



Irish Heart
Foundation

Action for Life

Physical literacy through PE and SPHE



Head



Heart



Hands

SECOND
CLASS

THIRD
CLASS

FOURTH
CLASS

LESSON PLANS

Irish Heart Foundation Overview

The Irish Heart Foundation is the national charity dedicated to saving lives by eliminating premature death and avoidable disability from heart disease and stroke. We campaign and advocate to change the public policy environment, improve services for heart health and stroke and are the driving force behind national awareness campaigns such as the Act F.A.S.T. campaign on the signs of stroke.

The Irish Heart Foundation promotes health in communities, workplaces and schools across Ireland and gives vital patient support through a nurse support line, high-quality information materials, and support groups for stroke, heart failure, ICD, Long QT, SADS and cardiomyopathy.

We are a registered charity supported by donations from the public and rely on the goodwill and generosity of our supporters to fund life-saving and life-changing work in prevention, patient support, CPR and campaigning.

Every donation helps more people in Ireland to live longer, healthier lives.

About Irish Heart Foundation's work in schools

The Irish Heart Foundation supports teachers and schools across Ireland in their wellbeing mission to create healthy schools. Our core programmes are evidence-based and co-designed ensuring they meet the needs of schools and align to the curriculum. We advocate for policies that promote healthy school environments and prevent childhood obesity. 80% of premature heart disease and stroke is preventable through healthy lifestyles, which is why the Irish Heart Foundation is committed to promoting lifelong healthy habits from an early age.

The Irish Heart Foundation's dedicated Children and Young People team is available to support schools. For more information, visit www.irishheart.ie or contact schools@irishheart.ie.

Visit
irishheart.ie/schools
for the full
Action For Life
programme

Before and After Physical Activity

Warming Up, Cooling Down and Stretching



WARM UP

- Before we do exercise, like doing PE or sports training, it is necessary to prepare our bodies by warming up.
- When we are active, the heart and lungs work harder and faster to circulate blood around the body.
- Warming up involves doing light activity to gradually increase our heart rate so that the body is prepared for more intense physical activity.

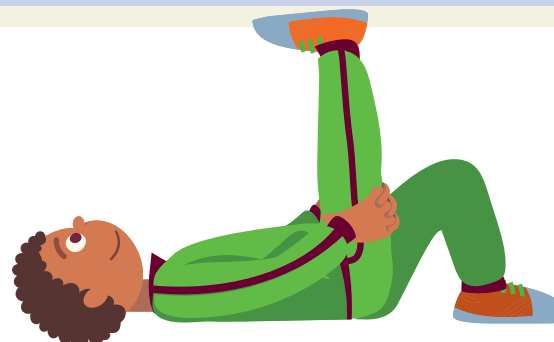
Warm Up Stretch: After warming up our bodies and muscles with light activity, we then do a Warm Up stretch. We do not stretch without first warming up because our muscles are a little bit like plasticine. When we take plasticine out of the packet or tub, it is cold and hard. We need to warm it up by moving it around to make it soft and stretchy. Our muscles are similar; they need to be moved around and warmed up to become flexible enough to stretch.

- ➡ Full body stretches are suggested in each Action For Life lesson plan before the first main activity (Warm Up Stretches) and at the end of each lesson (Cool Down Stretches). Particular attention should be given to stretching the body parts used within the lesson.
- ➡ The stretch should be held when a gentle tension is felt in the muscle.
- ➡ If doing a specific stretch causes pain, stop the stretch. **Stretching should not cause pain.**

COOL DOWN

- When we finish exercising, we are still breathing fast and our hearts are still working hard to deliver blood all around the body.
- If we stop suddenly, the body thinks it is still exercising and continues to react as if it is.
- Cooling down means doing a lighter activity to ease the body out of its work mode and allow the breathing and heart rate to return to normal.
- Stopping suddenly without doing a Cool Down could make us feel dizzy or unwell and can make the muscles sore.

