Physical Education Requirements for New York City Elementary Schools

Physical education (PE) is required by New York State law and the Commissioner of Education’s regulations for all students in grades K-12. In PE, students learn about fitness and develop attitudes, skills and behaviors that lead to lifelong physical, mental, emotional and social wellness.

Physical Education Is

- An academic subject, with established learning standards
- A regular class scheduled during the school day
- Taught by a certified, licensed DOE teacher
- Based on a curriculum, with learning outcomes and assessments
- Accessible to all students
- Comprised of instruction on a diverse range of skills (not just sports)
- Required by State law

Physical Education Is Not*

- A form of punishment
- Recess
- A before- or after-school club
- A video-based activity break
- An external- or vendor-provided program
- A community sports league
- Going to the gym
- Active transportation

*Although some of these activities may help increase physical activity at your school, they do not replace physical education.
Elementary school students must participate in PE for at least 120 minutes per week.

- Grades K-3 must participate in PE every day.
- Grades 4-6 must participate in PE at least three times per week.

A certified PE teacher is most qualified to provide instruction that meets New York State (NYS) and national PE learning standards. The NYS learning standards for physical education are:

1) Personal Health and Fitness
2) A Safe and Healthy Environment
3) Resource Management

The Office of School Wellness Programs (OSWP) supports schools in achieving standards and provides professional development opportunities for NYC DOE teachers in health, wellness and PE. Visit schools.nyc.gov/wellness or email wellness@schools.nyc.gov to learn more.