Advice for schools – safety and hygiene measures in Physical Education

The following advice provides practical information for schools on the return to physical education in the school environment. This advice is designed for subjects which involve movement and physical activity, such as PDHPE K-10, Physical Activity and Sports Studies, Stage 6 PDHPE and Stage 6 Sport, Lifestyle and Recreation.

## Purpose of this advice

This advice is to support secondary education teachers with incorporating safety and hygiene measures into physical education lessons whilst providing opportunities for students to value movement. Physical education lessons are particularly important for students’ physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing. They can provide physical activity, social connection and serotonin release that supports mental wellbeing.

This advice complements the department’s [COVID-safe school operations advice](https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/covid-19/advice-for-school-based-staff/covid-safe-school-operations) and [School Sport and Physical Activity Policy](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/page/1114).

## Safety and hygiene

### Level 3 schools

Schools moving from stay-at-home rules will return to face-to-face learning and teaching under these settings. All staff and students are expected to be at school with visitors and activities limited. Access more [information for Level 3 schools](https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/covid-19/advice-for-school-based-staff/level-3-schools?deliveryName=DM18004) on the department’s website.

The following hygiene measures apply to all physical activity, movement and sport activities as part of the PDHPE KLA in NSW public schools at level 3.

* Consideration is to be given, where practical, to:
  1. physical distancing and limiting interactions between groups at entry and exit points for physical education, such as gymnasiums, ovals or change rooms
  2. transitioning between classes to reduce contact between student cohorts.
* Masks or face coverings are currently required in:
  + all indoor and outdoor settings for all staff unless exercising or eating
  + all indoor and outdoor settings for students in Year 7 and above unless exercising or eating.

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| Activities which are permitted in-line with COVID-Safe practices within classes in outdoor spaces | Activities which are not permitted |
| Dance  Non-contact outdoor games and sports  Resistance based activities of moderate intensity (outdoors) | Mixing of classes  Contact games and sports  Gymnastics (or similar activities)  High intensity training or resistance training indoors |

### Level 3 plus schools

For schools operating at COVID-Safe Operational Level 3 plus the following hygiene measures apply to all physical activity, movement and sport activities as part of the PDHPE KLA in NSW public schools at level 3 plus.

* Mixing of student cohorts is not permitted and must be managed effectively through:
  1. physical distancing and avoiding interactions between groups at entry and exit points for physical education, such as gymnasiums, ovals or change rooms
  2. transitioning between classes to minimise potential contact between student cohorts.
* Masks or face coverings are currently required in:
  + all indoor and outdoor settings for all staff unless exercising or eating
  + all indoor and outdoor settings for students in Year 7 and above unless exercising or eating.

## Modifying physical activities to meet COVID-safe practices

Planning for safe, accessible, and enjoyable physical activity across the school day during COVID-19 is possible with a little planning and creativity.

Encourage students to bring additional clean masks so they can change their mask if soiled, wet, or humid.

As much distancing as possible should always be promoted, particularly in Level 3 plus schools.

* Plan activities that focus on individual practice and promote the development of movement, interpersonal and self-management skills and personal fitness.
* Team based games and activities such as modified sports or sports (basketball, soccer, and volleyball) could be modified to promote physical distancing. Examples of modifications include but are not limited to:
  + focus on individual practice and structure around student growth
  + use no contact partnered activities to encourage connection, interaction and high levels of participation
  + reduce the number of players per team and increase the play space where possible to increase participation and involvement
  + focus on the three skill domains of the syllabus to encourage decision making, problem solving, communication and leadership
  + involve your students in activity and game design to allow them to apply the skills of the domains other than movement skills
  + modify the rules of the game or activity to increase distancing and promote involvement, for example:
    - add a distance for defence to promote a focus on offensive play
  + enforce a rule for interceptions only (rather than getting in close to a player) to gain possession of the ball.

## Specific physical education lesson ideas

Some examples of sample lessons or how activities can be modified have been provided below.