Cool Down Stretch: Cool Down stretches should be done after the cool down to keep the muscles strong, flexible and healthy. Cool Down stretches are usually held for longer than Warm Up stretches and done in a seated or lying down position for a deeper stretch. Stretching can help to prevent muscle soreness after physical activity.



Stretches are detailed on the pages overleaf.



Warm Up Stretches

○ = Area where stretch should be felt

- ➔ Hold the position when a gentle tension is felt; you should not feel pain or discomfort.
- ➔ Keep breathing normally through the stretches.
- ➔ Hold each stretch for 8-10 seconds.

1 Quad Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Bend left knee and catch foot.
- Gently pull heel to bum.
- Hold onto wall for support if necessary.
- Keep hips level and both knees close together.



2 Hamstring Stretch

- Step right foot backwards.
- Bend right knee, leaning upper body forward from hips with back straight.
- Place hands on thigh for support (not on knee).
- Gently push hips backwards as if sitting into a chair.
- Stretch should be felt on back of upper part of the straight leg.



3 Calf Stretch

- Step left leg back, keeping right knee bent from Hamstring Stretch.
- With straight back leg and feet flat on the ground, push weight through back heel into ground.
- Stretch should be felt in bottom of back of straight leg.
- Push against a wall or move feet further apart for deeper stretch.



Complete stretches 1, 2 and 3 on left leg, then change to right leg.

4 Chest and Shoulder Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Lace fingers together behind the back with palms facing the body.
- Gently squeeze shoulder blades together and lift arms only as far as comfortable.



5 Tricep Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Raise both arms overhead.
- Bend one elbow and allow hand to drop between shoulder blades.
- Reach fingertips down spine and support elbow with other hand.
- Repeat with opposite arm.



6 Upper Back Stretch

- Interlock fingers with palms facing body.
- Bring arms to shoulder height and drop chin to chest.
- Gently reach arms forwards, feeling the stretch between the back of your shoulders.



7 High Reach Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Hold hands above head and stretch upwards.
- Feel the stretch along the whole upper body.



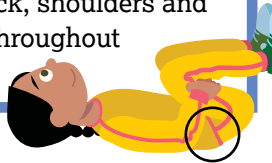
Cool Down Stretches

○ = Area where stretch should be felt

- ➔ Hold the position when a gentle tension is felt; you should not feel pain or discomfort.
- ➔ Take slow deep breaths during the stretches.
- ➔ Hold each stretch for 10-15 seconds, unless otherwise specified.

1 Lower Back Stretch

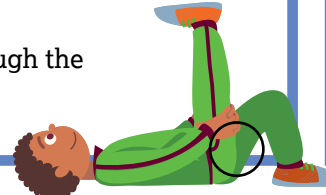
- Lie on back with knees bent and feet flat on floor.
- Place hands at back of thighs and pull knees gently towards chest.
- Keep upper back, shoulders and head on floor throughout the stretch.



2 Lying Hamstring Stretch

- Lie on back with knees bent and feet flat on floor.
- Lift one leg and hold hands around back of thigh.
- Gently pull leg, only as far as comfortable, keeping the leg straight.
- Stretch should be felt through the back of the lower leg.

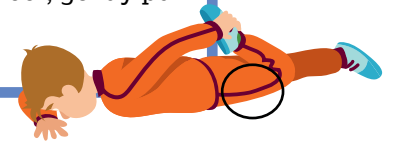
Repeat with opposite leg



3 Lying Quad Stretch

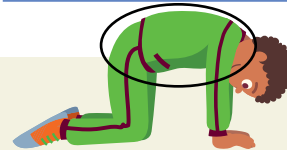
- Turn onto front of body to lie on stomach.
- Rest head on forearm.
- Bend one leg and hold foot with hand on same side.
- Keeping both hips on the floor, gently pull the heel towards the bum.

