



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](http://www.irishheart.ie) or contact [schools@irishheart.ie](mailto:schools@irishheart.ie).

**Visit**  
**[irishheart.ie/schools](http://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.

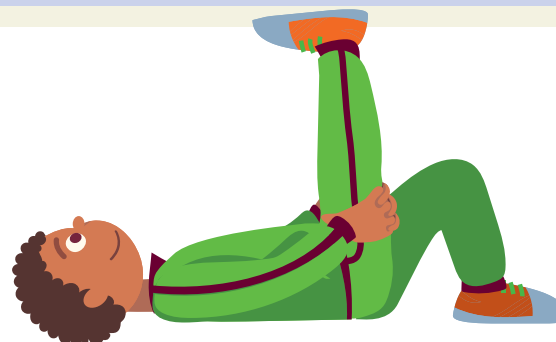
**Warm Up Stretch:** After warming up our bodies and muscles with light activity, we then do a Warm Up stretch. We do not stretch without first warming up because our muscles are a little bit like plasticine. When we take plasticine out of the packet or tub, it is cold and hard. We need to warm it up 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.*

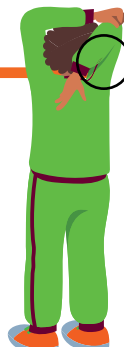
## 4 Chest and Shoulder Stretch

- 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.



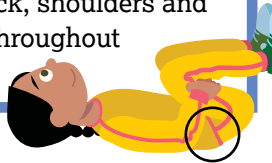
# Cool Down Stretches

○ = 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

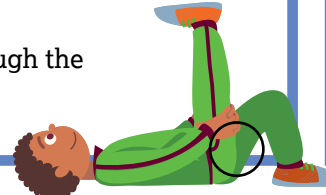
- Lie on back with knees bent and feet flat on floor.
- Place hands at back of thighs and pull knees gently towards chest.
- Keep upper back, shoulders and head on floor throughout the stretch.



## 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.

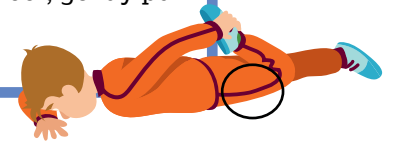
*Repeat with opposite leg*



## 3 Lying Quad Stretch

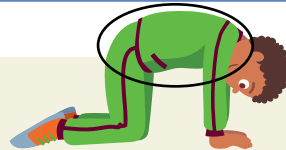
- Turn onto front of body to lie on stomach.
- Rest head on forearm.
- Bend one leg and hold foot with hand on same side.
- Keeping both hips on the floor, gently pull the heel towards the bum.

*Repeat with opposite leg*



## 4 Cat Stretch

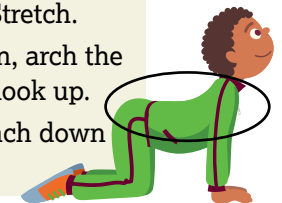
- Kneel with both hands on floor (knees below hips and hands below shoulders).
- Let out a deep breath, tuck chin towards chest and round the back – imagine that you are trying to move your belly button up to the sky.
- Do not hold this position as you will move slowly into Cow Stretch on next breath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



**Identify** variations that can be made to movement skills to adapt the level of challenge.

HEART



**Demonstrate** respect, support and encouragement for other pupils when working in teams.

HANDS

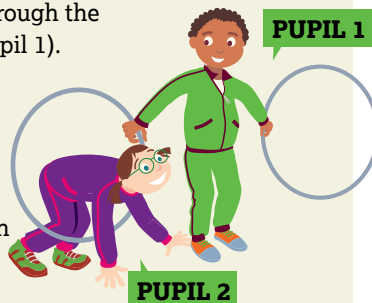


**Experiment** with different ways of jumping (forwards, backwards, for height, distance, taking off from one foot and landing on two feet etc.).

