



**Te Tāhuhu o  
te Mātauranga**  
Ministry of Education



**Te Poutāhū**  
Curriculum Centre

# The New Zealand Curriculum

# Health and Physical Education Year 8

October 2025

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**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

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# Purpose statement

*He oranga ngākau, he pikinga waiora.*

*Positive feelings in your heart will raise your sense of self-worth.*

The Health and Physical Education learning area equips students with the knowledge, practices, and competencies necessary to thrive physically, mentally, and socially. Students are taught essential health and movement concepts that enable them to participate confidently in a wide range of physical activities and manage their own health in an informed way.

Through the study of Health, students learn how to navigate the complexities of modern life as confident individuals, connected members of their communities, and informed citizens. They are taught concepts that support their understanding of relationships, resilience, identity, and decision-making.

Through the study of Physical Education, students learn about specific movement patterns, activities, games, and sports. They are taught knowledge and practices to make informed decisions about their own healthy involvement in sport and physical activity.

As students progress through Health and Physical Education, they deepen their understanding of personal and collective wellbeing and learn how to embrace active and balanced lifestyles and cultivate habits that support long-term health. This provides students with a foundation for living well, thinking critically, and contributing positively to the world around them.

# Learning area structure

The year-by-year teaching sequence lays out the knowledge and practices to be taught each year. In *Health and Physical Education*, the teaching sequence for Years 0–10 is organised into two Knowledge Strands:

- **Health Education:** Focuses on physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. It develops students' understanding of identity, body, emotions, relationships, safety, and health-related choices across personal, community, and societal contexts.
- **Physical Education:** Focuses on movement skills and principles. It develops students' understanding of locomotor, non-locomotor, and object control skills, game structures, tactical thinking, outdoor activity practices, and aquatic safety through repeated practice in selected movement contexts.

The year-by-year teaching sequence, organised through Knowledge Strands and elements, sets out what is to be taught. Its enactment is shaped by teachers, who design learning in response to their learners, adjusting the order and emphasis, and adding appropriate contexts and content.

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# Introduction

Across Years 0–10, Health and Physical Education takes students on a rich and evolving journey of discovery. It begins with understanding their bodies and emotions and grows into developing the knowledge, skills, and confidence to manage wellbeing and participate fully in life. HPE is not just about movement or healthy practices; it builds a foundation for lifelong wellbeing through purposeful teaching, reflection, and connection. As students progress, they explore increasingly complex ideas about themselves, others, and the world around them. They learn how to care for their bodies, navigate relationships, and make informed decisions. Movement experiences develop coordination, cooperation, increasingly complex movement skills and outdoor education experiences.

In Years 0–3, teaching introduces foundational health and movement concepts that help students begin to understand how their bodies function and what supports wellbeing. Instruction focuses on everyday health practices, such as rest, hydration, hygiene, and movement, and how these contribute to growth and participation. Movement teaching centres on developing movement skills (MS) including balancing, running, and throwing. These are taught as discrete skills, allowing teachers to baseline knowledge and focus on accuracy and efficiency rather than sport-specific outcomes. Teachers also support students to notice and name emotions, linking feelings to behaviours. These years establish HPE as a learning area grounded in explicit knowledge, purposeful practice, and developmental progression.

In Years 4–6, teaching helps students connect everyday health practices with how their bodies function and change. Students learn that nutrition, hydration, rest, and movement contribute to growth and development, and that these needs evolve over time. Teaching introduces puberty, early learning about relationships and emotions, and decision-making that supports emotional wellbeing. Once MS are secure, movement teaching provides sufficient practice through discrete instruction and repetition in activities to enable more complex content. Students begin applying skills in games and sports across varied physical settings. Water safety, fair play, and preparation for outdoor activities are taught as essential knowledge for safe and confident participation.

In Years 7–10, teaching builds deeper knowledge about how bodies change and how health decisions influence physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. Students develop understanding of topics such as nutrition, substance use, sexual health, and media influence, and are supported to evaluate information and consider consequences. Movement instruction becomes more specialised, with students applying skills in different roles, environments, and physical activities, and learning how training and preparation affect performance. Across these years, teaching supports students to connect what they know with how they act, building the confidence and understanding needed to manage wellbeing and participate fully.

The Health and Physical Education learning area prepares students with the knowledge and practices to access related curriculum subjects for Years 11–13, such as Health Education and Physical Education.

