



Unpacking the Physical Education strand of the new HPE curriculum

Suggested time	Focus	Who it's for
4–5 hours: one full day, or three to four department meetings	Physical Education, with opportunities for cross-strand planning with Health	PE departments planning Years 9–10 programmes for 2027

Kia ora koutou!

With the new Health and Physical Education curriculum released, many departments are beginning to consider what this means for their Year 9–10 programmes.

The good news is that much of what you already teach remains relevant! This is an opportunity to look at your existing programmes, recognise what you're already doing, and identify what you might need to develop or make more explicit.

As you work through these activities, we encourage you to think creatively about how you could organise and connect the new knowledge and practices within your programme. Every department approaches PE differently, and there is no one way to package the learning. Consider the strengths of your current programme, the experiences you want to retain, and the opportunities to make new connections across the curriculum.

What do we want students to understand, know and be able to do?

How might we bring different knowledge and practices together into meaningful units of learning?

Which movement experiences, games, sports or environments could help students develop and apply this learning?

You don't need to start again! Use this time to explore the possibilities together, build on what you already do well, and get creative about what your Year 9–10 programme could look like.

What you'll need

- The September 2026 Health and Physical Education curriculum, Phase 4 (Years 9–10)
- The HPE glossary and conceptual mapping document
- Your current Year 9–10 PE unit plans or programme overview
- Paper, sticky notes, highlighters or a shared digital document

How to use this guide

Work through the activities in your department or in smaller groups. Adapt the timing and approach to suit where your team is currently at.

By the end, aim to have an initial understanding of the new PE curriculum, some ideas about what can remain in your programme, and a few questions to bring to the Big Day Outs.

Overview of activities

Activity	Time	Purpose
1 Getting our heads around the PE strand	25 min	Establish what's familiar and what has changed.
2 PE curriculum scavenger hunt	25 min	Navigate the new structure and locate key information.
3 Sort the knowledge	50 min	Explore the two PE elements and Year 9–10 progression.
4 Unpacking knowledge and practices	60 min	Work out what a PE statement means for teaching and learning.
5 Keep, tweak or rethink?	70 min	Map existing PE units and identify gaps.
6 Bringing Health and PE together	55 min	Identify authentic cross-strand planning opportunities.
7 Help us plan your Big Day Out	15 min	Identify what teachers need at the Big Day Outs.
Total	5 hours	Trim or split activities to suit your time.

PENZ planning tools to have on hand

Free A3 tools from PENZ that pair with these activities. Codes on the tools (M1 to A3, K1, P1) are PENZ labels for planning, not Ministry codes.

Tool	What it helps with	Activity
Knowledge and Practices Year 9 and Year 10	Every PE knowledge and practice statement for the year level on one page.	3, 4
Unpacking Canvas Blank and topic versions	What a statement means for teaching and learning in your context.	4
Unit Canvas Years 9–10	Reframing a unit around its intended learning.	5
Programme Map Year 9 and Year 10	Seeing which units carry which statements, and where the gaps are.	5

Download them from the curriculum supports page on penz.org.nz.

Purpose: Share your first impressions and consider what has changed from the previous NZC.

Start by individually reading the HPE purpose statement (p. 4), PE strand description (p. 5) and learning area structure (pp. 5–6). As you read, think about the following questions.

What feels familiar?	What looks different?	What are we unsure about?
What knowledge and practices do we recognise from our existing programmes?	What appears new, more specific or organised differently?	What questions do we have about the curriculum or its implementation?

Share your thinking with your colleagues. Look for common responses and discuss any differences in interpretation.

Before moving on Agree on two or three things that stand out to your department.

Purpose: Become familiar with the structure, terminology and organisation of the new PE curriculum.

Working in pairs, use the new curriculum to find the answers to the questions below. Record the relevant page number or statement. Don't worry if you're unsure about something. Make a note so you can discuss it with the wider team.

Your scavenger hunt

	Work through the questions with a colleague	Page or statement
1	Find the two strands within the HPE learning area. How are they organised?	
2	Find the two elements within the Physical Education strand. What are they?	
3	Find the three headings within the Movement element.	
4	Find the three headings within the Active participation element.	
5	Find a Year 9 knowledge statement and a related practice. What's the difference between the two?	
6	Find an example of knowledge that progresses from Year 9 to Year 10. How does the learning develop?	
7	Find where the curriculum discusses psychological aspects of movement. What are students expected to learn?	
8	Find where adapted physical education appears. What does this mean for teaching?	
9	Find an example of Māori knowledge, values or approaches within PE.	
10	Find where the curriculum explains the use of local contexts. What flexibility do teachers have?	