Repeat with opposite leg



4 Cat Stretch

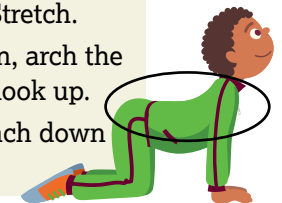
- Kneel with both hands on floor (knees below hips and hands below shoulders).
- Let out a deep breath, tuck chin towards chest and round the back – imagine that you are trying to move your belly button up to the sky.
- Do not hold this position as you will move slowly into Cow Stretch on next breath in.



Move slowly from Cat Stretch to Cow Stretch and back for a few breaths – slowly moving into Cat Stretch on breath out and Cow Stretch on breath in. Repeat sequence 3-4 times.

5 Cow Stretch

- Kneel with both hands on the floor as in Cat Stretch.
- Taking a deep breath in, arch the back, tilt the chin and look up.
- Gently press the stomach down and the hips up.



6 Seated Calf Stretch

- Sit on floor with legs wide.
- Bend one knee, bringing the sole of the foot to rest on the inner thigh of the opposite leg.
- Point toes of straight leg towards the face and reach gently towards toes, keeping back straight.
- Stretch should be felt in the back of the bottom of the straight leg. *Repeat with opposite leg*



7 Inner Thigh Stretch

- Sitting on floor with straight back, bend both knees, placing soles of feet together.
- Hold legs at ankles, sit up tall and allow knees to fall towards the floor (don't push the legs).
- For a deeper stretch, hold feet and lean slightly forward.



8 Seated Chest Stretch

- In a seated position on the floor, place both hands behind the back.
- Rest the palms of the hands on either side of the spine at the lower back with fingertips facing downwards.
- With straight back and head facing forward, gently press elbows together to stretch across the chest.





Irish Heart Foundation

Learning Outcomes

Through this lesson, pupils should be enabled to...

HEAD



Recall the minimum amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity required each day to keep their heart and body healthy (60 minutes).

HEART



Lead an activity with confidence and humour.

HANDS

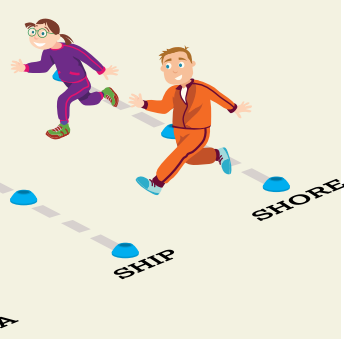


Complete an activity (e.g. collecting the correct piece of treasure while running/hopping/skipping) with speed but also care.

WARM UP - Ship, Sea, Shore

Set-up: Using cones, divide the playing area into three parallel lines.

- ➡ Pupils line up at middle line which is designated as the Ship.
- ➡ Side line to the left is designated as Sea.
- ➡ Side line to the right is designated as Shore.
- ➡ Pupils respond to the directions of “Ship”, “Sea” or “Shore” by running to the corresponding line. Teacher selects a different pupil after every couple of times to call out the directions.



MODIFICATION:

Use appropriate signalling methods for pupils with hearing impairment (e.g. large print cards with arrows or diagrams of designated destination that pupils run to). Use disc markers instead of cones to accommodate pupils with vision impairment and pupils who use a wheelchair or mobility device.

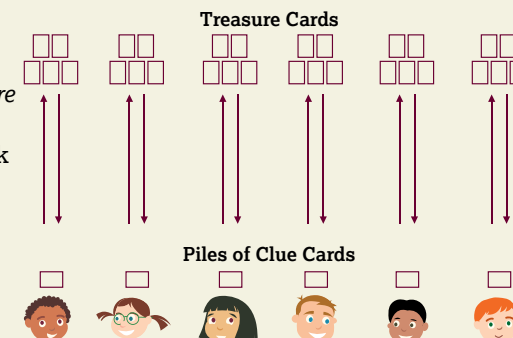
STRETCH

before moving to Activity 1
(see Warm Up stretches)

ACTIVITY 1 - Matching Treasure

Set-up: Set-up the course as demonstrated in illustration. Pupils should be in pairs.

