



Physical Education



An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí  
**JuniorCYCLE**  
for teachers

# Supporting student goalsetting for, and reflection on, physical activity during this challenging time



*Junior Cycle for Teachers  
Physical Education Team*

An tSraith Shóisearach do Mhúinteoirí

**JuniorCYCLE**  
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January 2021



## Introduction

This *support booklet* is designed to aid teacher of Physical Education in supporting relevant learning during this challenging time of school closures of the national response to the Covid-19 pandemic (January 2021). It builds on learning from the previous school closures and looks at facilitating student voice and ownership through their goalsetting for, and reflection on, physical activity at this time.

## Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to the seven teachers who have shared their practice over the course of the webinar and via this *support booklet*. They are representing a subgroup of teachers who gathered in a focus group to share ideas ahead of this presentation to a wider audience. These schools are listed below.

- St. Kevin's Community College, Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow – Méabh Corr
- Creagh College, Gorey, Co. Wexford - Anna Nolan
- College of the Immaculate Conception, Summerhill College Sligo – Gary Goldrick, Brian Tivnan and Patrick Touhy
- Causeway Comprehensive School, Co. Kerry – Anna Murphy
- Tullow Community School, Co Carlow – Brian O'Reilly
- Skibbreen Community School, Co Cork – Niamh Lordan
- Cork Educate Together Secondary School, Cork City – Daniel Clifford and Julia White
- Coláiste an Chraoibhín, Fermoy, Co. Cork – Gerard Gibbons
- Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig, Cork – Doireann Ni Mhuimhneacháin
- Ballymahon Vocational School, Co Longford – Ben McCormack
- Ballinamore Community School, Co. Leitrim – Denise Stenson
- Ardgillan Community College – Mary Nealon and Eoin Farrell
- Coláiste na Toirbhirte, Bandon – Sinéad Walsh

Sincere thanks to the committed team of JCT Physical Education associate presenters, the DES Inspectorate and the Physical Education Association of Ireland, for their contribution to this support.

## Update: Future Curricular Developments in Physical Education at Junior Cycle

[Circular Letter 76/2020](#) signals a further welcome development for Physical Education at Junior Cycle, in that the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has been requested to prepare a 135-hour programme for Physical Education.

The work will be carried out by the NCCA over the remainder of this academic year, and consultation will be a key feature of the process. The NCCA would greatly appreciate your feedback as a practicing teacher of Physical Education on a number of occasions during the process. The background paper and detail of the consultation process can be found [here...](#)



### Update: Reporting on Physical Education on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (2021)

Detail of how Physical Education may be reported as part of the Wellbeing area of learning on a student's eventual Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) was provided within the [Circular Letter 76/2020](#) which outlines the 'Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school year 2020/21 whereby:

*Reporting on students' learning in Wellbeing aims to provide a picture of what students have learned about wellbeing and the skills they have developed to support their wellbeing. It is expected that schools will report on student learning about wellbeing as part of ongoing assessment and reporting throughout Junior Cycle.*

*Wellbeing will now be reported on through the JCPA for the first time in 2021.*

*Wellbeing will show in a separate area of the JCPA. It is in this area that schools will report on student achievement in CSPE, SPHE and PE. This will be facilitated by the use of the descriptors which have already been developed and reflect the appropriate language of learning.\**

- Exceptional,
- Above Expectations,
- In Line with Expectations, or
- Yet to Meet Expectations

*The Wellbeing area of the JCPA will also include a free text space where schools can report on achievement in Wellbeing in other areas as set out in section 2.7. Further information on this may be found in the JCPA Handbook.*

*\*Footnote: Where students are not following the short course, the descriptor awarded by the teacher should reflect the student's learning and achievement during the course of study.*

JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT		Mary Murphy 2020	
<b>State Certified Final Examinations</b>			
Irish L2 (PE)	Achieved	Language Portfolio	In line with Expectations
Mathematics (PE)	B	Communication Task	Above Expectations
English (PE)	Achieved	Oral Communication	In line with Expectations
Business Studies (IC)	Distinction	The Dictionary of the Irish Language	Above Expectations
French (IC)	Higher Merit	Business Studies	Above Expectations
Geography (PE)	A	Presentation	In line with Expectations
History (PE)	C	Oral Communication	Above Expectations
Science (IC)	Higher Merit	Student Language Portfolio	Above Expectations
Visual Art (IC)	Higher Merit	Extended Experiences Investigation	In line with Expectations
		Science in Society Investigation	Above Expectations
		Peer Review in Evaluation	In line with Expectations
		Communication and Reflection	Exemplary
<b>Other Areas of Learning</b>			
<p>They took part in a school drama performance, learned to express himself and build his communication skills.</p> <p>They participated in the school Science Competition (2nd place) when they developed their own project. In doing so, they learned to bring an idea from conception to realization.</p> <p>They brought forward an Oral Presentation learned to communicate effectively on a topic for the students in his class.</p> <p>They worked collaboratively with others, in the organization and promotion of the school social event for the local community.</p> <p>They were a member of the school college team, where they contributed to training and developed his confidence in physical activity.</p>		<b>Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses</b> Digital Media Literacy: Above Expectations Creativity: In line with Expectations <b>Wellbeing</b> Skill: Not Reported Skill: Not Reported Skill: Above Expectations <b>Other Areas of Wellbeing</b> In SPHE, they reflected on and learned about the changing patterns of teenage friendship and how best to manage relationships. They completed a project in CSPE where they learned about the social and economic impact of homelessness. As part of the school's Wellbeing Programme, they participated in lessons where they learned about the influence of social media, peer pressure and strategies to stay safe online.	
Principal	Year Head	Roll Number: 004780	
Colman Candy	Ann Howett	Anytown Secondary School Anytown Co. Any County	
This JCPA recognizes and records achievements in Junior Cycle.			

### Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) to support effective reporting.

The holding of the SLAR meeting is an important part of the assessment process. These meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally set Features of Quality. Further detail of the SLAR process. Professional Time, which is time allocated to teachers each week to engage in a range of professional collaborative activities, will facilitate teachers attendance at Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. The NCCA developed [Guide to the Subject Learning and Assessment Review \(SLAR\) process](#) and associated resources are available [here...](#)



### Update: Reporting on the JCPA in the context of the range of curricular options

[Circular Letter 76/2020](#), which outlines the 'Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school year 2020/21, states that:

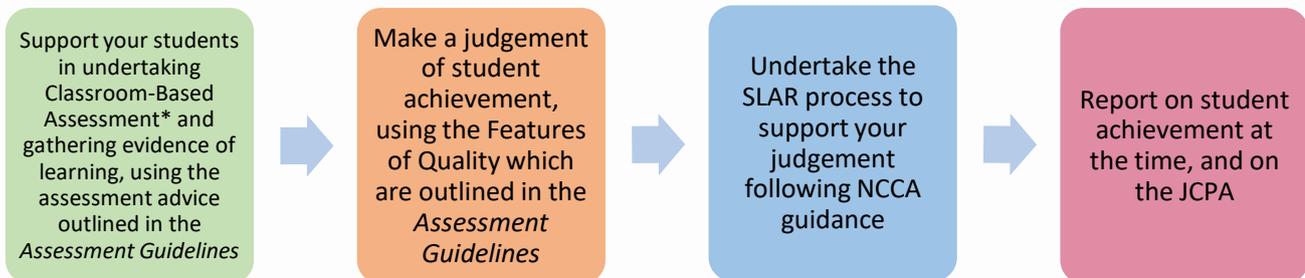
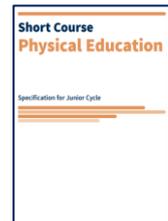
*Wellbeing will now be reported on through the JCPA for the first time in 2021. Wellbeing will show in a separate area of the JCPA. It is in this area that schools will report on student achievement in CSPE, SPHE and PE. This will be facilitated by the use of the descriptors which have already been developed and reflect the appropriate language of learning.*

- *Exceptional,*
- *Above Expectations,*
- *In Line with Expectations, or*
- *Yet to Meet Expectations*

The NCCA-developed **short course specification for Physical Education** is available [here...](#)

The associated **Assessment Guidelines for Physical Education** are available [here...](#)