Department kōrero

Bring everyone back together and discuss:

- 1 What did you discover?
- 2 What do you understand better now?
- 3 Which parts would you like to explore further?

Purpose: Explore the knowledge within Movement and Active participation, identify how it progresses from Year 9 to Year 10, and consider what your department already teaches.

Use with

Knowledge and Practices, Year 9

Knowledge and Practices, Year 10

Preparation

- Print or copy the PE knowledge statements from pages 28–29 of the new curriculum. Cut them into individual statements or place them in movable digital boxes.
- Remove the year-level and element headings from the statements. Keep a copy of the original curriculum nearby so you can check your sorting.

Your task

Working in small groups, complete the following steps.

Step 1. Sort the knowledge into the two PE elements

Read each statement and decide whether it belongs under Movement or Active participation. Then organise the statements under the appropriate curriculum headings.

Movement	Active participation
The moving body	Participating with others
Skill acquisition	Social and cultural influences
Psychology of movement	Outdoor education

Step 2. Identify the year level

- Decide whether each statement belongs to Year 9 or Year 10. Discuss what helped you make that decision.
- Check your sorting against pages 28–29 of the curriculum.
- As you compare the two year levels, consider: What builds on prior learning? Where is new knowledge introduced? How does the complexity of learning change?

Step 3. Identify what your department already teaches

Now that you have organised the statements, use three colours to identify where your department is currently at.

Green

We already explicitly teach this knowledge. We can identify where this is taught in our current programme.

Orange

We teach this, but may need to develop it further. The knowledge features in our programme, but we may need to make it more explicit or develop it in greater depth.

Red

We don't currently teach this, or we need to develop our understanding of it. We may need to introduce new learning or seek further support.

Remember to consider the knowledge students are actually learning, not just the activities they participate in. For example, teaching basketball does not automatically mean students are explicitly learning about feedback, tactical decision-making or emotional regulation.

Department kōrero

Bring everyone back together and discuss:

- 1 What knowledge are we already teaching across our Year 9–10 programme?
- 2 Were there any statements we initially marked green because we teach the activity, but need to reconsider because the knowledge isn't explicitly taught?
- 3 Where are our biggest gaps, and which statements generated the most discussion?

Before moving on Keep your orange and red statements handy. Choose one to unpack in Activity 4 and bring any remaining questions to the PENZ Big Day Outs.

Purpose: Explore what a PE knowledge statement means for teaching and how students might develop and apply this knowledge through practical movement experiences.

Use with

Unpacking Canvas

Knowledge and Practices

Select one knowledge statement from page 28 or 29. Identify the relevant practice(s), then consider how you could design learning experiences to develop students' understanding.

Our knowledge statement and related practice(s)

Code(s)

Your task

Work together to unpack the statement using the following questions:

	Question	Our thinking
1	What knowledge does the statement require us to teach?	
2	Are there terms or concepts we need to define or develop our own understanding of?	
3	Which practice(s) could connect with this knowledge, and what are students expected to do?	
4	What would students need to learn before they could apply this knowledge?	
5	How could we design practical movement experiences that help students develop and apply this knowledge?	
6	Which games, sports, activities or environments could provide suitable contexts for this learning?	
7	What could students say, do or produce to show they understand and can apply the knowledge?	

Share back

Each group briefly shares its selected knowledge statement, the related practice(s), and one practical learning experience.

As a department, discuss: How does starting with the intended learning influence the activities we select and the way we teach them?

Purpose: Review your existing PE programme and consider how you could organise units around the knowledge and practices students need to learn.

Use with

Unit Canvas

Programme Map

Many PE programmes are currently organised around sports or activities. These are useful contexts, but what is the learning driving each unit?

For example, a basketball unit could focus on tactical decision-making, skill acquisition, or understanding how emotions influence movement. The learning focus determines the knowledge and practices you teach and how you use the activity.

Step 1. Choose an existing unit

- 1 Select one Year 9 or Year 10 unit from your current programme.
- 2 Identify the knowledge and practices from pages 28–29 that this unit currently addresses.
- 3 Be specific about what students learn, rather than simply listing the activities they complete.

Step 2. Keep, tweak or rethink

Keep	Tweak	Rethink
What learning already aligns with the new curriculum?	What knowledge or practices could we make more explicit?	What learning is missing, or where might we need a different approach?

Step 3. Reframe your unit

Consider how you might organise or name your unit around its intended learning.