- ➡ One pupil in each pair picks up a *Clue Card* and runs to the *Treasure Cards*.
- ➡ Pupils are tasked with finding the *Treasure Card* to match their clue, then returning the matching pair (treasure and clue) back to base.
- ➡ Each pair of pupils takes turns to select a *Clue Card*, run to find its matching *Treasure Card* and return to base with both cards.
- ➡ Repeat until all cards have been paired.
- ➡ As a class, read through the clues and identify the pieces of treasure they refer to.



MODIFICATION: For pupils who are wheelchair or mobility device users, place cards on an elevated surface such as a table. Complete the activity as pairs instead of taking turns to give pupils additional support with reading and interpreting the clues.

MORE ACTION: Change run to any other locomotor skill (walk, hop, skip, slide or jump). Call the same destination twice in a row and/or point to one destination but call another to challenge processing skills.

MORE ACTION: Designate a specific action for pupils to do when moving to the *Treasure Cards* (e.g. “*Walk, pretending to be digging with a shovel for treasure each time you take a step*”, “*Pretend you are swimming to a treasure chest at the bottom of the sea*” etc).



TOP TIP

Offer pupils the **choice** and **responsibility** to call out Ship, Sea or Shore. Encourage pupils to really challenge the class (e.g. by calling the same destination twice in a row and/or pointing to one destination but saying another). Opportunities for choice and leadership boost confidence and enjoyment.



TOP TIP

It can be challenging to strike a balance between doing an activity quickly and doing an activity well. Highlight that “*This is not a race. Travel with speed but the MOST important part of this task is to match the right piece of treasure with the right clue*”. Reward the pair who demonstrated a nice balance between speed and care. Emphasise to the class that being the first team to complete a task is not necessarily the same as being the ‘best’ team.

SPHE

Strand: Myself
Strand Unit:
Self-identity;
Self-awareness



PE

Strand:
Outdoor and
Adventure Activities
Strand Unit:
Orienteering

Equipment for Lesson:

Cones, Clue Cards,
Treasure Cards and
Feelings Finder
(from resource pack)

Action for Life

LESSON 3

ACTIVITY 2 - Treasure Chest

Set-up: Randomly select 2-3 pupils to act as 'Treasure Hunters'. Give all other pupils a Treasure Card to hide in their hands.

- ➔ Treasure Hunters are tasked with finding gold.
- ➔ Treasure Hunters chase after pupils, who, when caught, reveal their piece of treasure to them.
- ➔ If the treasure is gold, they hand it to the Treasure Hunter and continue running around the playing area.
- ➔ After a number of minutes, teacher signals for pupils to freeze.
- ➔ Treasure Hunters show how many pieces of gold they collected to see who has the most. Any pupil who has a piece of gold treasure who was not caught by a Treasure Hunter should also be praised for demonstrating good evasion skills.
- ➔ Repeat with new treasure hunters and treasure redistributed.

After the activity, have pupils feel their heartbeat. Tell pupils that *"If your heart is beating fast, this was moderate to vigorous physical activity"*.



MORE ACTION: Invite pupils to swap *Treasure Cards* whilst being chased to make it more challenging for the Treasure Hunters. Alternatively, give only half the pupils *Treasure Cards*; task pupils who do not have cards to pretend they are holding *Treasure Cards* to their chest. Can they trick the Treasure Hunters?



**TOP
TIP**

Ask pupils to be aware of how they feel when they are running and their heart is beating faster. Use this activity to highlight the amount of physical activity recommended for health. *"Physical activity is any activity that uses the large muscles in our body and requires more energy than resting". "Physical activity keeps our hearts healthy and happy". "We should be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day". "The 60 minutes can be spread across the day with shorter amounts throughout the day".*

COOL DOWN - Make 60 Minutes

Set-up: Divide pupils into groups of 4-5.

