility
- participation, relevance and enjoyment
- well-being
- creativity and innovation
- lifelong learning

THE SENIOR CYCLE CURRICULUM
- learning outcomes
- key skills
- subjects
- short courses
- transition units
- assessment
- certification
- guidance

Planning

Teaching and learning

Teacher professional development

School culture
Vision

RESOURCES
they show their imagination, intelligence, intuition and other talents through
- curiosity
- enquiry
- open-mindedness
- reflection
- connecting learning
- innovation
- problem solving
- creativity

LEARNERS COMPLETING SENIOR CYCLE ARE

CONFIDENT
they develop their physical and mental well-being and become self-aware
- have high self-efficacy
- engage with ethics, values and beliefs
- welcome opportunities
- can cope with setbacks
- can effect positive change

ENGAGED
they participate in the social, community, national and international dimensions of their lives by
- showing respect for others
- forming and sustaining caring relationships
- making informed decisions
- building practical know-how
- taking interest in and responsibility for their social and physical environment
- developing moral/ethical and political understanding
- making lifestyle choices that are sustainable
- contributing to their own material well-being and the material well-being of society

ACTIVE LEARNERS
they pursue excellence in learning to the best of their ability and develop a love of learning by
- seeking and using knowledge, and understanding how knowledge is created
- experiencing passion for, rigour in and commitment to learning
- developing intellectual and critical thinking skills
- exercising autonomy and independence in learning
- managing their learning and making learning choices
- setting and achieving learning goals
- pursuing learning qualifications
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)
INCLUSION
RELATED LEARNING
The aim of physical education in senior cycle is to support learners’ confident, enjoyable and informed participation in physical activity now and in the future. Physical education in senior cycle builds on students’ learning experiences in early childhood, primary and junior cycle physical education.

Physical education may be studied in two ways as part of senior cycle education: Leaving Certificate physical education and senior cycle physical education framework. Leaving Certificate physical education is a full subject (180 hours) which is formally assessed as part of the Leaving Certificate. The senior cycle physical education framework is designed for those learners who do not choose to take physical education as part of their Leaving Certificate. The curriculum framework provides a flexible planning tool for schools wishing to improve the management and co-ordination of physical education for this second group of learners.

Young people in this group bring a wide variety of skills, talents and levels of motivation to their learning in physical education. They are represented at all points of the physical activity continuum. In this group of learners, up to 50 percent may not include regular physical activity as part of their lifestyle at present. Other learners may be regularly active and/or participate at a very high level of performance.

Students’ learning in physical education supports the overall vision of senior cycle education which is to develop students as resourceful, confident, engaged and active learners. Learners grow in confidence and competence as they acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy and succeed in a variety of physical activities while in senior cycle and in their future lives. Physical activity, in its many forms, provides the medium through which students learn in, through and about physical education. The use of different instructional models in conjunction with those physical activities selected by a class group and their teacher is at the heart of teaching and learning in senior cycle physical education. By using different instructional models, learners are encouraged not only to improve their performance in different physical activities but also to develop their understanding of the factors which impact on their personal performance and participation in physical activity.

Learners are encouraged to undertake different roles and responsibilities including leadership, coaching and officiating roles. They learn to plan, organise, participate in and reflect on their experiences in physical activity. Students learn about fair play, team work and how to relate to one another respectfully. As a result, they learn to be effective in the different competitive, creative and challenging situations that participation in physical activity continually offers them.

Learners can experience success in different ways in physical education. For some, the pursuit of excellence and the achievement of sporting goals will be the focus. For some, organising, leading and facilitating others to be physically active will be the measure of success. For others, including regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle will represent a successful outcome.

In this course, students learn about the importance of physical fitness as part of a healthy lifestyle. They are encouraged to take responsibility for planning and reflecting on their own participation in physical activities of their choice. Regular physical activity is universally accepted as being central to overall health and wellbeing. The recommended level of physical activity for young people is at least sixty minutes of moderate intensity activity each day of the week. Research suggests that by 15 years of age, almost nine out of ten girls and seven out of ten boys do not reach the recommended levels of daily physical activity. The school is a key setting and young people a key target in strategies to promote health-enhancing levels of physical activity for all. Physical education has an important contribution to make in supporting young people to discover ways in which they can enjoy and commit to regular physical activity.
Aim

The aim of senior cycle physical education is to encourage learners’ confident, enjoyable and informed participation in physical activity while in senior cycle and in their future lives.