### Allow for student design and creativity

* [**Design a modified physical activity**](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/stages-4-5/learning-from-home/design-a-modified-physical-activity-pdhpe-s4-rl.docx) (Stage 4) – Individually or in groups, students design a modified physical activity outdoors to promote safe participation in practical situations being mindful to limit ‘huff and puff’ activities to moderate exercise and avoiding activities involving students yelling.
* [**Designing physical activity options**](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/stages-4-5/learning-from-home/design-physical-activity-pdhpe-s5-rl.docx) (Stage 5) – Students will consider their own needs and the needs of young people and design a circuit with minimal equipment to be completed in their own home or out.
* **COVID-safe creative dance –** Create a greeting using students’ feet. Students practise their greeting by providing and receiving feedback and refining the movement. Record the greeting using a mobile phone or iPad. PD4-4, PD4-11, PD5-4, PD5-11.
* **Mirror movement composition –** Create a sequence of eight counts. Students take turns to teach their partner and mirror the other person as they perform. Build the composition to create a routine of 32 counts. PD4-11, PD5-11

### Use zones, spacing and independent or small group-based tasks and stations

#### Partner circuit

Use a court and set up stations that require no equipment around the outside. These should be spread apart. In pairs, one student starts on a station, while the other student runs from one end of the court to the other and back. Students then swap places. Continue for two minutes, rest for one minute, before moving to the next station. One group per station if possible. Alternatively, students can spend one minute per activity, swap with their partner, then rest for one minute before moving onto the next station. Outcome PD4-8

#### COVID-19 circuit

Students are in groups of 3. For each rotation of 5-10 minutes the students in each group are performing a different movement. Groups swap when the student on the running station has completed the task. Students may rotate between the three activities more than once in the time allocation. Follow with a drink break before starting the next rotation. Use a timer application such as “Interval Timer-HIIT. Outcome PD4-8.

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| Rotations | Activity one | Activity two | Activity three |
| One | Shuttle runs - out and back to each cone at 5m, 10m and 15m. Stop to perform five squat jumps at each cone. | 10 push-ups  10 dips | 10 squat pulses  10 jump lunges |
| Two | As above, swap the jumps for push-ups. | 10 crunches  10 leg raises | 10 gorilla sprints  10 high knees |
| Three | As above, swap the push-ups for star jumps. | 10 sit-ups  10 reverse crunches | 10 standing lunges  10 back raises/ cobras |

* Ball must always hit wall above or on the line to be a fair throw.
* The other player can catch rebound off wall without one bounce.
* If the ball is thrown below the line or the ball bounces twice before catch, opponent gets the point.

#### Zone ball

Setup three zones per field. Each team allocates a zone for each player. Teams can decide how many players they wish to have in each zone, in line with COVID-safe practices and physical distancing guidelines. Provide time for teams to discuss tactics and change their formations throughout. Use a ball that students can kick. Progression 1 - 5 passes equals a point, progression 2 - all players must kick the ball and maintain possession to score a point, progression 3 – add goals. Outcomes PD4-5, PD5-5

#### Net or wall task cards and stations

Use small groupings and space (if possible) to assign students to skill and task-based activities. Outcomes PD4-5, PD5-5

##### Hand tennis

* 1 vs 1 in square area.
* One student strikes/underarm throws ball up to start point.
* Students strike ball up with palm/bat so it lands in a space inside playing square, before their opponent hits it.
* Rally continues until a student misses the ball or one hits it out of the square.
* Increase to 2 v 2 if space allows and physical distancing can be maintained.

##### Roll tennis

* Play on a badminton size court with a line on floor dividing halves.
* 1-2 students per half with one ball.
* One player begins by serving ball (underarm roll) to their opponent/s in between the “net posts”.
* Other team must pick up ball before their base line and roll the ball back.
* Rally continues until one student/team misses the ball (rolls over base line) or ball is rolled outside the “net posts”.

##### Circle ball

* Students in circle with one in middle (4-5 students per group).
* Outside player passes ball in the air to inside player, who catches and then throws to another outside player. Order of outside players can vary, but cannot pass to same player
* Aim is to keep ball up for 1 minute/until teacher calls ‘stop’.
* Rotate players to be in the middle.