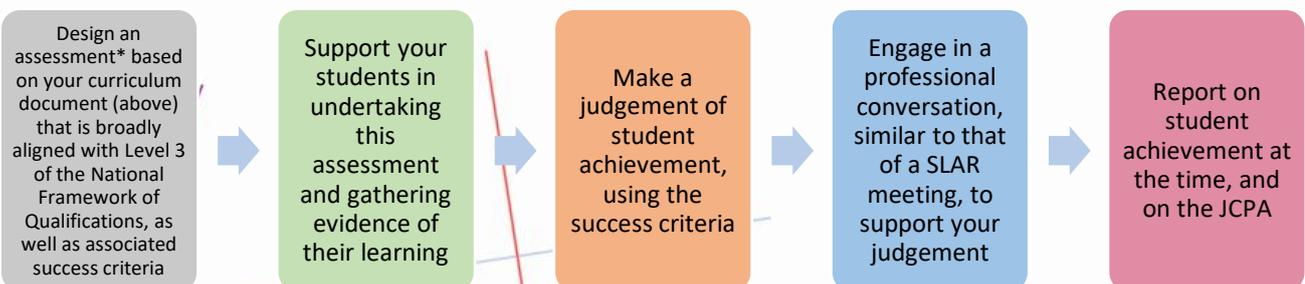
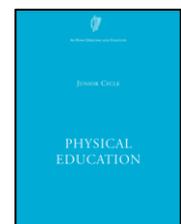
The NCCA developed **Guide to the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process** and associated resources are available [here...](#)



*\*Assessments may be modified to meet the needs of learners following a Level 1 or Level 2 Learning Programme*

The **Junior Cycle Physical Education Syllabus** is available [here...](#)

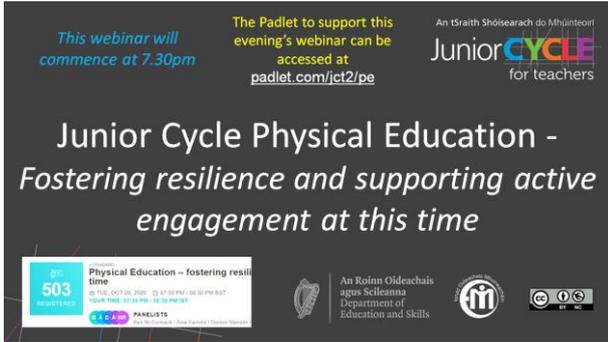
The DES-issued **Circular 76/2020** which outlines the 'Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school year 2020/21' is available [here...](#)



*\*In the context of supporting the needs of learners following a Level 1 or Level 2 Learning Programmes, assessments designed should be broadly aligned with Level 1 or Level of the NFQ*



### JCT Physical Education Webinar Series

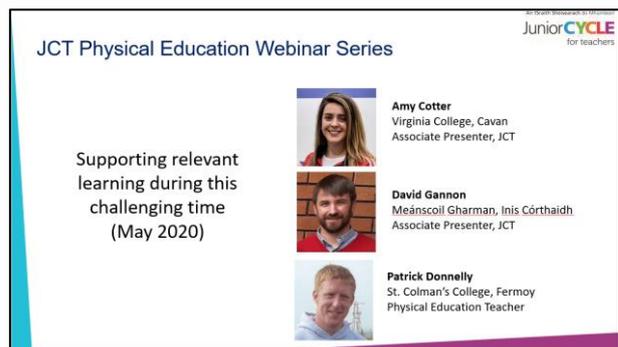
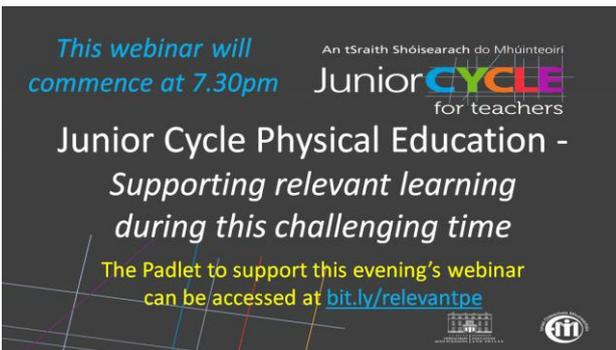