Objectives

The objectives of senior cycle physical education are to enable learners to

- develop confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- participate in physical activity both inside and beyond school
- examine the value of physical activity in different contexts
- understand and commit to physical activity which develops health-related physical fitness
- undertake different roles in physical activity
- demonstrate responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, demonstrating respect for self and others
- act as ‘informed participants’ in physical activity.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT has become an integral part of the way in which learners experience physical activity and sport both as participants and spectators in their daily lives. It is important, therefore, that the effective and appropriate use of ICT is fully exploited in planning for teaching, learning and assessment in physical education.

ICT includes the range of hardware and software devices such as personal computers, assistive technology, scanners, digital cameras, multimedia programmes, image editing software, database and spreadsheet programmes. It also includes the communications equipment through which people seek and access information including the internet, email and video conferencing. Creative and imaginative use of ICT in physical education can add value to teaching, learning and assessment by drawing on the ways that learners themselves choose to use technology in their everyday lives.

Students learn to critically evaluate, manage and use information as they analyse their own and others’ performances. They can record their effort and participation and use results in their discussions, reflections and programme planning. ICT may also prove to be a significant motivational tool in students’ learning and performing in physical activity as students interact with the different types of feedback that can be obtained from using ICT creatively.

As students learn about physical education, they can be encouraged to critique the ways in which ICT is used in sport and physical activity including analysis of which activities are covered in the media, how they are covered and the impact of this coverage on the experiences of different groups in sport and physical activity.

Finally, ICT has an important role to play in the preparation and presentation of coursework for assessment purposes in physical education.

Inclusion

Senior cycle physical education is designed to encourage learners’ active participation in physical education irrespective of their level of ability and/or commitment to physical activity. Each learner should experience high quality physical education that is meaningful to their personal, social and cultural interests and needs.

In senior cycle physical education, specific physical activities are not the primary focus for planning for teaching and learning. Rather, they provide the medium through which students learn in physical education. Teachers are encouraged to negotiate which physical activities are included so that learners are more likely to want to participate in physical education class.

The use of different teaching approaches, effective differentiation of learning opportunities and the modification of equipment, including adapted and/or assistive, are central to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning environment in physical education.
**Early Childhood**

*Aistear* is the curriculum framework for children form birth to six years. *Aistear* celebrates early childhood as a time of well-being and enjoyment where children learn from experiences as they unfold. Under the theme of Well-being, physical well-being is recognised as an important pre-requisite for learning and development as it enables children to explore, investigate, and to challenge themselves in the environment. A growing awareness of their bodies and physical abilities is part of this. One of the aims of Well-being is that children will be as healthy and fit as they can be. This aim includes learning goals that children will gain increasing control and co-ordination of their bodies, be aware of their bodies, discover, explore and refine motor skills and make healthy choices and demonstrate positive attitudes to nutrition, hygiene, exercise and routine.

**Primary School**

Physical education in the Primary School Curriculum 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. The physical education curriculum provides a balanced range of activities for children and encourages schools to adopt a flexible approach to planning for physical education.

The curriculum includes six strands: athletics, dance, gymnastics, games, outdoor and adventure activities and aquatics.

**Junior Cycle**

Junior cycle 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. The emphasis is on 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.

The Junior Cycle physical education curriculum includes six areas of study: adventure, aquatics, athletics, dance, games, gymnastics and health related activity.

**Senior Cycle physical education and Leaving Certificate physical education**

Physical education may be studied in two ways as part of senior cycle education: senior cycle physical education framework and Leaving Certificate physical education.

The senior cycle physical education framework provides a flexible planning tool for schools to manage and co-ordinate physical education for learners who do not choose physical education as part of their Leaving Certificate. The framework is not for assessment in the Leaving Certificate. It has been designed however to support a variety of approaches to school based assessment.

There is a strong relationship between the framework and syllabus in physical education. Both aim to enhance students’ learning in, through and about physical education and to encourage learners to be physically active throughout senior cycle and in their future lives. While the framework includes some similar learning outcomes, there is considerably less specification. The course is shorter and less demanding while still offering choice and scope for creativity for teachers and schools.

In Leaving Certificate physical education, the emphasis is on a more in-depth engagement by learners in their own personal performance in physical activity and with the theoretical factors that impact of performance. Leaving Certificate physical education will be assessed as part of the Leaving Certificate examinations. There are two assessment components: a personal performance project and a written paper.