The New Zealand Curriculum

# Health and Physical Education

Year 8 teaching sequence

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# Health Education

Year 8		
	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>The facts, concepts, principles, and theories to teach.</i>	<b>Practices</b> <i>The skills, strategies, and applications to teach.</i>
<b>Bodies   Minds</b>	<p><b>Adolescent change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Puberty is a biological process. The timing and experiences of these changes can vary widely and affect how adolescents feel about their bodies and identities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Nutrition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrients like protein, calcium, iron, and healthy fats play specific roles in supporting bone health, brain development, and energy regulation during adolescence.</li> <li>Food marketing often targets young people by linking products to popularity, fun, or fitness, making it harder to tell if a food is healthy or just cleverly advertised.</li> </ul> <p><b>Self-care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stress responses are often part of how the brain and body react to challenge, and understanding these responses helps people manage them by reframing thoughts, setting boundaries, and maintaining supportive relationships.</li> <li>Resilience does not always look like 'bouncing back'. It can involve feeling stuck for a time, needing support from others, or taking time to recover before moving forward.</li> <li>As bodies change during puberty, some young people may feel embarrassed or unsure about new hygiene needs, especially if they do not have clear guidance or support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alcohol and other drugs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some people use substances to cope with stress, fit in socially, or manage difficult emotions even when they understand the potential harm.</li> <li>Legal substances like over the counter medicines or energy drinks can be misused, especially when people do not understand dosage, mix substances, or feel pressure to boost performance or mood.</li> <li>Protective behaviours like asking for help or setting boundaries can reduce harm, but they may feel difficult to use in real life situations, especially when peer pressure, fear of judgement, or loyalty to friends are involved.</li> <li>Vaping can cause serious harm to the lungs, brain development, and overall health, especially for young people. Understanding these risks is essential for making informed, safe decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practising respectful communication strategies to discuss puberty and recognising how the timing and nature of these changes can influence thoughts, feelings, and self-perception</li> <li>Explaining the roles of key nutrients in supporting physical and cognitive development during adolescence</li> <li>Analysing food packaging and advertisements to detect persuasive techniques and assess whether promoted products meet nutritional needs</li> <li>Exploring how hygiene needs change during puberty, including skin care and body odour, menstrual hygiene, and reproductive hygiene (e.g. managing increased sweat, body hair, and genital hygiene)</li> <li>Recognising physical and emotional signs of stress using accurate terminology, including changes in breathing, heart rate, mood, or behaviour</li> <li>Examining how the brain and body respond to stress and applying strategies that support regulation, recovery, and wellbeing across different situations</li> <li>Examining the health risks of vaping and why it is not recommended for young people, despite sometimes promoted as a safer alternative to smoking</li> </ul>
	<b>Relationships</b>	<p><b>Self and others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths like assertiveness or boundary setting can support communication, but these skills may be harder to use in unfamiliar or high-pressure situations.</li> </ul>

## Year 8

	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>The facts, concepts, principles, and theories to teach.</i>	<b>Practices</b> <i>The skills, strategies, and applications to teach.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respecting differences can build stronger relationships, but it may take time and effort to understand perspectives that challenge your own beliefs or values.</li> <li>• Healthy relationships are not perfect. People can still make mistakes or misunderstand each other, and what matters is how people repair trust and respond to each other's needs.</li> <li>• Creating inclusive environments takes more than good intentions — it often involves addressing unfair behaviours, speaking up, and making space for different voices.</li> <li>• Although helping others and asking for help can reduce harm, people may hesitate if they fear being judged, ignored, or misunderstood.</li> </ul> <p><b>Consent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading consent cues can be difficult, especially when people feel nervous, unsure, or pressured to go along with something they're not comfortable with.</li> <li>• Even when people understand the rules of consent, they may feel pressured to agree or unsure how to speak up, especially in situations involving power imbalance or social expectations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Staying safe online</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online pressure can come from friends, trends, or fear of missing out, and managing it often means making tough choices that go against what others are doing.</li> <li>• Even when people know how to behave safely online, they may still take risks to fit in and get attention which can affect their wellbeing.</li> <li>• Even when people know that body images online are unrealistic, they may still compare themselves and feel pressure to look a certain way.</li> <li>• Media and advertising often use emotional triggers like excitement or belonging to influence decisions and behaviours.</li> <li>• Sexualised content and pornography often omits key aspects of real intimacy such as consent and emotional connection. Stylised bodies and exaggerated behaviours are used to fit often unrealistic narratives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Stereotypes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging stereotypes can be uncomfortable or risky, especially when it means questioning group norms or calling out unfair behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting on personal values and biases, and exploring how these influence interactions and relationship building</li> <li>• Analysing strategies for repairing trust, such as apologising, clarifying intentions, and making amends</li> <li>• Developing advocacy skills such as speaking up and facilitating group dynamics</li> <li>• Developing strategies that promote emotional safety by responding respectfully to peer pressure (e.g. saying 'no' confidently, standing up for others, encouraging personal choice)</li> <li>• Exploring strategies for handling uncertainty, recognising pressure and power dynamics, building confidence to seek help, and developing skills to recognise and respond to consent cues</li> <li>• Building digital literacy, self-awareness, and resilience to navigate online pressure and unrealistic body standards</li> <li>• Identifying emotional triggers in online advertising and content</li> <li>• Using collaborative activities to build confidence in exploring different viewpoints</li> </ul>
<b>Sex Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In New Zealand, the legal age of consent for sexual activity is 16 years. Engaging in sexual activity with people below this age is considered unlawful under statutory provisions designed to protect young people from harm and exploitation.</li> </ul>	