##### Square bounce using a hoop

* Play on a badminton size court with a square/hoop on the centre line dividing the two halves.
* 1-2 students per half.
* Students use a volleyball or low bounce ball to underarm throw ball so it bounces into the centre square/hoop and to the opposition.
* They can then catch the ball, take one step with it and pass it back.
* Rally continues until there are two bounces, a drop catch, or the ball doesn’t bounce in the square/circle or land in the court.

##### Four square

* Four students play on a square, with the playing area divided into four even spaces. One ball per group.
* One player serves the ball by throwing underarm into another student’s square. The ball must bounce before the student who is in that square can catch it, and then underarm throw to another student.
* Play continues until a student misses the ball/catch, or the ball lands in their square.
* Player rotation if a point is lost.

##### Wall ball

* Use a wall for the playing space with a horizontal line on it (higher is easier).
* Students work in pairs/singles with one ball.
* One player serves (underarm throw at wall over line).

Access resources through the [PDHPE statewide staffroom](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/teaching-at-home/teaching-and-learning-resources/teacher-support/statewide-staffrooms), the [Department’s PDHPE website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/stages-4-and-5/resources) and [Learning from home hub](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/teaching-at-home/teaching-and-learning-resources/planning-and-programming/7-10-support/pdhpe).

## Hygiene measures for all schools

The following hygiene measures apply to all sport and physical activities in schools regardless of the level, including once full participation physical education returns.

* **Practise good hygiene** 
  + Staff and students are required to wash their hands prior to and at the conclusion of movement and physical activities.
  + Encourage hand hygiene practices at regular intervals as required.
  + Display NSW Health posters in the change rooms and toilets to promote handwashing, and general hygiene
  + Maintain respiratory hygiene whilst participating in movement and physical activity, encouraging coughs or sneezes to be covered and tissues to be disposed of immediately. Staff and students should wash their hands after having coughed, sneezed or blown their nose.
  + Discourage spitting or clearing of nasal or respiratory secretions in classroom environments, including ovals and other physical activity settings.
  + No shining of a cricket ball with sweat/saliva.

All schools should now have a hygiene supply pack delivered to their school site. Email [schoolsupplies@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:schoolsupplies@det.nsw.edu.au) if you’re still waiting for your pack.

Schools that require additional hygiene products will need to order through [EdBuyExternal link](https://edbuy.unimarket.com.au/app/community/marketplace/dashboard?1) by searching ‘Department of Education’ in the supplier box. Certain hygiene products remain free such as gloves and face masks.

Mask supplies are a back-up for schools. Staff and students should bring their own mask where possible.

* **Do not participate if unwell.** Students are expected to stay away from school or be collected by a parent/carer should they become unwell during the day. Students should not be participating in any physical activity if they are unwell.
* **Do not share drink bottles or towels.** Students should provide their own personal items such as water bottles, towels, socks, mouthguards or clothing as required for physical education lessons or other physical activities.
* **Equipment use and cleaning protocols.** Sharing of physical activity equipment (except fitness equipment and weights) is permitted. Wipe down shared spaces and equipment regularly. All sport and physical activity equipment (including shared equipment and clothing such as bibs and braids) must be cleaned at the end of each lesson. Equipment that cannot be cleaned after each use cannot be not shared.
* **Environment cleaning.** Standard daily cleans as well as the cleaning of high touch areas should occur within classroom environments and physical activity facilities, such as change rooms, halls, performance spaces. Allocate classes to different areas of the school for PE lessons to reduce the number of students in one area.
* **Apply standard precautions for infection control**. Staff should continue to adhere to the Infection Control requirements outlined in the [Requirements for All Sport and Physical Activity](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/File/1449) and [First Aid procedures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/inside-the-department/health-and-safety/emergency-planning-and-incident-response/first-aid/PROC003_FIRSTAIDPROCEDURES.pdf). Protocols for spills of blood and other bodily substances must be followed where any clothing, equipment and surfaces are contaminated by bodily fluid such as blood following a player injury.
* **Avoid physical contact, including holding or shaking hands.** Students should avoid holding hands or having physical contact during dance, gymnastics or other physical education lessons. Shaking hands and high fives should be avoided on conclusion of a lesson or activity. Alternate ways to congratulate each other for good play should be discussed and implemented.