Learning in a number of subjects in senior cycle supports the learning in physical education and vice versa. For example, in English, students learn to become more media literate. Learners can use these media literacy skills as they critique how the media portrays sport and physical activity. In biology students learn about aerobic and anaerobic respiration. In physical education, learners can experience both physically as they participate in different types of physical activities, for example, sprinting and middle distance running. In social, personal and health education, there are opportunities for teachers to co-ordinate how different groups of learners might explore how to include physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.
Some learners in senior cycle participate and compete in different physical activities and sport within and beyond the school. Their learning about different playing and non-playing roles in physical education can contribute to their undertaking a more informed role in these settings.

**Further Study**

Students' learning in physical education provides students with knowledge, skills and understanding that support lifelong informed participation and/or the pursuit of excellence in their own sporting and physical activity pursuits. The emphasis on the development of the key skills in senior cycle physical education will support learners' effective engagement in a variety of further education opportunities where self-direction, leadership, organisational skills, and reflection are important.

**Community and Society**

Senior cycle physical education has the potential to make a significant contribution to enhancing learners' commitment to lifelong physical activity participation. Learners are encouraged to explore physical activity opportunities within and beyond the school. As they do so, they can become informed participants in physical activity as they reflect on the community and societal factors that support or hinder lifelong participation in physical activity. Learners are encouraged to act as advocates for physical activity both by their personal example and in their contribution to the various discourses in relation to sport and physical activity.
THE FRAMEWORK

STRUCTURE
WHICH PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES?
KEY SKILLS
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SENIOR CYCLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION
DIFFERENTIATION
Physical Education

Structure

The curriculum framework for senior cycle physical education is structured around six instructional models. Each model provides a detailed map for decision making about teaching and learning. This includes a rationale, planning, implementation and assessment functions, all of which can be used in the design of a unit of work in physical education.

| Health Related Physical Fitness | — developing learners’ understanding of health related physical fitness now and in the future. |
| Sport Education | — providing learners with an enjoyable and authentic experience of organised physical activity as they learn to perform playing and non-playing roles. |
| Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity | — encouraging learners to critically reflect on their own and others’ experience in physical activity and sport. |
| Adventure Education | — encouraging learners to challenge themselves and co-operate with others as they learn to solve physical activity challenges. |
| Personal and Social Responsibility | — encouraging learners to take responsibility for themselves and their learning in physical education class including respecting the rights and feelings of others. |
| Teaching Games for Understanding | — develops learners’ tactical awareness and decision making skills in a variety of games |

Each model can be used as a ‘stand alone’ or combined with other models. In some instances, a teacher may choose to use a combination of two models in order to ensure that learners are physically active whilst also being involved in learning about physical activity. What is important is that learners have sufficient time and experience of each of the models to fully benefit from the different teaching and learning experiences provided by each one.

Senior cycle physical education is planned in units of work. Teachers choose the instructional models or combinations of models which will be the focus of each unit of work. It is recommended that not less than three and not more than five units of work should be included in each year. Planning for each unit of work can be framed in relation to the following questions:

- Which objectives of senior cycle physical education are to be addressed in this unit of work?
- Which instructional model(s) can best support the achievement of these objectives?
- Which of the physical activities, that learners are interested in doing, will work well with this instructional model?
- Which learning outcomes in this model(s) will be addressed in this unit of work?
- What evidence of learning will learners be expected to provide during and at the completion of the unit of work?
- What element(s) of the senior cycle physical education portfolio will be generated in this unit of work?

The importance of planning within the unique context of each school is recognised here. School settings, facilities, personnel, expertise, the characteristics of the particular class and students’ interests are all significant considerations in the selection and sequencing of appropriate learning outcomes and approaches to assessment.

Transition Year physical education can be planned exclusively using the senior cycle physical education framework. Alternatively, there are a number of transition units designed for physical education, for example, Sport Coaching, which may be used in conjunction with the framework. Teachers are also encouraged to design their own transition units using the guidelines at www.ncca.ie/transitionunits.

The following is an example of what a two/three year plan for senior cycle physical education might include:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unit of work</th>
<th>Unit of work</th>
<th>Unit of work</th>
<th>Unit of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sport Education</td>
<td>Health Related Physical Fitness</td>
<td>Physical education transition unit</td>
<td>Personal and Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teaching Games for Understanding and Personal and Social Responsibility</td>
<td>Sport Education and Contemporary Issues in Physical activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adventure Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Health Related Physical Fitness</td>
<td>Sport Education and Personal and Social Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity and Adventure Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which physical activities?

The choice of physical activity is important for learners’ successful and enjoyable experience in physical education. The main criteria for the selection of an activity are that learners are interested in the activity, the school can facilitate it, the learning outcomes can be addressed through the activity and it is possible to assess students’ learning.