This webinar, entitled **Fostering resilience and supporting active engagement** was hosted in October 2020, as school re-opened following the emergency closure of schools nationally since March 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. A recording of the webinar is available to view [here...](#)

- The contribution from Áine Farrelly, St. Bricin's College, Belturbet, Co. Cavan begins [here...](#)
- The contribution from Ben McCormack, Ballymahon Vocational School, Longford begins [here...](#)
- The contribution from Denise Stenson, Ballinamore Community School, Co. Leitrim begins [here...](#)

The *Padlet* to support this webinar can be accessed [here...](#), while the *CPD Booklet* to support this webinar can be accessed (in Column 1) [here...](#)

Further detail regarding the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model, as mentioned in the contribution from Denise Stenson (above) can be found via an introductory video from the NCCA which outlines TPSR as a model to support Senior Cycle Physical Education. It is available [here...](#) (under *Additional Materials*).



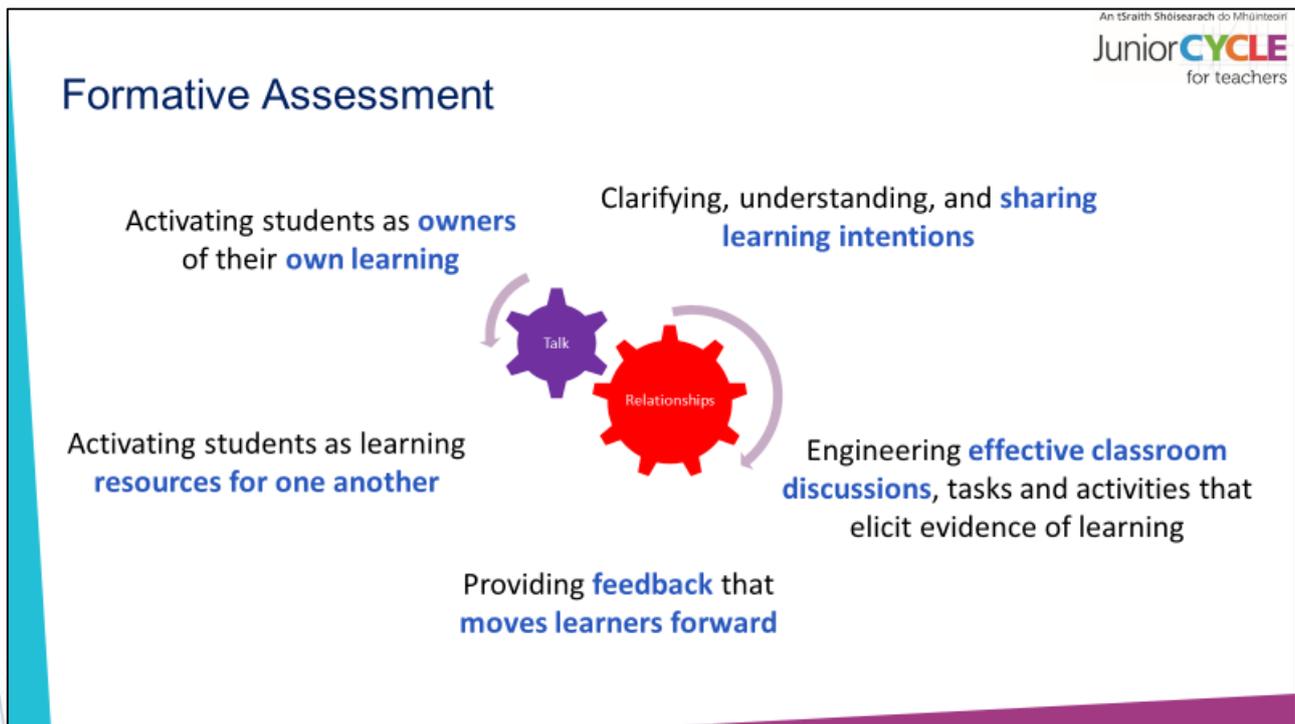
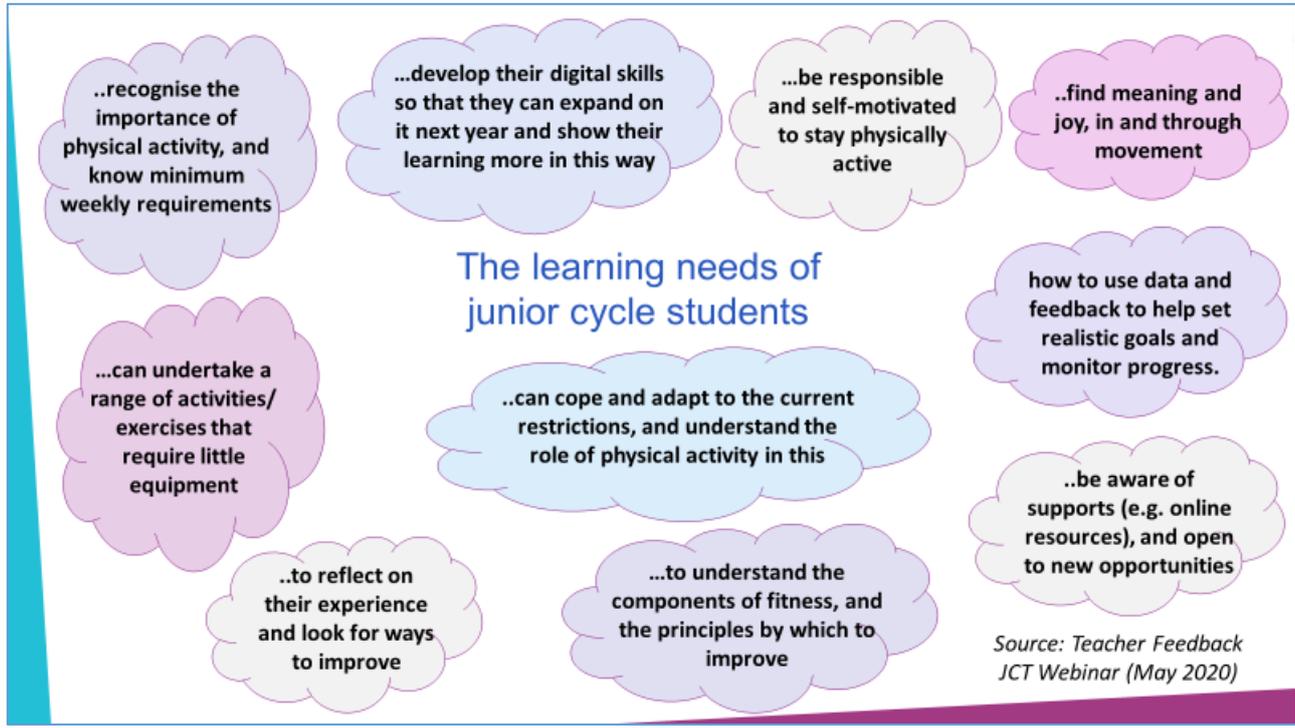
The recording of the webinar entitled **Supporting relevant learning during this challenging time** from May 2020 is available to view [here...](#)

