

Physical Education and Psycho-Motor Development Area Project

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I. Justification

The Physical Education and Psycho-Motor Development Area is born in 2013 to respond to the necessities of Tallinn European School (TES) accommodating the Baccalaureate curriculum to its students and to the reality of its actual society.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) in its paper about obesity and overweight identifies education among other areas, as part of an increasing problem that is conducting our society towards obesity through physical inactivity and an increased intake of energy-dense foods.

The Aims of the Physical Education and Psycho-Motor Development Area:

- Help the students to discover the possibilities of their bodies enhancing their self-esteem among other personality traits.
- Educate students in the contemporary most popular sports in Europe and upcoming tendencies. Enriching the sports culture of our students with tools to ease their inclusion in an active lifestyle.
- Provide a progressive and coherent transition of the students throughout the years.
- Deliver outstanding quality and excellence not only in the lessons, but also in the relation with the students and families.
- Ensure an open environment with opportunities for exercising for every member of the TES community. Physical activity must be the easiest option; accessible, available and affordable.

II. The European schools

The European Schools are official educational establishments controlled jointly by the governments of the Member States of the European Union. In all these countries they are legally regarded as public institutions.

The mission of the European Schools is to provide a multilingual and multicultural education for Nursery, Primary and Secondary level pupils.

Based on the recommendation of the European Parliament, the European Schools have opened up their curricula and European Baccalaureate since 2005 for national Schools.

Accredited European Schools are schools which offer a European education that meets the pedagogical requirements laid down for the European Schools but within the framework of the national school networks of the Member States and hence outside the legal, administrative and financial framework to which the European Schools are compulsorily subject.

Tallinn European School is part of the Accredited European Schools since 2013.

(Extracted from: <http://www.eursc.eu/getfile/566/2>)

The syllabuses

“To guarantee recognition of the European Baccalaureate certificate, syllabuses have to meet at least the minimum requirements of all the member states. Since these vary from country to country, syllabuses are designed and written after negotiations between national experts – more particularly the members of the Boards of Inspectors – on the basis of detailed comparison of national curricula.

The syllabuses are then approved by the Joint Teaching Committee of the European Schools, which is the pedagogical supervisory authority.

In general, syllabuses are reviewed and revised every ten years. Minor changes may, however, be made at any time.”

(Extracted from: <http://www.eursc.org/index.php?id=143>)

The syllabuses provide the educational frame for Tallinn European School and hence for The area of Physical Education and Psycho-Motor Development. The programs for the Primary and Secondary cycle of Physical Education are based on their respective syllabuses, while the Psycho-motor development program is based on the objectives and outcomes extracted from the area of “ME AND MY BODY” of the Early Education Syllabus.

Early Education cycle: “Me and my Body” area: [Link here.](#)

Primary and secondary cycle: [Link here.](#)

III. The Area of Physical Education and Psycho-Motor Development

A common and integrated project.

Students in early education present differentiated characteristics:

- An early stage of development which affects the maturity of sensory-motor skills and gross motor skills makes essential a strong emphasis on loco-motor skills.
- A strong desire for playing shapes the most appropriate teaching styles at this age: trial and error, exploring, heuristic play, getting familiar by repeating, and learning repetitive procedures become key elements of a “Learn by doing” approach.

The psycho-motor development of the student is put in perspective by facilitating a smooth transition towards the first stage of a more complex physical education in Primary. Ensuring the inclusion of

contents and outcomes to help in the sensorial and gross motor development of the student as well as a well ordered change in the methodology is the key for success.

The first years of Primary are built over the pillars of early education. Sensorial-motor skills and basic motor-skills will also conform the foundation of the area of Physical Education in Primary; all linked by a more refined general dynamic coordination. General-motor skills, basic gaming strategy and sports skills will form the gate towards a new dimension of the Physical Education of the child. Healthy habits are developed and a conscience of time and space grows towards the orientation in the surroundings.

Students in the first years of Primary are more ready to learn by listening, nonetheless the transition will aim to be untroubled as it occurred before. Procedures and exploration are also present in a familiar "learn by doing" approach, what will slowly lead towards more participative styles like guided discovery or problem resolution.