For example, tag rugby could be used in conjunction with five of the six instructional models. Students could learn about health related fitness, personal and social responsibility, physical activity and society, teaching games for understanding and Sport Education through the medium of tag rugby.

Young people want to be active in meaningful ways, including participating in physical activities other than competitive and sports-based ones. The selection of physical activities should therefore, be decided in consultation with learners to ensure that they are based on what is perceived by learners to be important and worthwhile. Selected activities are then given adequate physical education class time for learners to develop confidence and competence in some and mastery in a few. The underlying belief is that learners’ in-depth learning in one activity will be transferable to other activities. It is envisaged that a range of physical activities will be included in order to ensure that the needs and interests of all learners are catered for.

Time allocation

Senior cycle physical education is designed to be taught over the two or three years of senior cycle education. It is recommended that a double period per week is made available as the minimum requirement for teaching senior cycle physical education. Timetable arrangements should reflect the fact that learning opportunities associated with physical education may occur in practical settings beyond the school.
There are five key skills identified as being central to teaching and learning in senior cycle education. These are information processing, being personally effective, communicating, critical and creative thinking and working with others. Physical education provides a unique opportunity for students to develop the key skills generally but more specifically, in the psychomotor domain.

Learning outcomes in senior cycle physical education are clear, detailed statements of what it is expected that students will achieve in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes. Each of the key skills is embedded in the learning outcomes in senior cycle physical education. For example, skills relating to being personally effective, communicating, and working with others are clearly articulated in the learning outcomes in Personal and social responsibility. Critical and creative thinking skills are central to the learning outcomes where students respond to compositional tasks in dance or gymnastics as well as the challenges presented in Adventure Education, Teaching Games for Understanding and Sport Education. The use of a range of teaching and learning methodologies makes it possible not only to meet the different learning needs of students but it also allows the key skills to be developed. For example:

- Communication skills and information processing skills can be developed by involving students in accessing and processing information in a variety of ways. Information gathered can provide the basis for students to generate a well-informed opinion. Learners can then use this information in group or partner-based problem-
solving tasks.

- The ability to develop and maintain good relationships is central to the key skill of working with others.
  Working effectively with others is important in achieving individual and common goals in senior cycle physical education. Such opportunities arise frequently in physical activity participation and/or competition.
- Being personally effective includes the ability to reflect on their own performance and/or engagement in different physical activity options. The ability to reflect can lead students to have a clearer understanding about what it means to be personally effective in this and other contexts and how to plan for improvement.

The well-planned use of learning outcomes will enable teachers to assess students’ progress in the key skills. As teachers observe learners engaging in the different learning experiences, they can use these opportunities to provide clear and supportive feedback to learners about their use of key skills. For example, learners may be engaged in evaluating their own performances in dance in relation to a set of agreed criteria. While students learn to identify their strengths and plan to improve their performances, they can also receive feedback about the key skill of personal effectiveness.

### Teaching and learning in senior cycle physical education

The unique contribution of physical education to learning in the psychomotor domain is the central consideration in planning for teaching and learning. The emphasis is at all times on learners being physically active and involved in their learning, thereby helping them to develop their psychomotor skills and their knowledge and understanding of physical activity in general.

Senior cycle physical education draws on a wide range of activities, each placing its own particular demands on learners. For example, learners’ experiences in adventure activities are different from those in individual activities such as athletics or swimming. Learners engage in different learning experiences including information processing, discussion, debate and reflection about the different factors that enhance or detract from their positive experience of physical activity. They are facilitated in making links between theory and practice through the use of activities such as quizzes, case studies, ranking exercises and role plays. They are encouraged to experience non-playing roles beyond that of player/participant. They learn to use different kinds of media as they analyse their own and others’ participation in physical activity.

### Differentiation

The flexible nature of the senior cycle physical education framework facilitates learners in achieving goals that are worthwhile for them. The use of a variety of teaching and learning approaches ensures that students’ different learning styles and needs are catered for. Assessment approaches should, in turn, facilitate learners responding to similar tasks in different ways.
INSTRUCTIONAL MODES

HEALTH RELATED PHYSICAL FITNESS
SPORT EDUCATION
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
ADVENTURE EDUCATION
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
TEACHING GAMES FOR UNDERSTANDING
Health Related Physical Fitness

Health Related Physical Fitness (HRPF) aims to develop learners’ understanding of health related physical fitness now and in the future. HRPF builds on learners’ knowledge, skills and understanding of this area from junior cycle physical education. In HRPF, students participate in physical activities designed to develop health related physical fitness, an understanding of the related concepts and an appreciation of the importance of physical activity now and in the future.