- The contribution from Amy Cotter, Virginia College, Cavan begins [here...](#)
- The contribution from David Gannon, Meánscoil Gharman, Inis Córthaidh begins [here...](#)
- The contribution from Patrick Donnelly, St. Colman's College, Fermoy begins [here...](#)

The *Padlet* to support this webinar can be accessed [here...](#), while the *CPD Booklet* to support this webinar can be accessed (in Column 1) [here...](#)



Some of the needs of junior cycle students of Physical Education during the March - June 2020 school closures were identified by teachers during the May webinar (above), and are listed below.



The NCCA-developed **Focus on Learning toolkit** is designed to help support teachers develop ongoing assessment practices that support student learning. They are available [here...](#)



The reflective questions (below) have been adapted from the Physical Education–specific considerations, available on p.5 of the NCCA-developed [‘Considerations in planning for Junior Cycle Wellbeing 2020-21’](#) (Aug 2020). These may help in allowing student to reflect, but especially to allow the sharing of ideas between students at this time.

### My learning from last year’s school closures (March – June 2020)



- How easy/difficult was it to stay active during the last restrictions?
- What activities did you trying out?
- Did you do any activity while at home during school closures that you kept doing when restriction began to lift (last July onwards)?
- Would you like to create a short audio or video recording to demonstrate these activities for your classmates?
- In what way is the January restriction different from the restrictions last March regarding staying physically active? Has is better (advantages)? What are the barriers, and how might you overcome them?



- For those of you who normally play team sports, but could not from March to June, how did you manage? What about now?
- What helps you feel part of an active community?
- What did you discover about your local community last year (places to walk/exercise within 5km from your home)? In what ways can you use them now?
- Are there activities that you take part in with your family, or with those in your bubble? Describe which you enjoy most and why?
- Are there activities that you take part in with your sports club while you are unable to train? Describe which you enjoy most and why?
- Are there activities that you take part in with your friends although you are unable to meet (e.g. walk and talk, undertake exercise to an online resource together, although apart)? Describe which you enjoy most and why?



- What coping strategies did you discover during the challenging time last March to June? What role did physical activity play in this?
- What/who helped at the time? Are these supports available now
- What skills or coping strategies would you like to develop during these restrictions to help you become more active?



The goalsetting and reflective questions (below) allow for students to be purposeful in their physical activity during the current restrictions. They can also allow for the sharing of ideas between students at this time if students are allowed space to speak to their classmates on virtual PE classes (breakout rooms, etc.) it can also allow for the development of active peer groups as many students may have similar goals at this time.

Sample Approach 1: Goalsetting and reflection on my health and physical activity

**February Goal Setting**

What are the three activities I wish to engage in and what do I hope to learn from these? The elements of the eight key skills, as well as the wellbeing indicators on the next page may assist you in setting goals.


Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Mid-February Check-in**

What has been my best achievement to date on the above? Why?

--	--

What area have I to work further on? How?

--	--

Do I wish to refine a goal based on my learning? Which one and how?

--	--

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Late-February Reflection**

What are the three aspects of learning from participation in the above activities that I am most proud of? What were my key achievements? What am I most surprised with about my experience/performance?

Statement 1
Statement 2
Statement 3

Which of the above three statements are you most proud of? Why is this?

--

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_



The goalsetting and reflective questions (below) allow for students to be purposeful in their physical activity during the current restrictions. They can also allow for the sharing of ideas between students at this time if students are allowed space to speak to their classmates on virtual PE classes (breakout rooms, etc.) it can also allow for the development of active peer groups as many students may have similar goals at this time.

Sample Approach 2: Goalsetting and reflection on my health and physical activity

**February Goalsetting**

The strand I chose is...

My learning goal is to...

The steps I will take to achieve this goal are...

Our current strengths...

- 
- 
- 

Our focus of development...

- 

Date:

I will use the success criteria to assess if I have reached this goal. My success criteria (as agreed by my teacher, my classmates and I) are:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mid-February Check in**

How far am I on my journey to reaching my chosen goal?

What has been my greatest success to date?

What has been my greatest challenge to date? How might I overcome this?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Late-February Reflection**

I have assessed my learning based on the success criteria. The following is the paragraph/video/audio which I will send to my teacher so they can use it to report on my learning....





Students can find reflection challenging. The elements of the eight key skills, as well as the wellbeing indicators can support students in doing so. Teachers can also support student reflection through the ideas and approaches within the NCCA-developed [Focus on Learning](#) toolkits, especially the booklet entitled [Students reflecting on their learning](#)



### INDICATORS OF WELLBEING



#### ACTIVE

- Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
- How physically active am I?



#### RESPONSIBLE

- Do I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others?
- Do I make healthy eating choices?
- Do I know where my safety is at risk



#### CONNECTED

- Do I feel connected to my school, my friends, my community and the wider world?
- Do I appreciate that my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts?



#### RESILIENT

- Do I believe that I have the coping skills to deal with life's challenges?
- Do I know where I can go for help?
- Do I believe that with effort I can achieve?



#### RESPECTED

- Do I feel that I am listened to and valued?
- Do I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers?
- Do I show care and respect for others?