## WARM UP - Silly Goggles

**Set-up:** Put pupils into pairs; each pair gets two hoops. Instruct pairs to spread out across the playing area.

- ➡ Pupil 1 holds both hoops at their sides (as pictured) so that they look like spectacles or goggles. Pupil 2 stands behind pupil 1.
- ➡ On teacher's signal, pupil 2 moves through one hoop (moving from behind to in front of pupil 1) then moves through the other hoop (moving from in front of to behind pupil 1).
- ➡ When pupil 2 has completed the course, pupil 1 gives them the hoops. Pupil 2 then holds the hoops like goggles, as pictured, for pupil 1.
- ➡ Pupils can experiment with holding the hoops higher or at different angles to practise moving in different ways, or pretend the hoops are hot and can't be touched to make it more challenging.



**MODIFICATION:** Use extra large hoops for pupils who are wheelchair or mobility device users. For pupils with vision impairment, tie small bells around the hoop to allow the pupil to hear where the edge is.

## STRETCH

before moving to Activity 1 (see Warm Up stretches)

**MORE ACTION:** Pupils could start the activity from different positions (e.g from a seated position, from lying on their tummy, lying on their back). To increase challenge, set a start line from which pupils run to where their partner is holding the hoops, before moving through the hoops and swapping roles.

## ACTIVITY 1 - Puddles

**Set-up:** Ask pupils to keep their hoop from previous activity, find a space of their own and place the hoop on the floor in front of them.

Teacher instructs pupils to:

- ➡ "Pretend hoops are puddles".
- ➡ "Jump in and out of your hoop".
- ➡ "Use high jumps and low jumps in and out of the hoop (forward and back)".
- ➡ "Make yourself into a curled shape in your hoop".
- ➡ "Hop and land on one foot in and out of hoop, hop and land on two feet into and out of the hoop".
- ➡ "Do three different jumps in a row to create a jumping pattern".
- ➡ "Create your own jump or movement, in or out of the hoop".



**MODIFICATION:** Offer alternative sequencing (shorter sequences or greater repetition) to pupils who require additional support. Make a larger circle on the floor using thin rope, masking tape or chalk to facilitate pupils who are wheelchair or mobility device users.

## MORE ACTION: Clock Jumping

- ➡ Explain that the hoop is a clock face; designate where 12, 3, 6, and 9 are on the clock.
- ➡ Pupils jump forward, backwards or sideways to different numbers, jumping back to the centre after each number. Ensure that pupils jump to the outside of the hoop and not on the hoop itself.
- ➡ Call out different times to create a jumping pattern or sequence.



TOP TIP

Use **WILF** (What I'm Looking For) to emphasise working together and encouraging one another. Ask a willing pair to demonstrate the task (**peer demonstration**). Demonstrate and reinforce encouraging language. "You're doing a great job", "I like how careful you are being", "keep trying", "don't give up" etc.



TOP TIP

Use **rhyming cue** to prompt the 'right way' to take off and land when jumping. "Bend your knees, up you go, jump and land, two feet in a row". Rhyme can be helpful for remembering key aspects of specific movement skills. Try reciting the rhyme as a class in a **call and response** style to aid recall.



## SPHE

**Strand:**  
Myself and Others  
**Strand Unit:**  
My Friends  
and Other People



## PE

**Strand:**  
Athletics  
**Strand Unit:**  
Jumping

## Equipment for Lesson:

Hula hoops, *PE Agreement*  
poster and *Muscles of  
the Body* card  
(from resource pack)

## Action for Life

# LESSON 1

### ACTIVITY 2 - Foxes and Rabbits

**Set-up: Ask pupils to assist in clearing hoops from previous activity to create activity space.**

- ➔ All pupils spread out and practise the movements of both Foxes and Rabbits slowly before playing the game:
  - **Fox:** Begin in plank position on hands and toes, with straight arms and legs (4 points of contact), bring left knee to chest and back down, then right knee to chest and back down. Continue to alternate legs, increase the speed and use hands at the same time to crawl forward.
  - **Rabbit:** In the same position with 4 points of contact, bring both knees to the chest and jump feet forward, using the arms to push off the floor and move forward.
- ➔ Class is divided into 2 groups, one group of Rabbits and the other Foxes.
- ➔ Teacher explains rules of game: Foxes chase Rabbits. When caught, Rabbits stand up with arms and legs out wide (like a star) and can only be released by another Rabbit crawling through their legs.