Year 8		
	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>The facts, concepts, principles, and theories to teach.</i>	<b>Practices</b> <i>The skills, strategies, and applications to teach.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication, clear boundaries and respect create safe and positive experiences within intimate and sexual relationships.</li> <li>• There are a range of sexual activities in which consenting adults experience and express their sexuality. These activities include different forms of physical contact and interaction for sexual pleasure, reproduction, or both.</li> <li>• Conception usually occurs through sexual intercourse when sperm fertilises an egg, which is how human reproduction begins.</li> <li>• Harmful sexual behaviours (e.g. sharing intimate images without consent, giving unsolicited sexual attention) have serious consequences.</li> </ul>	

## Physical Education

Year 8		
	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>The facts, concepts, principles, and theories to teach.</i>	<b>Practices</b> <i>The skills, strategies, and applications to teach.</i>
<b>Movement skills</b> <b>(Invasion games and net and wall)</b>	<b>Net and wall (e.g. volleyball)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are similarities and differences between ball movement techniques such as forearm pass (dig), smash, and tip, and underarm vs overarm serve.</li> <li>• Attacking and defensive strategies use specific vocabulary and conventions, such as blocking, setting, spiking, covering, and court positioning.</li> <li>• Game conventions include scoring systems, serve rotation, and how points are awarded.</li> <li>• Success relies on key components of fitness, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– reaction time (e.g. responding to a fast serve)</li> <li>– flexibility (e.g. shoulder mobility during a smash)</li> <li>– power, agility, and coordination.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The principles of training (specificity and progression) look different across activities and can be compared between volleyball and other movement disciplines (e.g. parkour).</li> <li>• Basic statistics and observations can be used to evaluate performance and identify strengths and areas for improvement.</li> </ul>	<b>Net and wall (e.g. volleyball)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using body position, anticipation, execution, timing, and force in the preparation, execution, recovery, and transition to the next movement for volley, dig, and smash</li> <li>• Improving decision making when applying attacking strategies (e.g. set for a smash, smash and tip technique)</li> <li>• Applying consistent, accurate underarm serve and moving on to overarm</li> <li>• Defending and attacking by controlling space (e.g. ball placement)</li> <li>• Scoring and application of rules</li> </ul>
<b>Movement skills</b> <b>(Invasion games)</b>	<b>Invasion games (e.g. touch/rippa rugby/rip rugby)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body position and dodging involves changes of pace and direction to evade defenders and create attacking opportunities.</li> <li>• Passing, running, and dummy passes are selected based on field position, defensive pressure, and support from teammates.</li> </ul>	<b>Invasion games (e.g. touch/rippa rugby/rip rugby)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dodging by changing of pace and direction to evade defenders and attacking opportunities during drills and modified games</li> <li>• Making decisions about when to pass, run, or use a dummy pass in modified games, based on field position, defensive pressure, and support from teammates</li> </ul>

