

Introduction

These recommendations are consistent with guidance received from OCMOH (Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health) with a public health perspective based on current epidemiology. For additional information please see the links below and please refer to the [Nova Scotia Back to School Public Health Plan](#).

While this document is focused on P-8 classrooms, there are many components of this document that can also apply to Grades 9-12. A document specifically addressing Grades 9-12 is in development and will be linked from the [Curriculum Website](#) when completed.

The Importance of Physical Activity, Movement and Being Outdoors

There is strong evidence on the positive impact physical activity has on the development of the whole child. Physical activity as part of a daily routine positively impacts individual growth and development, academic achievement, as well as school connectedness and sense of belonging. Positive physically active experiences benefit students' healthy mental, emotional, physical, and social development.

Movement and being physically active support student success by improving learning, development, well-being and health. Notably, it is linked to academic performance, physical and mental health, maintenance of a healthy body weight and motor skill development. Physical activity can be a means to positively affect how young people behave in relation to other health matters such as healthy eating, sleep hygiene, injury, substance-use, sexual health, and social and emotional management. There is also strong evidence that when children and youth are outside or engaged with the natural environment, they are more likely to be physically active. The outdoors can play a critical role in their overall healthy development.

Nova Scotia is committed to increasing opportunities for students to be physically active and, in collaboration with community and provincial stakeholders, the Government of Nova Scotia is implementing the [Let's Get Moving](#) plan to encourage Nova Scotians to include movement in their daily lives.

Being physically active and moving can happen across the curriculum and in different settings. A minimum of ten minutes of physically active time should be incorporated into every classroom P-6 and it is strongly encouraged in 7-12 based on the evidence and benefits as noted above. It is important that measures taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission be balanced with efforts to create safe, physically active and inclusive spaces. The [Back to School Plan](#) indicates that the outdoors is to be used for learning and well-being whenever possible. This document helps to support you to do that throughout the school day.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide suggestions for teachers P-8 on how to incorporate movement into the daily routine.
- Provide suggestions and tools to help support teachers to plan for learning outside.
- Provide suggestions and recommended resources to allow teachers to meet or exceed the dedicated Physically Active Time of 10 minutes a day for students in Primary to Grade 6.
- Provide suggestions on how to embed movement and physical activity across the curriculum.

An additional document for Grades 9 to 12 is in development.

Moving Forward: Creating a Culture of Movement during Class for All Students

[Nova Scotia's Inclusive Education Policy](#) focuses on *equity and inclusion* to support the well-being and success of all students, including students who have been historically and systemically marginalized, under-represented, and under-served. Planning and implementing physically active time, embedding movement throughout the day and going outside more frequently will support all learners.

Getting Outside to Move and Engage in Learning

All teachers are encouraged to creatively look for ways to incorporate learning outside into the day. It is strongly recommended that teachers take students outside for some physical activity every day over and above scheduled recess and/or lunch breaks. Something as simple as a walk around the school grounds and/or in the neighborhood provides time for everyone to get outside for more light, fresh air, and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. This can happen in all weather conditions and can be connected to curriculum (e.g. patterns in nature that connect to mathematics, words on signs, weather and natural sciences, and journal writing). The “Subject-Specific Bank of Ideas” below shares a number of ideas and suggestions on using the outdoors as a place for learning across the curriculum.

NOTE on Consent and Waiver Forms:

The School Insurance Program has provided the following information:

- One-time individualized informed consent (based on each school's particular applicable hazards) can be sent home at the beginning of the school year for times when students will be going off school property. This means that all hazards should be covered in the informed consent. (ie. maybe the students have to cross the road, etc)
- Teachers can organize regular excursions within their community, such as a trip to a nearby park or green space area, to add variety in the outdoor learning settings. A general walking permission form signed once by parents can cover all excursions of this nature off school property. To access this form, go to the SIP website and login under the Risk Management tab:
<https://sip.ca/rm/topic/category/consent-forms>
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Nevertheless, for certainty, as you plan how to integrate being outside into the learning experience, you will also want to reach out to your RCE/CSAP to identify potential consent and waiver forms and other documentation that may be needed to allow students to leave school property. Other considerations will need to be factored in when planning for students to leave school property, including the appropriate safety guidelines and check lists that need to be referred to.