Teacher asks a pupil to demonstrate variations for Fox [crawl with knees on the ground (easier), crawl with hips high in the air (moderate) or crawl with hips low (harder)] and for Rabbit [hips high (easier) or low (harder)]. Teacher encourages pupils to choose variation that challenges them at their own level.

**MODIFICATION:** Pupils who are wheelchair or mobility device users can use a soft ball to throw or a foam tube to assist with tagging or freeing.

#### RABBIT



#### FOX

**MORE ACTION:** Instead of having two groups, designate three pupils as Foxes and the rest of the class as Rabbits.



#### TOP TIP

When demonstrating variations on a skill, provide specific details on what makes a skill easier and harder. For example, "*Fox position is easier with a sunken back because it means we don't have to use the muscles in our tummy. When we use muscles that we don't use often it can feel challenging – BUT, the more often we use these muscles, the stronger they get and the easier it is to use them*".

### COOL DOWN - Mexican Wave Pass it On

**Set-up: Divide pupils into groups of 4-5 and instruct each group to form a circle.**

- ➔ Each team should have a leader (can be nominated by group or by teacher).
- ➔ The leader demonstrates a skill of their choice (e.g. jumping, kicking, chest passing, throwing).
- ➔ Starting to the leader's right, each pupil in turn demonstrates the skill or action around the circle.
- ➔ When all pupils around the circle have done this action, the leader introduces another skill.
- ➔ Once several skills have been completed, the leader can introduce new skills when a skill has gone halfway around the circle.

Teacher may need to give verbal cues, calling out skills to ensure all pupils are involved.

#### STRETCH

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

## Assessment of / for learning



#### Questioning

Record the names of muscles pupils already know. Use it as a starting point to build on their knowledge. Use the *Muscles of the Body* card in the resource pack to discuss what muscles are used when walking like a fox.



#### Questioning

Highlight some of the agreed points from the *PE Agreement*; ask pupils to give examples of how they can help motivate and encourage their friends during PE.



#### Self- assessment

Back in the classroom, ask pupils to draw pictures of the version of the Fox or Rabbit they used and label two of the muscles used.



# Irish Heart Foundation

## Learning Outcomes

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



**Identify** the correct pattern of movement, or the 'right way', to hop (through observation and verbal description).



**Demonstrate** consideration for themselves and others by not encroaching on others' personal space.



**Demonstrate** proficiency in at least one component of the skill of hopping.

## WARM UP - Here, There and Everywhere

### Set-up: Create large square playing area using cones.

Pupils line up at 'base' (back of the playing area) and respond to the following directions:

**Here:** Pupils walk/run to the opposite end of the square area.

**There:** Pupils walk/run to an area that the teacher is pointing to.

**Everywhere:** Pupils walk/run on the spot/ jumping jacks/bounce on the spot.

Teacher reinforces positional language throughout – front/back, forwards/backwards e.g. “*You’ve nearly reached the front*”, “*We are all lined up at the back*”, “*Are we ready to run to the front/back/everywhere?*”.

**MODIFICATION:** For pupils who are wheelchair users, complete half jacks with arms only or spin in a circle. Use appropriate signaling methods for pupils with vision or hearing impairment (large print cards with arrows or diagrams).



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

## ACTIVITY 1 - Fruit Bowl

### Set-up: Use cones to create a large circle, ensuring there is at least one cone per pupil. Ask pupils to each stand at a cone of their choice facing into the circle.

- ➡ Teacher assigns each pupil a fruit (apple, orange or banana).
- ➡ When the teacher calls the name of a fruit, pupils assigned that fruit hop in the same direction around the circle one full rotation, until back at their cone. Teacher emphasises that it's not a race; pupils should change hopping leg frequently and can put the other foot down as often as needed.
- ➡ When teacher calls 'fruit bowl' all pupils run a lap of the circle.
- ➡ Use this activity to focus on one specific skill per lesson. If hopping, pupils alternate the leg that they hop on and emphasise the components of a hop:  
“*Take off and land on the same foot (taking off using the ball of the foot)*”.  
“*Bend supporting leg and swing in rhythm with your jumping leg*”.