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in HRPF are to enable learners to
• understand and commit to physical activity which develops health-related physical fitness
• participate in physical activity both inside and beyond the school
• critique the value of regular physical activity
• act as ‘informed participants’ in physical activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students learn about</th>
<th>Students should be able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Health related and performance related physical fitness | • participate in activities designed to enhance one or more health related fitness components  
• evaluate their own health related physical fitness  
• compare the components of health related-related and performance-related physical fitness  
• monitor their participation in different health related activities using the FITT principles¹  
• demonstrate ways in which they can develop health-related physical fitness in their daily routines |
| Physical activity participation | • discuss the benefits of regular physical activity for health related physical fitness  
• identify different supports which help people to start and remain physically active  
• suggest how possible barriers to regular participation in physical activity might be overcome  
• identify physical activity opportunities within and beyond the school |
| Designing a physical activity programme | • complete a webquest designed to plan health related physical activity programmes for individuals engaged in sport at recreational or competitive level  
• participate in a personally designed physical activity programme which aims to improve health related/ performance related physical fitness  
• reflect on participation in health related/performance related physical activity  
• plan a physical activity programme designed to enhance health related physical fitness for an individual with an activity profile different than their own |

¹FITT refers to the overload principle necessary to improve fitness levels. The overload principle is achieved through consideration of frequency – how often to exercise, intensity – how hard, time – for how long and type- what type of exercise will improve the particular fitness component.
| Organising a physical activity event | • organise a health related physical fitness event for their class/year  
| | • participate in and reflect on a health related physical fitness event |
| The evaluation of physical activity facilities | • evaluate a health club/gym or physical activity facility in their area from a number of perspectives including that of a participant |
| Appropriate clothing and equipment for physical activity | • design a poster outlining the criteria for appropriate clothing and equipment for health related physical fitness activities |
| Uses and abuses of supplements/drugs in physical activity | • document the uses and abuses of supplements/drugs in the fitness industry  
| | • design a charter for safe participation in health related physical fitness activities. |
Sport Education

Sport Education aims to contribute to the development of learners as competent, literate and enthusiastic players and participants in a range of physical activities. This is achieved by providing young people with an authentic experience of organised physical activity where they learn to perform playing and non-playing roles such as participant/player, referee, coach, choreographer, statistician. By focusing teaching and learning on a more complete experience of the activity, each learner is more likely to develop a broad set of skills and to have a more satisfying experience of the activity.

In Sport Education, sport is understood as being all forms of physical activity, which through casual or organised participation; aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels. (The European Sports Charter (Revised): Council of Europe 2001)

The main features of Sport Education are:

**Seasons**—learners experience the activity in a season in which they practice the skills, techniques and/or compositional elements of the selected activity and participate in formal competition or performance

**Affiliation**—learners are affiliated to teams/troupes/squads/groups working toward a common goal

**Formal competition**—each season includes opportunities for participation in formal competition or performance

**Keeping records**—learners engage in record keeping about different aspects of their participation and performance

**Culminating event**—at the end of each season, an event, to mark the end of the season and recognise excellence and effort, is organised

**Festivity**—Sport Education aims to include the festivity, colour and excitement associated with the chosen activity (team colours, chants, flags, costumes and pictures)

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Sport Education are to enable learners to

- develop confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- undertake different roles in physical activity
- participate in physical activity both inside and beyond the school
- demonstrate responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, demonstrating respect for self and others
- act as ‘informed participants’ in physical activity.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Sport Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students learn about</th>
<th>Students should be able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>• undertake different playing and non-playing roles in the selected physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an effective team member</td>
<td>• participate as an effective member of a team toward a common goal, e.g. culminating event, display, performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• respect the group ‘Fair Play’ contract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Effective personal performance | • demonstrate the skills, techniques and strategies of the activity to the best of their ability  
• observe the rituals and conventions of the activity  
• adhere to the safety requirements of the activity  
• develop the fitness requirements for the selected physical activity  
• incorporate a variety of techniques, choreographic principles and approaches to group work in their dance/gymnastic performance  
• demonstrate an understanding of aesthetic and artistic considerations in the design of the performance  
• work creatively with props in dance and small and large apparatus in gymnastics  
• organise a culminating event for the selected physical activity  
• reflect in their own experience of organising and participating in a culminating event from an individual and/or group perspective |
|---|---|
| Culminating physical activity event | • organise a culminating event for the selected physical activity  
• reflect in their own experience of organising and participating in a culminating event from an individual and/or group perspective |
| Physical activity opportunities beyond the physical activity class | • document related physical activity opportunities beyond the physical education class with a view to active participation in at least one |
| Common sport injuries and their rehabilitation, First Aid procedures | • prepare a group presentation detailing common injuries in the chosen activity including First Aid procedures and rehabilitation.
Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity

Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity aims to develop learners as informed and critical participants in physical activity and sport. Students learn not only to critically reflect on their personal experiences in physical activity and sport but also on the broader local, national and international influences on participation and provision. Learners are encouraged to consider physical activity and sport from personal, social and cultural perspectives.