Students will be aware of ways to protect themselves from UV rays (e.g. use of hat, sunglasses, sunscreen) and insects (e.g. repellent). Information regarding ticks and potential for lyme disease can be found at <https://novascotia.ca/dhw/CDPC/lyme.asp>

Movement-based Learning Across the Curriculum: General Ideas

Kids Run Club (KRC) "Let's Move" Teacher Resources:

[KRC Let's Move](#) is a fun, simple and effective bilingual program that supports primary to Grade 6 classroom teachers in promoting movement among students, whether in the class or during at-home learning. KRC Let's Move features a teacher's toolkit that contains ideas for outdoor activities, the Alphabet Activity Challenge for outside or gymnasium time, and the modified Kids Run Club running program. It also features KRC Let's Move Videos – a series of five-minute movement breaks that can be used in the classroom and for at-home learning.

As with all KRC programs, KRC Let's Move is available at no cost and does not require registration or membership. However, teachers who register for the program will be supported by the KRC team and will provide important input to help evaluate this new tool.

Learning for a Sustainable Future Resources:

Learning for a Sustainable Future is an organization committed to engaging students outdoors while following subject-based curriculum. They have created, developed and linked many different lessons on their resource pages that educators may find helpful as they plan their learning experiences for the outdoor setting.

NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Outdoor Learning Resource Page:

This resource page contains NS Curriculum-based webinars and resource links developed to inspire outdoor learning in NS.

Movement-based Learning Across the Curriculum: Subject-Specific Bank of Ideas

In addition to using the outdoors more frequently, movement in the classroom is encouraged. It is important that teachers look for opportunities for learners and themselves to be active. In general, avoid and limit extended periods of remaining sedentary, take breaks to move, and actively monitor for signs that students need to move. Below are examples across subject areas to provide daily opportunities for students to learn in an active way, but to still maintain safe practices within the classroom environment.

These are starter ideas that we know teachers will expand on and adjust based on their learners and school environments. Many of the suggested subject-specific approaches and activities that follow can be applied across the curriculum in a variety of subject areas and in cross-curriculum ways. There is value in reviewing the full list as you plan.

As a reminder, please be advised of Public Health recommendations to eliminate or minimize sharing and communal equipment. If it is educationally necessary to share equipment, then it must be disinfected, and hand hygiene regularly performed, before and after, in the classroom. Refer to [the Back to School plan](#) for further information.

Health Education

P-3:

In Grades P-3, pedestrian safety is an important component of injury prevention. Take students outside to practice crossing the street (stop, look, listen, then go, look, listen). This learning experience can happen in all seasons. Likewise, if in an urban setting, walking safely along a sidewalk looking and listening for vehicles moving out of and into driveways.

P-8:

In Grades P-8, take learning outside to practice and role play personal safety scenarios from Kids in the Know (digital access can be found on the GNSPES landing page in other links under C3P button) that address the seven root strategies for personal safety. Write positive health messages with sidewalk chalk outside (reminder that chalk should not be shared between students and students should have their own individual chalk).

Simulate the pathway of human systems and models (i.e., move like a blood cell, move like food through the digestive system, act out aspects of life cycles, water cycle, etc.) can be done both inside and outside. Create and maintain school and/or community gardens. This provides an opportunity for hands on/active/outdoor learning experience that can be connected to guiding questions in Health Education Primary-8. Simply getting outside for conversation-based learning related to curriculum outcomes, conducting check-ins, standing, or sitting in green space on the school grounds are good ways to make learning in Health Education P-8 less sedentary.

Language Arts and Social Studies

In general, BOKS Canada provides excellent suggestions on encouraging movement in the Language Arts and/or the Social Studies classes:

- [Boks-Canada-20 Activity Bursts that Allow Students to Stay Active at a Distance](#)
- [Boks-Canada 20-activités-Boum-BOKS qui respectent les distanciations physiques](#)

Here are a number of specific suggestions:

All Grade Levels

- Gallery Walk: Explore any concept by walking around the room maintaining distancing. This can be done with small groups instead of the full class.
- Sidewalk Chalk Compositions: Represent literacy or social studies concepts through writing or illustrations.
- Outdoor Observation (Inspiration): With journals, walk and explore your community, or school grounds, using five senses to springboard poetry, stories, writing ideas, etc.
- Outdoor Observation (Mapping): Sketch, note, or use technology to record your observations on a walk outside and use them to create a map of your school grounds.