- ➔ Pupils are tasked with creating the number 60 (representing the recommended minutes of physical activity) as a group using their bodies.
- ➔ Pupils work as a team to arrange themselves on the floor in the shape of a 6 and a 0.
- ➔ Pupils can also try to make the number 60 as a full group.
- ➔ Teamwork and communication are encouraged for pupils to arrange themselves in the shape.

STRETCH

at the end of the lesson
(see Cool Down stretches)

Assessment of / for learning



Questioning

What is physical activity? Ask pupils how many minutes we should be active for each day. As a group, list examples of activities that increase our heart rate. Discuss how our bodies feel when we are doing physical activity.



Self- assessment

Using the *Feelings Finder*, privately ask pupils who called out commands during the Warm Up to rate their confidence level. Ask pupils *"What did you like about leading the activity?"* *"What did you find challenging?"*



Teacher- designed Task

Use school camera (if school policies allow) during the Cool Down to photograph the group arrangements of the number 60, so that pupils can see what their arrangements looked like. Task pupils with making posters for the school to spread the message that healthy hearts, bodies and brains need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.



Irish Heart Foundation

Learning Outcomes

Through this lesson, pupils should be enabled to...

HEAD



Identify at least one way to maintain a calm (mindful) body (e.g. pay attention to surrounding sounds).

HEART



Role play in the PE context with courage and confidence.

HANDS



Participate in a variety of activities at different paces, and walk at an appropriate pace to support being mindful.

WARM UP - Pop

Set-up: Ask pupils to spread out around the playing area.

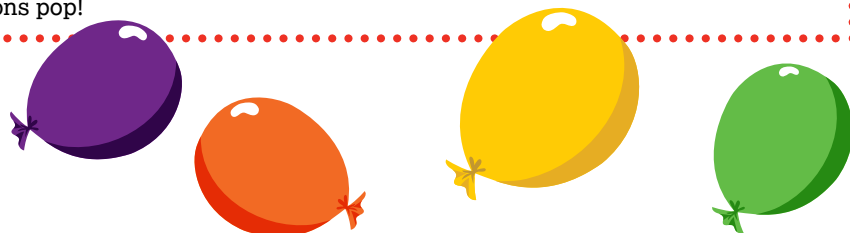
Teacher instructs pupils to:

- ➡ *"Imagine you are a balloon floating around the room".*
- ➡ *"Stretch your arms up high and move around the room on tiptoes, swaying gently as you move".*
- ➡ *"When 'POP' is called, run and find a perfect spot away from others".*
- ➡ *"Sit down in your perfect spot with legs straight and hands on thighs".*

Repeat a number of times, varying the end position (e.g. curl up small like a stone, sit cross-legged with hands on thighs, kneel down with arms stretched wide).

STRETCH
before moving to Activity 1
(see Warm Up stretches)

MORE ACTION: Pretend a wind is blowing and the balloons are being blown rapidly all around the room. Add musical accompaniment; when music stops, balloons pop!



TOP TIP

When asking pupils to **role play** in the PE context, remember that some pupils can be self-conscious or reluctant. Remind pupils of the **PE Agreement** and that PE is a place where we can try new things without having to be afraid of what others think of us. Use **positive reinforcement** for pupils who really make an effort to get into the role.

ACTIVITY 1 - Mindful Walk

Set-up: This activity requires an outdoor space for walking. Place pupils in pairs and provide each pair with a clipboard, paper and pen/pencil.

Let the class know they are going on a mindful walk and explain what a 'mindful walk' is. *"A mindful walk means noticing your footsteps, your breathing as well as the sounds and sights around you as you walk". "Try not to think about anything that happened earlier today, or what might happen later – concentrate on the here and now".*

- ➡ Teacher asks each pair to write the word M.I.N.D.F.U.L on their page.
- ➡ Pupils are tasked with being 'mindful' on the class walk, to *"focus on the sounds and sights"* around them.
- ➡ Instruct pupils to walk at a steady pace – not too fast, not too slow.
- ➡ Pupils record sounds and sights that begin with M, begin with I, begin with N and so on, using their clipboard, until they have found words beginning with each letter of the word 'MINDFUL'.
- ➡ If available use your local/school *Slí na Sláinte* (or a designated outdoor trail).