**SAFETY!** Ensure pupils know which direction to move in around the circle to ensure everyone is going the same way.

**MORE ACTION:** Change 'run' to any other locomotor skill (walk, hop, skip, slide, jump or gallop). Encourage pupils to walk both forwards and backwards (looking over their shoulder to avoid falling or bumping).



**TOP TIP**

Remind pupils of the **PE Agreement** and that you are looking for pupils who can be considerate of others. This means caring about yourself AND others during the activity. Task pupils with not touching off another player as they participate in this task. “*I’m going to look for pupils who are using their eyes to consider their own movements AND the movements of those around them. Try your best to give each other space*”. Praise pupils (privately, not in front of the class) who demonstrate an awareness of others.



**MORE ACTION:** Vary the movement (run, hop, skip, jump, side step etc.), vary the direction (clockwise, counter-clockwise), teacher may call two fruits at the same time, or the same fruit twice in a row to increase the challenge. Add extra cones to the circle and instruct pupils to move through the circle to a free cone instead of a full lap (emphasise that pupils must be aware of others also moving through the circle and to give each other space).



**TOP TIP**

Show pupils the different parts of a hop using **visual cues** such as posters or videos (accessible online through the PDST *Move Well, Move Often* resource) and **physical demonstrations**. Hopping is a skill that requires both balance and strength; **discuss** what these terms mean and what other activities might require either or both of these.



SPHE

**Strand:**  
Myself and Others  
**Strand Unit:**  
My Friends  
and Other People



PE

**Strand:**  
Athletics  
**Strand Unit:**  
Jumping (hopping)

### Equipment for Lesson:

Cones, Hula hoops, Disc  
markers, Beanbags,  
*PE Agreement* poster  
(from resource pack)

## Action for Life

### LESSON 2

## ACTIVITY 2 - 'Hoop to Group' Beanbag Relay

**Set-up:** Divide pupils into groups of 3-4. Arrange hoops and disc markers in a course as illustrated, with beanbags in hoop (one line per group).

- ➡ Each group lines up behind the start line.
- ➡ Pupils in each group take it in turns to move across the course, hopping across the disc markers and running through the space in the middle, before picking up a beanbag and hopping/running with it back to their group.
- ➡ Pupils high five the next person in the line to signal their turn.
- ➡ Continue until all of the beanbags have been moved from the hoop to a group.
- ➡ Pupils are encouraged to change the hopping leg frequently.
- ➡ Recognition should be given to the group who demonstrated good hopping technique and encouraged their teammates, as well as the group who completed the task the fastest.

**MODIFICATION:** Move the disc markers further apart or closer together to alter the challenge. For pupils who are wheelchair users, challenge them to move across the disc markers alternating hands, pushing one wheel at a time in a zigzag style and ensure beanbags are on an elevated surface (bench or table).

Start line

Cones

Hop



Disc markers

Run



Disc markers

Hop



Beanbags in hoop

## COOL DOWN - Wind Down

**Set-up:** Ask pupils to assist with clearing away equipment from Activity 2.

Teacher directs pupils through the Cool Down using the following movements:

- ➡ Slow jog.
- ➡ Brisk walk.
- ➡ Walk on the spot.
- ➡ Toe taps.
- ➡ Shoulder rolls.

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

## Assessment of / for learning



### Questioning

After Activity 2 ask pupils to identify the components of a proficient hop. "What should you do first? What does the other leg do? What do our arms do?"



### Questioning

Ask pupils to discuss the benefits of working together as a team in physical activity. Ask pupils to consider what would happen if a soccer player or dancer in a dance troupe did not think about their teammates.