#### AWARE

- Am I aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and can I make sense of them?
- Am I aware of what my personal values are and do I think through my decisions?
- Do I understand what helps me to learn and how I can improve?



The below reflective questions and statements have been adapted from p.9 and p.26 of the [Assessment Guidelines for Physical Education](#), which contains assessment and reporting guidance relating to the NCCA-developed [short course specification for Physical Education](#)

### Reflecting on my personal physical activity programme

These questions could be helpful at the start of a programme

- What component of your fitness would you like to develop?
- Explain why you chose this particular component of fitness?
- What are the benefits of developing this component of fitness?
- What activities, that you find enjoyable, could you engage in to develop this component of fitness?  
...or, for entry level participants...
- Explain why you chose to increase your level of physical activity?
- What are the benefits of increasing your level of physical activity?
- What enjoyable activities could you engage in to do so?

These questions could be helpful at the midway point of a programme

- What has been the most successful part of your programme to date? Why is this?
- What challenges have you encountered over the last while?
- What strategies could help you overcome these challenges in the remainder of your programme?

These questions could be helpful at the end of a programme

- What went well and why?
- How would you describe your level of fitness before and after your programme?
- What did not go well and why?
- How did you deal with setbacks?
- What have learned from taking part in your physical activity programme?
- What did you enjoy most about your programme? Explain why you chose this?
- What would you change about your programme if you were to start again? Why did you chose this?
- What are the next steps you could now take, having completed the programme?

The following statements could be considered to support students in their reflections:

- The most important thing I learned from completing this assessment was .....
- The most interesting part was.....
- What I found difficult was.....
- My performance could have been better if.....
- I enjoyed \*\*\* most because.....
- I learned the following skills while completing this assessment .....
- I would be interested in learning more about .....
- I would be interested in learning to.....
- One thing that I had to work hard at overcoming was.....
- At the end of this challenge/programme/assessment, I am more likely to be physically active/less likely to be physical active because .....
- At the end of this assessment, I am more likely/less likely to try new activities because.....



The below task comes from p.9-10 of the [Assessment Guidelines for Physical Education](#), which contains assessment and reporting guidance relating to the NCCA-developed [short course specification for Physical Education](#). The assessment guidelines contain

- different assessments specifically designed to capture evidence of students' learning in each of the four strands, including [Strand 1: Physical Activity for Health and Wellbeing](#)
- Features of Quality (assessment criteria) by which to make a judgement of student work for each assessment
- advice regarding undertaking the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings to support our judgement of student work.

Parts of the below marked **in blue** provide an example of how the school has the autonomy to adjust how they conduct CBAs and/or utilise the support of digital technologies which may be necessary this academic year.

### Strand 1: Physical activity for health and wellbeing, students design a personal physical activity programme

There are three aspects to this Personal Physical Activity Programme: 1) Health-related or performance-related physical activity profile, 2) Personal physical activity programme, and 3) Reflection

The learning outcomes in Strand 1 (see p.11 [here...](#)) aim to ensure that students are motivated and able to plan to include physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. In this strand, students learn about different ways to test fitness, to improve it, to incorporate physical activity into everyday lives and to reflect on what helps and/or hinders them being physically active.

This assessment requires students to plan for, implement and evaluate their personal physical activity programme over a 6-week period.

- During the first two weeks students will undertake a series of appropriate fitness tests in order to generate a physical fitness profile. **Given the current restrictions, this may include daily step count, duration of time per day/week engaged in moderate or vigorous physical activity.**
- In the third week, students will reflect on their results and set goals to improve their fitness levels.
- Over the remaining three weeks, as students implement their programme, they can be encouraged to reflect on the following: if and how they include regular physical activity in their lifestyles, the kinds of physical activities that they enjoy and are likely to engage in as part of their personal programme, what supports they can use to ensure their success in implementing the programme and how to address possible barriers to participation that they encounter.
- **Students may be asked during and after online classes to provide feedback to the work of their peers.**

On completing this strand, students should reflect on the successes and challenges encountered in implementing their personal physical activity programme. Questions such as the following could be used to support student reflection:

- What went well and why?
- How would you describe your level of fitness before and after your programme?
- What did not go well and why?
- How did you deal with setbacks?
- What might you do differently the next time?