During the last years of Primary the contents aim to build bridges towards Secondary. The consolidation of basic motor skills and the further development of general motor skills show the next ineludible step: specific motor skills. Pre-sports and adapted sports serve as test range for skills and methodologies that will be necessary in the upper levels.

Secondary is already the scenario where individual and team sports gain protagonism. European most popular sports are presented taking into account the recommendations of the sports federations. Specific technique and tactics are built over basic and generic motor-skills as much as games and pre-sports situations to which students have been exposed in Primary. It is during the first 3 years of Secondary when students understand how rules, efficiency and performance condition technique and tactics within the limits of the individual circumstances. It will be during the following years where technique and tactics will be potentially depurated and strategy introduced acknowledging the frame of the limited time. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle in Primary will open its scope to include a variety of disciplines, all oriented to better exploit the leisure time of the alumni.

To ensure a smooth transition of the student throughout his or her school life, it is fundamental to provide continuity to the curricula:

Vertical Progression: The area of Physical Education and Psycho-motor Development aims to build the foundation for every new level taking into account three main aspects:

- First, the characteristics of the children within every particular stage of development.
- Second, the aims and contents taught in previous years.
- Last, the contents and outcomes to be taught in the following years.

Vertical collaboration: Students from higher grades participate in a peer teaching experience through the FITeSPORTY project, in which students plan, lead and reflect on sport workshops for the school community.

Transversal cross-curricular harmonization: To ensure the most meaningful Teaching-Learning environment a multidisciplinary approach will be facilitated mostly within the same level. Informing teachers about changes in the topic, sharing materials and suggesting activities and cross-curricular projects are examples of collaboration.

IV. The Physical Education and Psycho-Motor Skills Teacher.

TES started as a small project with a grandiose potential. In very few years TES has gained the confidence and support of the international community of Tallinn what has led to a quick growth.

Due to its peculiar characteristics and potential, it is advisable to bear in mind an agile, adaptable, dynamic and highly specialized profile among the qualified and experienced teachers of TES. International and/or intercultural working experience is a requisite. The teacher is also expected to focus on the support of the development of the child, to have excellent social and communicative skills and a great willingness to contribute to the development of the school.

The PE and/or PMS teacher fulfills the above mentioned requirements and bears a profound knowledge of his area of expertise. Scientific applications and explanations play an important role along with the pedagogical capacities of the educator, both of them well adapted to the maturity of the psychological and physical characteristics of the children in different ages. Classroom management is of the essence, kindness and proximity create an atmosphere of willingness where clear rules and attractive lessons direct students toward an active learning environment. The collaboration with the rest of the teachers within the Area is also of utmost importance; Communication among teachers ensures vertical and horizontal harmonization and facilitates a smooth transition of the student throughout the school life and beyond.

V. Facilities and equipment

Safety measures, soft landing mats, edges and corners, appropriate distance, space, height and length, orientation, divided areas, attachments, illumination, ventilation and heating, ... just to name a few. A well designed facility can mark the difference between an outstanding lesson and the rest, hence its relevance. A brief description of the facilities used by the Area of PE and PMD of TES can be found underneath:

- **The gym.** Built in the ground floor of an Estonian historic heritage building, it is the core of the sports facilities at TES. Equipped for sports, games and activities, the gym welcomes every student at TES and also its staff.
- **The dance and calisthenics´ room.** A room equipped with semi rigid floor, mirrors on one side, music and a storage room.
- **The playground.** It is divided into two spaces:
 - One designed for Nursery students and lower primary; It counts with sand pit, climbing stations, slide, stands, road for bicycles and scooters, to name a few.
 - A separated area accessed by a gate gives way to a more challenging area for the rest of the children: higher climbing attractions, sand pit, table tennis, basketball court and an area with trees open the possibilities to Primary and Secondary.

- **The school surroundings.** The Snelli park and stadium and the Sõle Spordikeskus swimmingpool.
- **Other facilities in Tallinn.** Swimming pools, beach-soccer and beach-volley courts, fitness clubs, other sports clubs, indoor and outdoor athletic tracks, alpine ski and cross-country ski tracks, adventure parks, ice skating rinks... an open concept school for the students to discover and play an active part.