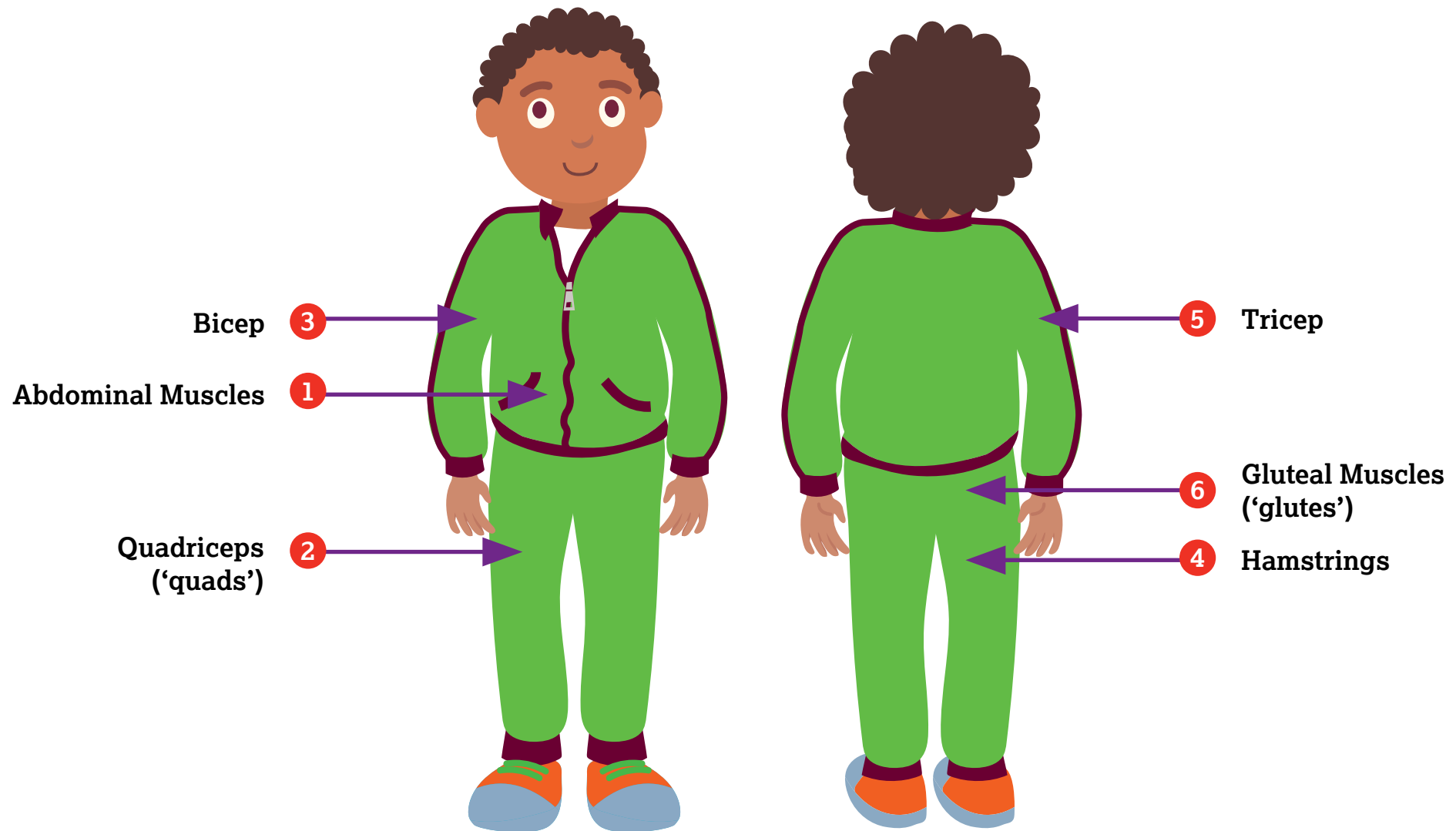
### Teacher Observation

Use the PDST *Move Well Move Often* teacher checklist to assess the skill of hopping. Observe 3-5 pupils per lesson and gradually build up a class profile over several lessons.



### TOP TIP

Before the relay, invite a pupil to **demonstrate** hopping across the course. Pause the activity at different times to focus on specific teaching points. Provide **feedback** to individuals **privately**. Hopping can be a strenuous activity so remind pupils to alternate their hopping foot and allow plenty of opportunities to rest.





# 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](http://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](mailto:schools@irishheart.ie)