MORE ACTION: Instead of giving the pupils clipboards and pens, use one clipboard for the class and stop every couple of minutes prompting, *"I hear with my little ear...something that sounds like ..."*, or *"I spy, with my little eye, something beginning with ..."* Write down the sights and sounds noted by the pupils. Why not try the mindfulness activities outlined in the *Bizzy Breaks* booklet (available free online at irishheart.ie/schools) before or after this lesson.



TOP TIP

The pace of a walk is crucial to facilitate a mindful experience. It is important to walk at a speed that allows the walker to notice the physical experience of walking and their breath. Tell the pupils to *"Take it step by step, not too slow and not too fast"*.

SPHE

Strand: Myself
Strand Unit:
Self-identity;
Self-awareness



PE

Strand:
Outdoor and
Adventure Activities
Strand Unit:
Walking Activities

Equipment for Lesson:

Outdoor space, Clipboards,
Pens, Paper, *PE Agreement*
poster and *Feelings Finder*
(from resource pack)

Action for Life

LESSON

4

ACTIVITY 2 - Mindful Walk (Follow-Up)

Set-up: Upon return from the mindful walk, instruct pupils to sit in a circle.

- ➔ Pupils list and discuss some of the sights and sounds experienced.
- ➔ Check in to compare sights/sounds identified by the pupils that begin with the letters M, I, N, D, F, U and L.
- ➔ Identify sights and sounds that were common or unique.

Sleepy Stars

Set-up: Ask pupils to find a space in the playing area to lie flat on their back and stretch out like a star.

- ➔ Teacher tells pupils to “*Close your eyes and take nice slow breaths in and out*”.
- ➔ Teacher explains to the class: “*When you feel a tap on your foot, I want you to open your eyes, then VERY quietly stand up and sneak to the back of the room* (or other designated area) *without touching off another star*”.
- ➔ Teacher taps a pupil’s foot to ‘wake them up’, leaving pupils who maintain a still body and keep their eyes closed until last.
- ➔ When there is one pupil left, teacher prompts the class to whisper “*Wake up sleepy star*” together.
- ➔ The last star is praised for keeping a still body, as should other pupils for being calm and quiet when they awoke.

MORE ACTION: After repeating the activity a number of times, entrust a pupil to act as teacher and ‘wake up’ the sleepy stars.



TOP TIP

Let pupils know that it is not only important to have an active body, but to know how to relax and have a calm body. This allows us to store up our energy to use when we need it and keeps our hearts healthy and happy. Provide verbal cues to help pupils keep their body calm whilst lying in the ‘sleepy star’ position. “*Notice your belly rising and falling as you breathe in and out.*” Tell pupils that having a ‘calm body and mind’ takes practice.

COOL DOWN - Goodbye Stars

Set-up: Ask pupils to find a space in the playing area and crouch down with hands on floor.

Teacher recites rhyme and leads pupils in the accompanying actions (**in bold**).

Goodbye to all the stars now the sun begins to rise,

(Wave and make a ‘rising’ action with the arms)

You’re fading oh so fast, I can’t believe my eyes, (**Sprint** around the circle).

Wait shooting star, before you go away, (**Stop** and touch the ground)

Catch your friend the moon, as you both fall from night to day. (Find a partner and hold a balance position together (e.g. back to back, leaning against each other, standing on one foot with arms on each others’ shoulders etc.)

STRETCH

at the end of the lesson
(see Cool Down stretches)

Assessment of / for learning



Questioning

Ask pupils when it might be useful to be able to calm our bodies (e.g. when we are tired, upset, angry). Discuss some of the things we can use to help us relax in these situations.