This assessment can be completed at different stages of this strand when students are learning about a particular aspect of planning a personal physical activity programme. Students can be encouraged to include a range of multi-media including photographs, drawings, video to illustrate their programme.

Assessment criteria, entitled Features of quality are available on the next page to support teacher judgement of student work.



The below assessment criteria comes from p.9-10 of the [Assessment Guidelines for Physical Education](#), which contains assessment and reporting guidance relating to the NCCA-developed [short course specification for Physical Education](#)

Parts of the below marked **in blue** provide an example of how the school has the autonomy to adjust how they conduct CBAs and/or utilise the support of digital technologies which may be necessary this academic year.

Features of Quality to support teacher judgement regarding the Personal Physical Activity Programme:

The following assessment criteria, entitled features of quality, can support teacher judgement of student work relating to the task set out on the previous page

<b>Features of Quality: Personal Physical Activity Programme</b>
<p><b>Exceptional</b></p> <p>The programme includes a full and rich profile of the student’s physical fitness addressing the student’s personal goals in a realistic way.</p> <p>Well-considered and creative strategies address the challenges in programme participation.</p> <p><b>The student provided excellent feedback to the programme of a peer.</b></p> <p>The student’s reflection is of excellent quality.</p>
<p><b>Above expectations</b></p> <p>The programme includes a very good profile of the student’s physical fitness addressing the student’s personal goals in a realistic way.</p> <p>Good, thoughtful strategies address the challenges in programme participation.</p> <p><b>The student provided very good feedback to the programme of a peer.</b></p> <p>The student’s reflection is of very good quality.</p>
<p><b>In line with expectations</b></p> <p>The programme includes a reasonable profile of the student’s physical fitness addressing the student’s personal goals in a realistic way.</p> <p>A range of strategies address the challenges in programme participation.</p> <p><b>The student provided reasonable feedback to the programme of a peer.</b></p> <p>The student’s reflection is of reasonable quality.</p>
<p><b>Yet to meet expectations</b></p> <p>The programme includes an inadequate profile of the student’s physical fitness addressing the student’s personal goals in a realistic way.</p> <p>The programme includes a few strategies to address the challenges in programme participation.</p> <p><b>The student provided limited feedback to the programme of a peer.</b></p> <p>The student’s reflection is limited.</p>



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**Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) Support Service**

A Department of Education & Skills Schools' Support Service

Administrative Office:  
Monaghan Ed. Centre  
Armagh Road  
Monaghan Tel.: 047 74000

Director's Office:  
LMETB  
Chapel Street, Dundalk  
Tel.: 042 9364603

<http://www.jct.ie/>

The JCT website provides detail of CPD opportunities to support school and teachers specific to the new Framework. It will include information, relevant resources and materials details of upcoming events

<https://www.ncca.ie/en>

The NCCA is a statutory Council and its brief is to advise the Minister for Education and Skills on curriculum and assessment for early childhood education and for primary and post-primary schools.

<http://www.curriculumonline.ie/>

At this NCCA-hosted website, you can view the curriculum, examples of student work, and a variety of assessment support options

<http://www.pdst.ie/Physical-Education-Main>

The PDST Health and Wellbeing team aim to provide high quality professional development and support that empowers teachers and schools to provide the best possible education for all pupils/students

<http://ncse.ie/> <http://www.sess.ie/>

The role of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) is to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in relation to special educational provision

<http://activeschoolflag.ie/>

The Active School Flag (ASF) is awarded to schools that strive to achieve a physically educated and physically active school community. The process aims to get more schools, more active, more often.

<http://www.peai.org/>

The Physical Education Association of Ireland is the professional association for physical education professionals in Ireland

<http://www.pepaysireland.com/>

PEPAYS Ireland will be recognised as a research centre that influences policy and practice at a national and international level in advancing the health and well-being of populations in the areas of physical education, sport, physical activity and health.

<http://www.pexpoireland.com/>

Physical Education Expo encourages secondary school students to enter a theory-based project to demonstrate learning in PE.