- Represent concepts physically to incorporate movement or as a frozen tableau (i.e., What does friendship look like? What does fairness look like? What does my community look like?).
- Tell a story through movement.
- Turn and talk standing up (maintain physical distancing).
- Stand up at the desk instead of raising their hands when contributing to a discussion or answering a question.
- Think-Pair at a Distance-Share: Explore language arts or social studies concepts independently, discuss with a partner somewhere else in the room, then share with the whole class.
- Social Distancing Greeting: Create ways to meet each other while keeping a safe distance.
- Memory: Create a pattern of movement, then others repeat (for added complexity, each student can add a movement). This can be done while seated or standing.

P-6

- Alphabet Scavenger Hunts: Get up and find a letter (or word that starts with the letter) in your learning environment.
- Make letters (or words) with your body.
- Create visual timelines throughout the room by having students get up individually and add to it.
- Mime/Move like a ____: This can be done like charades (guess the character, animal, person, etc.) or the teacher says a character/animal/person and everyone acts it out.
- Listen and move: A movement is assigned to a certain word/phrase, in a video, fiction/nonfiction text, or song. When students hear that word/phrase, they react (jump up when you hear the word “frog”, hug yourself when you hear the word “family”, etc.)
- Simon says: Use this with additional language learners to practice vocabulary and point to things around the room, or with mapping concepts (cardinal directions).
- Pretend: (P-3): Younger children enjoy pretending. Call out a few words/phrases in sequence to review vocabulary that has recently been taught or that has occurred in a read aloud.

7-8

- Carousel Questions: Students move around a large area outside and answer a series of questions on a concept.
- Create historical timelines around the room.
- Impact of Exercise: Describe how you feel before and after you engage in exercise within the school day through writing or other ways of representing.
- Walk and Talk: In pairs, students are given discussion questions, or opposite sides to debate. They are to walk and talk appropriately distanced for a set period of time. Each group takes turns sharing to the larger group what was discussed.
- Inner/Outer Circle: Use this to discuss multiple debatable topics, discuss what they have learned about a topic, or their responses to a question. There is an inner and an outer circle. The circles line up so that the inner circle speaks to a partner on the outer circle. This is a great way to review prior to an assessment, and to help elicit prior knowledge. You will need a large space, outdoors or indoors, to do this in a COVID friendly way.
- Charades: Play charades with the literal meanings of idioms to explore figurative meanings.
- Sticky Notes: Students write their answers/ideas/opinions about a concept on a sticky note. They then get up and post them on chart paper as directed.

Mathematics and Science

P-6:

- Scavenger Hunts: Collect data, represent findings, estimate, make observations, locate patterns.
- Shadow tag and exploring shadows at different times of the day outside or through the classroom windows.
- Move like particles in various states of matter can be done at desks or outside.
- Using arms to represent concepts such as movement of the planets, graphs (histograms, pictographs, etc.), plant growth, seasonal changes, counting and representation of numbers.
- Nature walk: Compare, count, estimate measurements using standard and non-standard units, make observations and notice patterns of living things, collect data, weather, seasons, sounds, etc.
- Explore rocks and habitats outside; make observations and recognize patterns.

7-8:

- Represent concepts (linear relationships, growth rate, population graphs, particle theory, parts of a cell, etc.) through movement.
- Investigate the impact of exercise and collect pulse and breathing rate data. This can be done in the class through activities like running on the spot, or energizing exercises.

Visual Arts

The Visual Arts P-8 curriculum provides learners with opportunities to engage in the processes of looking, making, and reflecting. These three processes are most effective when approached as interdependent, rather than discrete concepts. When linked with physical activity, learner engagement and achievement is heightened, creating joyful and interactive collaborative and meaningful experiences relevant to real situations.

The suggestions offered below can be adapted to be used at any grade level, P-8.