Self-assessment

Ask pupils to use the *Feelings Finder* to rate how they felt, as balloons in the Warm Up and as sleepy stars in Activity 2. Was there a difference? Discuss whether having eyes closed made a difference.



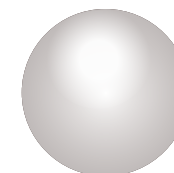
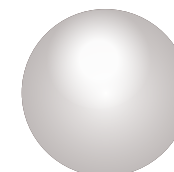
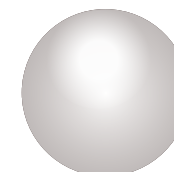
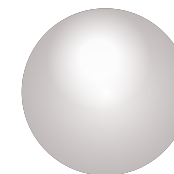
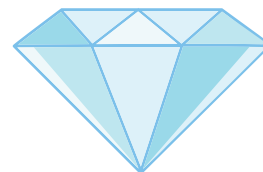
Questioning

Discuss the difference between a walk with your friends and a mindful walk; identify aspects that are the same and aspects that are different.

Treasure Cards

Action for Life

LESSON
3



Photocopy, cut out
and laminate for
Lesson 3. Each pair
will need one of each
type of treasure.



CLUE 1

I'm a round coin, I shine a lot.
At the end of the rainbow, I sit
in a pot.

CLUE 2

If you are a queen, or a king
instead, you must put this
on your royal head.

CLUE 3

Up above the world so
high, like a ____ in the
sky. HINT: it sparkles like
a star.

CLUE 4

Find me in a shell at the
bottom of the sea, I'm
shiny, smooth and round;
what could I be?

CLUE 5

Will you marry me? Please
say 'I do'. Put this on your
finger, because I love you.

Photocopy, cut out
and laminate for
Lesson 3. Each pair
will need a set of
all 5 clues.



1	2	3	4	5
				



PE Agreement

- The PE Agreement is like a class contract, created with input from all pupils in the class.
- The PE Agreement helps to clarify what sort of atmosphere the class wants to create for PE (e.g. inclusive, cooperative, respectful, friendly) and what pupils can do to make this happen.
- Working with pupils, choose the 5 most important points for the class that they can count out on fingers to allow for easy recall during PE.

The PE Agreement template can be found overleaf.
Poster-sized versions for printing are also available
at irishheart.ie/schools.



Creating the PE Agreement

- 1 Share with pupils that they are going to create their own agreement for things we should keep in mind during PE. Discuss what it means to “value” each other and show “respect” and give examples of what this might look like (e.g. listening to each other, making sure everyone is included, speaking positively to each other etc.)
- 2 Ask pupils to close their eyes and think about what a great PE class looks like, feels like and sounds like.
- 3 Pupils could work in small groups and discuss this with each other.
- 4 Ask pupils or groups to volunteer some words or descriptions that they came up with and note these on the whiteboard (or a large sheet of paper, or post-its).
- 5 Generate discussion around each of the points and give all pupils a chance to contribute or ask questions.
- 6 When all points are on the board, the class will vote for which ones they think are the most important for your class PE Agreement.
- 7 Each pupil chooses the 3 points that they think are most important (give each pupil 3 small circle stickers to place beside the words on the sheet, or invite pupils to use a whiteboard marker to draw 3 circles or ticks beside their favourite points).
- 8 Count up the votes until there are 5 main points for the PE Agreement.
- 9 Write these onto the PE Agreement poster, or onto sheets of paper to blu tack onto the **numbered** boxes. Additional points could also be added in the white space around the poster. Add pictures if desired.
- 10 Pupils then sign the agreement at the bottom with their names, or a thumbprint.
- 11 These points can be changed or adapted throughout the year as necessary, if all pupils are in agreement.



Our Class PE Agreement



We will value each other and show respect by....



My Notes

Action for Life



For more information on the suite of supports
for schools and training programmes for CPD,
contact schools@irishheart.ie