**Year 8**

	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>The facts, concepts, principles, and theories to teach.</i>	<b>Practices</b> <i>The skills, strategies, and applications to teach.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kicking is used for tactical advantage, including gaining territory, restarting play, or attempting to score, with decisions based on game context.</li> <li>• Wellbeing benefits of rip rugby/rippa rugby/touch include teamwork, cardiovascular fitness, and agility, while individual activities, such as swimming, support personal goal setting and endurance.</li> <li>• Rules and conventions, including managing infringements and using dynamic stretching, support safety, fairness, and readiness for participation.</li> <li>• Reviewing excerpts of games and data collection helps identify strengths and areas for improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using dummy passes and other evasion techniques to deceive defenders and create space</li> <li>• Changing direction or speed in game situations</li> <li>• Applying timing and decision making when kicking in rip rugby and choosing when to kick for territory, restart play, or attempt to score</li> <li>• Using observation and data collection (e.g. completed passes, successful dodges) to reflect on strengths and areas for improvement</li> <li>• Officiating small-sided games</li> </ul>
<b>Movement skills</b> <b>(Movement, strength and sport)</b>	<p><b>Sport/physical activity option block (e.g. football, waka ama)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each sport or activity (e.g. football, waka ama, orienteering) involves specialised movement patterns, rules, strategies, and tactics for both participation and officiating.</li> <li>• Warm-up and nutrition are important for physical and mental preparation and performance.</li> <li>• Physiological changes (e.g. heart rate, muscle use) depend on the intensity and type of activity, understanding these helps with goal setting and self-assessment.</li> <li>• Fitness components (e.g. strength, flexibility, endurance) and muscle names are relevant to performance and can be developed through specific training methods (e.g. circuit, interval, fartlek, flexibility training).</li> <li>• The principles of specificity and progression are important for effective training and improvement.</li> <li>• The SPORT (specificity, progression, overload, reversibility, and tedium) principles support the adaptation and refinement of training approaches to meet individual goals.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sport/physical activity option block (e.g. football, waka ama)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialising in movement patterns and applying rules, strategies, and tactics in a chosen sport or activity (both as a participant and as an official)</li> <li>• Performing appropriate warm-up routines and making informed choices about nutrition</li> <li>• Using data to identify strengths and limitations and set goals to analyse and respond to physiological changes during activity</li> <li>• Applying specific training methods to improve relevant fitness components while following the principles of specificity and progression</li> </ul>
<b>Movement skills</b> <b>(Athletics)</b>	<p><b>Advanced techniques (if equipment allows) discuss or 100, 800, 1500, relay, javelin, long jump preparing for a competition,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are different techniques for javelin and shot put, including standing and moving approaches.</li> <li>• Baton exchange techniques include upsweep and down sweep and occur within the changeover box.</li> <li>• Relay tactics involve strategic positioning and efficient baton exchange to reduce speed loss.</li> <li>• Starting stance, stride efficiency, and energy distribution influence sprint and long-distance running. These factors can be adjusted to enhance speed, endurance, and race tactics.</li> <li>• Force generation, body alignment, and sequential movement patterns influence the accuracy and distance of throws in javelin and shot put, using techniques such as standing, 3 step, and shuffle approaches.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advanced techniques (if equipment allows) discuss or 100, 800, 1500, relay, javelin, long jump preparing for a competition,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using accurate technique in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ standing and 3-step javelin throw</li> <li>○ standing and shuffle shot put</li> <li>○ sprint starts (e.g. for 80m or 100m)</li> <li>○ long-distance running (e.g. pacing, timing, overtaking)</li> <li>○ long jump (e.g. measuring run-up, take-off, and landing)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Performing baton exchanges, using upsweep and downsweep techniques within the changeover box</li> <li>• Applying relay tactics to ensure smooth and efficient baton exchanges</li> </ul>

**Year 8**

	<b>Knowledge</b> <i>The facts, concepts, principles, and theories to teach.</i>	<b>Practices</b> <i>The skills, strategies, and applications to teach.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training improves performance through specificity (targeting event-specific skills) and progression (gradual increase in challenge).</li> <li>• Circuit training can be used to prepare for participation in multiple events (e.g. one run and one jump/throw).</li> <li>• Fartlek and interval training are effective methods for improving performance in endurance and sprint events respectively.</li> <li>• Muscle soreness after anaerobic activity is linked to lactic acid build-up.</li> <li>• Aerobic and anaerobic activities differ in physical sensations and immediate effects on the body.</li> <li>• Officiating in athletics includes measuring and recording distances and times and judging performance using competition rules.</li> <li>• Observing and recording distances and times helps assess improvements in movement quality.</li> <li>• Safe practices are essential in athletics, such as coordinated collection of equipment after throws.</li> <li>• Aerobic performance in cross country is influenced by fitness level, movement efficiency, and the ability to apply pacing and breathing strategies such as rhythmic breathing and controlled exhalation to manage effort across varied terrain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for two events using circuit training, incorporating both running and jumping/throwing activities</li> <li>• Using specific training methods to improve performance in targeted events</li> <li>• Comparing the physical sensations and impacts of aerobic vs anaerobic activities</li> <li>• Accurately recording data in running, jumping, and throwing events</li> <li>• Using recorded distances and times to assess and reflect on movement quality and performance improvements</li> <li>• Following safe procedures during athletic activities, especially in throwing events</li> <li>• Applying movement techniques and adjusting effort to maintain steady running across different sections of a cross-country course</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor activities offer opportunities for personal enrichment and enjoyment through shared experiences in nature.</li> <li>• Safety in remote or unpredictable outdoor environments relies on proficiency in survival techniques, including shelter construction and basic first aid.</li> <li>• Outdoor challenges build leadership skills in decision making, supporting others, and taking responsibility in team situations.</li> <li>• Hypothermia is a risk in cold, wet, or windy conditions and can be prevented with appropriate preparation.</li> <li>• Orienteering requires map reading, compass use, and route planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying basic survival techniques, such as building shelter and performing first aid, to manage safety in outdoor or remote settings</li> <li>• Taking on leadership roles during outdoor challenges and taking responsibility for shared tasks and outcomes</li> <li>• Using correct safety equipment and appropriate wet weather clothing</li> <li>• Reading maps, using a compass, and planning safe routes including entry and exit points for land and water sections</li> </ul>