There are two elements at play when adopting this instructional model. In the first element, students reflect on contemporary issues in physical activity and sport using a variety of active learning methodologies.

The second element is a practical one where learners participate in physical activity. The learners, in consultation with the teacher, select a physical activity. Learners participate in this activity and pursue the learning outcomes of contemporary issues in physical activity, as appropriate. For example, learners might organise an inclusive badminton event in their school/local community.

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity are to enable learners to

- examine the value of physical activity in different contexts
- demonstrate responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity,
- demonstrating respect for self and others
- act as ‘informed participants’ in physical activity
- develop confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- participate in physical activity both inside and beyond the school

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students learn about</th>
<th>Students should be able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different experiences of physical activity</td>
<td>• review two or more physical activity biographies of individuals including their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• examine the role of family, friends, school and community in enhancing or inhibiting participation in physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• highlight, using ICT, opportunities for physical activity for students in their school, with their families and in their communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• document, using ICT, provision for physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity opportunities in and beyond school</td>
<td>• critique the opportunities for participation in physical activity within and beyond the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• plan to participate in a physical activity other than physical education class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• encourage others to participate in a physical activity of their choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Highlight the opportunities for mass participation physical activity events in their locality, e.g. mini marathon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers and supports in sport and physical activity</td>
<td>• investigate the supports and barriers, both actual and perceived, to different groups’ participation in physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• examine the concept of body image and its impact on physical activity participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify occasions and/or practices where sport and physical activity are used to either support or oppress different groups of males and females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Sports Partnerships</td>
<td>• explain the role of the Local Sports Partnership including how it supports young peoples’ ongoing participation in physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• plan to establish links between the Local Sports Partnership and the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Governing Bodies of Sport and groups promoting physical activity</td>
<td>• prepare a presentation outlining the work of a National Governing Body of Sport and/or other groups whose aim it is to promote physical activity participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Evaluation of physical activity facilities | • critique facilities for physical activity in and beyond school from a number of perspectives, e.g. safety, attractiveness, gender, age, special needs  
• advocate for the improvement of physical activity facilities/opportunities in their local community with the relevant bodies |
| Inclusive physical activity opportunities | • organise a physical activity event in their school/local community that is designed to be inclusive  
• design a promotional campaign to highlight opportunities for physical activity in their community which have been designed to be inclusive. |
| The influence of the media in physical activity and sport | • critically analyse the role of the media in relation to physical activity participation for both males and females and/or minority groups. |
Adventure Education

Adventure Education aims to encourage learners to challenge themselves as they learn to cooperate with others, take appropriate risks, develop trust in themselves and in others and solve physical activity challenges with others’ help and guidance. Building on students’ learning about adventure activities in junior cycle physical education, Adventure Education includes a wide range of activities, including co-operative activities, trust activities and problem solving initiatives. Each of the activities is based on one or more of the following concepts: challenge, cooperation, risk, trust and problem solving.

Reflection is a central part of each activity where students not only reflect on the adventure activity experience but also consider how they might apply what they have learned in the future. The emphasis is on students learning about themselves and each other whilst engaging in the adventure activity rather than on the outcome of the activity.

The following three practices are central to Adventure Education:

**Experiential learning**—learners participate in the adventure activity, reflect on the experience, generalise their learning and apply it to new situations.

**Shared commitment**—Briathar is the word used to describe how learners agree to be bound by a set of negotiated rules designed to encourage respectful and responsible personal and group behaviour.

**Challenge with choice**—learners choose how they participate in different adventure activities designed to challenge their physical, mental and emotional comfort levels.