Looking

Provide an opportunity for learners to engage with images of artworks from various times, continents, cultures, styles, etc. These could be posted in a physically large area, and if possible, outdoors. Teachers would create a variety of sticky notes and colour cards (sample paint colour “chips” from a hardware store) could be placed in a central location. Each sticky note would have one piece of information on it. It might be a vocabulary word from Social Studies, Math, English Language Arts, etc., a visual representation of an element of art/principle of design, a word from art vocabulary, a shape (triangle, circle, etc.). Learners would randomly be given a sticky note/colour card and run/walk/reach to the various artworks, placing their note/card on an artwork that they feel matches their selected item. When all the note/cards are placed, the teacher can facilitate a discussion about what learners observed about the art works.

Making

In small groups, offer learners the opportunity to express and create artworks using natural elements (leaves, twigs, nuts, bark, needles, stones, etc.) within an outdoor setting. The focus on found objects that are already lying on the forest floor/ground can help learners select more ecologically sound choices. Once completed, learners can be invited to set up an art gallery to view the works. Encourage creative movement between works, if space provides the opportunity to increase the movement intensity. Through this experience, learners will be able to explore nature not only as a source of inspiration for artistic expression, but also as a medium for creating.

Reflecting

Invite learners to look at a variety of artworks created by class members. Have them identify specific elements of art and principles of design in the artworks. Working in their cohort, have learners select an artwork and consider how they might physically interpret the elements of art and principles of design (e.g., line, shape, colour, texture, balance, pattern, contrast, etc.) represented in the artwork. Learners will create a dynamic physical representation of their identified artwork. These representations can be shared with each other and peer feedback can be offered where possible. Building on what they experienced while physically interpreting the elements of art and principles of design, learners can reflect on the big ideas.

Planning to Get Moving Indoors and Outdoors: Additional Suggestions

Embedding movement and physical activity throughout the day can be supported and amplified by a number of key factors. Here are some additional suggestions to support teachers and schools as you work to increase movement in the classroom and by using the outdoors.

- **Working together as a school community:** It may start out between a couple of teachers, exchanging and coordinating ideas and learning experiences on how to embed movement and physical activity throughout the day. Gradually over time, it can shift to a whole school approach. What can be done together to create an overall environment where movement can happen on a regular and routine basis? Your RCE/CSAP will be able to provide information on how to use a health promoting school approach to help coordinate your activities. Contact your regional Health Promoting Schools committee about a potential grant to support out-of-classroom/outdoor learning.
- **Applying a Mi'kmaw cultural lens:** As a way to build cultural competence (and confidence), teachers can use opportunities for increased physical activity to introduce aspects of treaty education which will enrich the experiences for all. Over the past year, concepts like Mi'kmaw ways of being and knowing, interconnectiveness and environmental stewardship have been introduced and can be integrated throughout the public school program. Through The Core Values of Netukulimk, educators can familiarize themselves with various Mi'kmaw perspectives or world views and enrich physical activity experiences.
- **Consider barriers and challenges:** Do you and the school community have strategies to support students to have appropriate clothing and footwear? What strategies can be used to normalize and communicate with parents regarding being outside in a variety of weather conditions?
- **Reach out to your community partners for ideas:** There is a wealth of expertise in your community to tap into how to engage school-aged children and youth on being physically active. See the [Nova Scotia Connect.ca](https://www.novascotiaconnect.ca) to get in touch with your local Recreation Department for ideas of what might be available in your community during COVID. These ideas may support your students in increasing physical activity in and out of school time.
- **Encouraging student active transportation:** Get involved with or lead efforts to encourage safe active transportation to and from school. Biking, walking, wheeling, or scooting to and from school not only helps students with their overall health but also helps prepare them to learn. Discuss with your School Advisory Council on how to integrate active transportation. Also, the [Ecology Action Centre](https://www.ecologyactioncentre.ca) has a number of excellent resources on how to build student active transportation. While promoting student

active transportation can be more challenging in rural areas, if it is possible, start to explore options and possibilities by opening the conversation at your school.

- **Engaging students and families in their activity:** Understanding student perspectives can help with your planning. The Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health's [Youth Engagement Tool Kit](#) is a practical resource to help you engage students in being more active.
- **Reach out to your Regional Centre for Education's Active Healthy Lead/Program Coordinator:** The RCE/CSAP office can help get the expertise and knowledge you may need to engage in physically active time, learning in the outdoors and to adopting a health promoting school approach.

