

EUROPEAN PHYSICAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (EUPEA) POSITION STATEMENT ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

NO EDUCATION WITHOUT PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the way education systems function in Europe. The new learning environment for pupils, teachers and school leaders needs serious attention from all, on what concerns the impact on the pupils' development. The focus of this position statement is the status of Physical Education and the effect of its potential absence in schools on the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of pupils and young people. By this statement, EUPEA's intent is to assist the politicians, school leaders and teachers in providing rich, safe, and engaging quality Physical Education.

EUPEA requests that Ministers, school leaders and teachers actively promote human development by assuring the quality of education (UNESCO Charter, 2015) during the Covid-19 crisis.

EUPEA considers that:

- Physical Education is the only compulsory school subject through which children and young people can learn movement motor skills and acquire the knowledge to participate in a variety of physical activities. It is the only subject whereby physical activity is a primary means of accomplishing educational objectives.
- Quality Physical Education is unique in providing children and young people with the opportunity to develop self-management skills to become independent, physically active adults. Physical Education must be developed and reinforced.
- Physical Education is critical to the education of the total person and requires a quality programme, taught by the generalist teacher qualified in Physical Education or, a specialist Physical Education teacher.
- Stakeholders should support the implementation and evaluation of effective, evidence-based Quality Physical Education and whole school approaches to promote physical activity to help reduce sedentary behaviour.

EUPEA demands that:

- Physical Education curricular time must be ensured at least to the level established prior to the crisis.
- Physical Education should not be confused with a single and unstructured offer of physical activity/physical fitness (as the one offered by the digital media).
- Physical Education must be taught by professionally trained and qualified teachers for this purpose.
- Physical activity facilities, both indoors and outdoors, must be reserved for the compulsory Physical Education lessons.
- The face to face Physical Education lesson is the only way of learning physical activities and to maintain control and quality.
- Physical Education must be delivered by assuring the principles of eclecticism and inclusion.
- Physical Education must rise above the challenge of the crisis, whilst respecting national health guidelines.
- Schools and teachers adopt safe practices in relation to sanitisation for pupils and equipment, in accordance with School Board policies.
- At national and local levels, representatives of the physical education profession must work with politicians, parents, school directors and decision makers, to achieve the demands.

EUPEA is confident that Physical Education can continue to offer children and young people, broad and balanced quality experiences during and after the Covid-19 situation.

Glarus, June 19th 2020