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Adventure Education are to enable learners to

- demonstrate responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, demonstrating respect for self and others
- develop confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- undertake different roles in physical activity
- act as ‘informed participants’ in physical activity
- participate in physical activity both inside and beyond the school.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Adventure Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students learn about</th>
<th>Students should be able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging individual and group adventure activities</td>
<td>• participate in individual and group adventure activities which challenge them physically, mentally and emotionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation in adventure tasks</td>
<td>• contribute to problem solving in group adventure activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on learning experiences</td>
<td>• reflect on the different adventure challenges including consideration of how their learning might to applied in future challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting goals</td>
<td>• set realistic personal goals for challenge which include opportunities for co-operation, risk-taking, building trust and/or problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating adventure activity challenges</td>
<td>• develop their own adventure activity task(s) including organising them for another individual or group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in adventure activities</td>
<td>• plan to include the necessary safety precautions in adventure activity challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrate basic emergency first-aid for outdoor adventure settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental features</td>
<td>• identify different environmental features in selected adventure activities including landscape features, tide and weather variations</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking an adventure activity expedition</td>
<td>• undertake a short expedition combining independent planning, navigation and adventure pursuit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Roles and responsibilities in Adventure Education | • take responsibility for one or more roles in an adventure activity challenge  
• recognise individual and team behaviours which contribute to or undermine team moral and effectiveness |
| Benefits of adventure activity | • discuss the benefits of adventure activities for health and well-being |
Personal and Social Responsibility aims to teach life skills through the medium of physical education. Developing personal and social responsibility is a central part of the education process and this model recognises the unique contribution that physical education can make in this area.

In physical education class, young people experience the challenges encountered in victory and defeat, success and failure, interpersonal conflict and intra-personal challenges. However, learners’ personal and social development is not necessarily an automatic outcome of these experiences. In Personal and Social Responsibility, the specific goals of respect, effort, self-direction, helping others, leadership and applying learning beyond the physical education class are made explicit. These goals are pursued in an incremental fashion, starting with respect and effort.

Regardless of the physical activity being taught, the physical education teacher using this model, has, as their primary focus, the gradual empowerment of learners to take appropriate levels of personal and social responsibility. Students learn to take increasing levels of personal responsibility for themselves and their learning including respecting the rights and feelings of others.

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in Personal and Social Responsibility are to enable learners to

- demonstrate responsible social and personal behaviour in physical activity, demonstrating respect for self and others
- develop confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- undertake different roles in physical activity
- act as ‘informed participants’ in physical activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students learn about</th>
<th>Students should be able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making and keeping agreements</td>
<td>• negotiate agreed goals for physical education class&lt;br&gt;• express their opinions and suggestions clearly and respectfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort and participation</td>
<td>• plan individual and group goals for effort and participation in the selected physical activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>• take responsibility for their behaviour, commitment and progress in physical education class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-direction</td>
<td>• set realistic and challenging goals for achievement in physical activity&lt;br&gt;• participate in self-paced challenges&lt;br&gt;• design warm-ups, practices and small sided games/performances&lt;br&gt;• reflect on their progress including planning next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting the rights and feelings of others</td>
<td>• discuss what is meant by respect, both to be shown respect and to show respect&lt;br&gt;• officiate in or lead a physical activity including making decisions respectfully that affect others&lt;br&gt;• help others as they learn a new skill or activity&lt;br&gt;• participate in peer teaching activities including giving other students feedback&lt;br&gt;• participate in physical activity in an inclusive way, being mindful of the needs and feelings of others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Leadership          | • reflect on the qualities of effective leadership  
|                    | • undertake various leadership roles in relation to the organisation of and participation in physical activity  
|                    | • demonstrate an ability to act responsibility when unsupervised  |
| Applying what has been learnt to the wider context | • apply their learning about taking personal and social responsibility beyond physical education class  
|                    | • plan to participate in physical activity outside of physical education class. |
Teaching Games for Understanding

Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) is a problem based approach to the teaching of games. The main aim of this instructional model is to develop learners’ tactical awareness and decision making skills in a variety of games.

In TGfU, games are classified into four main categories:

- Invasion games such as gaelic football, soccer and hockey
- Net/wall games, e.g. badminton, squash
- Striking/fielding games, e.g. rounders, cricket
- Target games, e.g. golf, bowling

The principles of play involved in a game are directly comparable to other games within that same category. For example, the general principles of attack and defence appropriate to gaelic football also apply in soccer and basketball. They include tactical skills such as creating space, moving forward, defending space and winning possession.

In TGfU, learners may participate in different generic games designed to develop learners’ understanding of the common tactics for games within that same category. Or they may develop tactical awareness in relation to one specific game and be encouraged to apply what they have learned to other games in the same category.

The teacher’s task is to create the situation where learners see the value of developing the skills and techniques of the game being played because they see their importance in being able to participate effectively in the game. Skill acquisition is seen in the context of the game and its usefulness in achieving a successful outcome.