Conclusion: Ease-In Approach

Finally, building into your planning opportunities for students to move and be physically active is fun, increases engagement with learning and enhances well-being. It is suggested that teachers ease into the new school year through establishing new routines for their classes, and initially minimizing the use of equipment until new practices are understood and reinforced with students. Incorporating movement into the classroom, being physically active and using the outdoors for learning daily will take time. Taking that first move is a step towards making it happen!

Appendix Recommended Resources

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development recommends the following resources from reputable organizations which developed them according to curriculum in Nova Scotia or teaching practices in Canada. These resources will assist teachers to embed movement as part of regular classroom activity and routines and offers suggestions for using the outdoors as part of the school day. They are free and offer ready-to-go ideas and/or lesson suggestions. While many of these suggestions come from organizations working with physical education teachers, they are also intended to be used across the curriculum or in any classroom.

- [At My Best - K - 6:](#) *At My Best* has been designed for teachers working with students in Kindergarten to Grade 6. It focuses on a variety of topics related to emotional well-being, physical activity, and healthy eating.
- [BOKS Canada:](#) BOKS is a FREE physical activity program designed to get kids active and establish a lifelong commitment to health and fitness. BOKS offers resources and tools to get kids moving in fun ways throughout the day, whether they are in the classroom, at home, or outside.
- [Healthy Tomorrow Foundation: Kids Run Club:](#) Kids Run Club is a free, school-based recreational running program designed to give children and youth an opportunity to embrace active, healthy living.
- [Learning for a Sustainable Future:](#) This website offers innovative methodologies to help educators engage their students in addressing the increasing complex economic, social and environmental challenges of the 21st century. It includes professional development workshops, tools, classroom resources and funding to help teachers enrich their students' education through active, experiential and interdisciplinary learning.
- [Making Tracks:](#) Provides teachers with ready-to-go lesson plans to teach children and youth walking and cycling safety skills. It also prepares youth to be mentors to younger children. Early in 2020-21, a Making Tracks Walking Activities Toolkit will be available online. Also, a series of short videos about cycling safety will be available on YouTube.
- [Nourish Nova Scotia's "Grow Eat Learn":](#) Using edible school gardens to connect learning to growing food. Helps students get outside and be physically active and moving.
- [NS ASK Project:](#) ASK is a model for curriculum delivery researched and developed in Norway (1,2) that involves the incorporation of simple physical activities into the delivery of academic lessons. Physically Active Lessons (PALs) activities are delivered by educators in 20-30 minutes and are well suited for Math, Language and Social Studies classes. Other subjects can use PALs with simple adaptation. PAL activities are usually delivered outdoors but are adaptable to any setting. The lessons can be found here: [Physically Active Lessons and Ideas \(Active Smarter Kids\)](#)
- [Outdoor Learning Tips:](#) As you build and deepen routines, the Council of Ontario Outdoor Educators provides a comprehensive document.
- [ParticipACTION:](#) Has plenty of ideas and suggestions on how to get school-aged children and youth active and moving that could be adapted for the classroom.

- [Reconnecting with Nature](#): This resource from Nova Scotia is suitable for teachers helping children and youth appreciate and understand the natural world, while being physically active in the outdoors. More information is available at [Hike Nova Scotia](#).
- [Return to School Physical and Health Education Guidelines](#): These guidelines are also fully transferable to all other subject areas when incorporating movement into lessons.
- [Teaching in Alternative Learning Environments](#): Useful guide that aligns with our current Public Health recommendations that is aimed at Health and Physical Education classes but is also fully transferable to getting students moving and physically active regardless of the subject area. Please see [their ideas for management](#) for additional information and supporting advice.

Resources that are Not Recommended

While the internet can be a vast warehouse of suggestions to inspire student movement and physical activity, some care should be exercised in integrating them into the classroom to ensure student equity, review for bias and for curriculum alignment with Nova Scotia's public education system. In particular, be careful with YouTube channels that offer no cost-led movement-based activities, and that have up-sell features for families to purchase from home.