- What is the main learning focus?
- Which knowledge and practices will students develop?
- What would progression look like within the unit?
- Which movement contexts could help students develop and apply this learning?

Step 4. Look across your programme

Consider how your proposed unit fits within the wider Year 9–10 programme. Which knowledge and practices are covered elsewhere? Where are there gaps, unnecessary repetition or opportunities for connections?

Keep it manageable You don't need to redesign your whole programme today. Identify one unit you could develop further and bring it to the Big Day Out.

Examples

Possible learning-led unit	Curriculum connection	Possible movement contexts
Understanding balance and stability (Y9)	Movement: The moving body	Gymnastics, mau rākau, kapa haka, dance, martial arts, balance challenges
Improving movement through feedback (Y9)	Movement: Skill acquisition	Kī o rahi poi, basketball, softball, athletics, target activities
Understanding how emotions influence movement (Y9)	Movement: Psychology of movement	Mahi whai, kapa haka, competitive and cooperative games, movement challenges
Adapting movement in changing conditions (Y10)	Movement: Skill acquisition	Waka ama, surfing, softball, football, outdoor activities
Designing for equitable participation (Y10)	Active participation: Social and cultural influences	Adapted ngā taonga tākaro, modified games, seated volleyball, inclusive dance, adapted sport
Leading supportive and inclusive activities (Y10)	Active participation: Participating with others	Horohopu, piki maunga, Māori and Pacific games, student-led activities, group challenges

Purpose: Identify opportunities for meaningful connections between Health and PE when planning your Year 9–10 programmes.

Although Health and Physical Education are organised into separate strands in the new curriculum, there are opportunities for the knowledge and practices to connect. Where can we connect the learning?

For this activity, you will need the Health teaching sequence on pages 25–27 alongside the PE teaching sequence on pages 28–29.

Step 1. Find the connections

Start by looking at the knowledge statements within either the Health or PE strand. Identify knowledge from the other strand that could meaningfully connect with this learning. Consider the following examples:

Year level	Suggested learning focus	Relevant curriculum knowledge
Year 9	Understanding connections between movement and wellbeing	PE: The moving body (p. 28). Health: Approaches to health (p. 25).
Year 9	Exploring how identity and confidence influence movement participation	PE: Psychology of movement (p. 28). Health: Mental health (p. 25).
Year 10	Understanding and supporting equitable participation	PE: Social and cultural influences (p. 29). Health: Inclusive communities (p. 27).

These are suggested learning focuses, not prescribed units. Use the curriculum to identify the exact knowledge statements and relevant practices for each strand.

Step 2. Plan one possible connection

Working as a department, select one learning focus that could connect Health and PE.

- Identify the relevant knowledge and practices from both strands. Then consider how you could organise the learning within your Year 9 or Year 10 programme.
- You may find that one movement context could support learning across both strands, or that separate Health and PE units could be planned to build on one another.

Consider

- 1 What knowledge and practices do we want students to learn in each strand?
- 2 Where are there meaningful connections between the two?
- 3 How could we organise or sequence the learning?
- 4 Which movement experiences or other contexts could support this learning?
- 5 How will we ensure students develop the intended knowledge and practices in both strands?

Step 3. Share and discuss

- Share your proposed connection with another group.
- Discuss whether both strands' knowledge and practices are being deliberately taught. A shared context can provide opportunities for learning in both Health and PE, but simply participating in a PE activity does not automatically mean students have met the Health requirements.

Department takeaway Identify one opportunity for cross-strand planning that you would like to explore further.

Help us plan your Big Day Out

15 min

Ngā mihi for taking the time to work through these activities with your department!

We would love to hear what you've discovered, what questions you still have and what support would be most useful when we come together at the PENZ Big Day Outs.

Please agree on one department response to the following questions, then share it with us on the **PENZ website**.

	Question	Our department response
1	What feels familiar or similar to what you're already teaching?	
2	What is the biggest change you've identified for your Year 9–10 PE programme?	
3	What would you most like support with in the Movement workshop?	
4	What would you most like support with in the Active participation workshop?	
5	What questions do you still have about the new curriculum?	

Before you come to the Big Day Out

Please bring one current Year 9 or Year 10 PE unit plan, along with your initial ideas about how it could be developed to align with the new curriculum.

Consider the knowledge and practices that will drive the learning, the movement contexts you could use, and any questions your department would like help unpacking.

See you at the Big Day Outs

Our Movement and Active participation workshops will explore practical ways to teach the new curriculum and provide opportunities to develop your existing programmes.

We look forward to continuing the kōrero and learning alongside you all!

**Ngā mihi nui,
The PENZ team**