Games making is an important element of teaching and learning in TGfU. Learners have an opportunity to work with their peers in the design and refinement of a new game based on their knowledge and understanding of the tactics and principles of play that are effective in game/games category being played in class.

The objectives of senior cycle physical education addressed in TGfU are to enable learners to

- develop confidence, competence and creativity in a range of physical activities
- undertake different roles in physical activity
- participate in physical activity both inside and beyond the school.

The following table sets out the content and the learning outcomes for Teaching Games for Understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students learn about</th>
<th>Students should be able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invasion games</strong></td>
<td>• work effectively as a team including communicating effectively with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics and principles of play</td>
<td>• keep possession and score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for player with the ball and</td>
<td>• invade the other team’s territory showing an understanding of the importance of width,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without the ball when team has</td>
<td>depth, penetration and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possession</td>
<td>• regain possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics and principles of play</td>
<td>• prevent the other team from getting close to the scoring target and/or scoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for individual players and the</td>
<td>• use a range of skills proficiently and appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>team in defensive play</td>
<td>• show an ability to read the game by using appropriate attacking/defending strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in different scenarios, e.g. when being defeated by a small margin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• show leadership qualities on the team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Striking and fielding games** | • make decisions about how best to strike the ball in response to how the fielders are organised and their own team’s outfield positions  
Tactics and principles of play for striking team  
Tactics and principles of play for fielding team  
• strike the ball using a range of striking skills  
• defend the fielding space effectively as a team  
• adjust the positioning of the fielding team in response to the abilities of individual batters  
• throw and catch the ball effectively and consistently  
• demonstrate an understanding of the importance of team work while striking and fielding |
| **Divided court games** | • set up an attacking play either themselves or as a supporting player demonstrating an understanding of attacking principles  
Tactics and principles of attacking play  
Tactics and principles of play defensive play  
• defend space on their own court when under attack  
• use a range of skills proficiently and appropriately  
• work as an effective player/ team member in attacking and defensive positions  
• show an ability to read the game by using appropriate attacking/defending strategies in different scenarios, e.g. when being defeated by a small margin  
• show leadership qualities on the team |
| **Games making** | • work with peers to create a new game which demonstrates an understanding of the main tactics and principles of play in the games category being studied  
• develop and refine the game through a series of practices  
• teach the new game to their peers including refining it as necessary. |
ASSESSMENT

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT
Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in senior cycle physical education. Assessment provides learners with feedback on their learning. It provides teachers with information about what students are learning, how they are learning and how teaching and learning can be planned and improved. It provides parents with information on their child’s progress in physical education.

The framework has been designed to support a variety of assessment approaches. Students’ learning can be assessed as they engage in different activities such as performing, competing, organising physical activity events, preparing presentations, designing advocacy campaigns for physical activity, self and peer assessment, reflection and undertaking roles other than performer. Learners can receive constructive feedback from their peers, their teacher and/or through the use of ICT during or following assessment events. Feedback can support students’ learning and encourage them to engage more fully in physical education. Learners are also developing the skills necessary for lifelong self-directed participation in physical activity as they plan to improve their participation and performance.

Portfolio assessment

Learners compile a portfolio of evidence about their learning in physical education over the two/three years of senior cycle education. At the outset, learners receive an outline of the required artefacts which highlight important learning milestones in students’ learning in physical education. Learners are encouraged to use different media including photographs, video and/or audio recordings in the compilation of the portfolio. The use of ICT allows learners to work independently on their portfolios and to develop the kinds of skills that will support them in becoming self-directed learners.

Possible artefacts include

- records of participation in physical education class
- summary statements of students’ learning in each unit of work. These statements should refer to the specific learning outcomes addressed.
- personal physical activity biography
- physical activity biography different than their own
- planning and review of personally designed health related physical fitness activity programme
- a review of physical activity provision for different groups in and beyond the school
- overview of game(s) created in Teaching Games for Understanding unit of work
- record of engagement in physical activity other than in physical education class
- investigation of opportunities for physical activity after completing their second level education, e.g. in college, in community or in the work place
- reflection on their overall experience of senior cycle physical education.

The criteria for a successful portfolio are clearly outlined at the outset. A rubric detailing how each element of the portfolio will be assessed is provided for the learner. Learners’ participation in senior cycle physical education, including the completion of the portfolio, should be formally recognised by the school in a manner which is meaningful to students. Ways in which outside awarding bodies might certify students’ learning in some or all of senior cycle physical education could also be explored.