BOARD OF EDUCATION

SYLLABUS
OF
PHYSICAL TRAINING
FOR SCHOOLS
1933
# CONTENTS TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefatory Memorandum</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>THE GENERAL METHODS OF TEACHING PHYSICAL EXERCISES</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>THE PHYSICAL EXERCISE LESSON</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>THE ORGANISATION AND COACHING OF GAMES</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF DANCING, SWIMMING AND ATHLETICS</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>PHYSICAL EXERCISES FOR CHILDREN UNDER SEVEN YEARS OF AGE</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>THE USE OF THE SYLLABUS UNDER EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rural Schools, Cold Weather, The Indoor Lesson**

## PART II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION OF EXERCISES AND POSITIONS</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION OF GAMES AND PRACTICES</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>LESSONS AND TABLES OF EXERCISES</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enjoyment is one of the most necessary factors in nearly everything which concerns the welfare of the body, and if exercise is distasteful and wearisome its physical as well as its mental value is greatly diminished.

Effects of Physical Training

Physical Training has, or should have, a twofold effect; on the one hand a physical effect and on the other a mental and moral effect, which for convenience may be termed educational in the popular sense. The direct results upon the health and physique of the child may be described as the physical effect. The teacher must clearly recognise that the child is a growing organism whose powers for physical work vary definitely and widely at different ages. To meet the special circumstances of continuous growth and development, a course of graduated exercises has been framed to suit children of both sexes, which aims at training every part of the body harmoniously. Not only can it be adapted to children of various ages, but under medical supervision it can be used to counteract and remedy various physical defects of weakly children.

Exercises, if rightly conducted, also have the effect, not less important, of developing in the children a cheerful and joyous spirit, together with the qualities of alertness, decision, concentration, and perfect control of brain over body. This is, in short, a discipline, and may be termed the educational effect.

These two elements are obviously blended in varying degree in every suitable lesson and, according to circumstances, now the one aspect, now the other, is to be regarded as the more important.

The Need for Revision

A Syllabus of Physical Training was first issued by the Board in 1904, and revised editions were published in 1909 when physical training was made part of the ordinary curriculum in all Public Elementary Schools, and again in 1919; the time is now ripe for a further revision. Each succeeding Syllabus has represented a definite advance upon its predecessors. Not only have the years been used to increase our knowledge and understanding of physical education in its application to the schools, but practical experience has led to modification and expansion of views originally held, while a further advance has been made possible by a higher standard of expert knowledge among the teachers who have to use the book. Thirty years ago the specialist knowledge among teachers was almost nil; now thanks to the inclusion of physical training in the Training College curriculum, the appointment of Organisers of physical training by Local Education Authorities, the provision of training classes and opportunities for special instruction of various kinds, teachers as a whole possess a useful and practical acquaintance with the subject, and a considerable number have spent time and trouble in obtaining additional qualifications. Thus we are now in a position critically to review the general methods and particular exercises described in the Syllabus of 1919, to consider whether they are in harmony with
the experience gained during the past 10 or 12 years, with the accepted changes in thought and practice which have taken place in physical education generally during this time, and with modern orthopaedic teaching.

As a result of such an examination it is evident that certain changes are needful to bring the Syllabus into line with recent methods of teaching, both to achieve the desired results in the physical development of the children more easily and more certainly, and to avoid the misapplication of certain of the original exercises which, in relatively unskilled hands, are apt to produce rather than eliminate faults of posture and carriage. Again, a number of formal exercises have hitherto been introduced rather too early in the training. On the other hand, teachers and children have responded so well to the more recreative and athletic side of teaching that it has been found possible to enlarge the scheme in this direction and commence various activities at an earlier age than that suggested before. Many teachers familiar with the 1919 Syllabus can now be encouraged to undertake a greater variety of exercises and activities with safety and with good results.

These modifications and points of difference will be dealt with in the appropriate chapters. Here it is sufficient to refer briefly to the changes which have been made, and to emphasise the fact that a full understanding of the newer methods cannot be obtained from a study of the Syllabus alone. Practical teaching and demonstration by an expert instructor are also necessary.

The Scope of the Syllabus

In order to conform to the reorganisation of schools into junior and senior schools, and to meet the differing requirements of boys and girls over the age of 11 which have become more pronounced as the standard of gymnastics has risen, it has been decided to alter the scope of this Syllabus and to regard it henceforth mainly as a book for use in junior schools and for children between the ages of 5 and 11. It is hoped later to issue a separate Syllabus for senior boys between 11 and 15 and one for senior girls of the same age group. Meanwhile, as many schools are not yet reorganised, provision is still made in this book to meet the needs of the older children, and an extension of the training has been included which will ensure continuity of teaching between the junior and the senior school. All branches of physical training suitable for Elementary Schools are included. Physical exercises and games are dealt with comprehensively, and some general guidance is given as to the introduction of swimming, dancing and school sports into the curriculum. The substance of the pamphlet on Rural Schools has been included, and some of the matter contained in the Supplement for Older Girls. The book sets out the fundamental principles underlying all physical education and deals with teaching methods suitable for children in general. Therefore it should still be regarded as the handbook for physical training for use in Elementary Schools, and should be familiar to teachers in senior as well as in junior departments.
Reference has already been made to the physical and educational effects which may be obtained from a well-balanced scheme of physical education. The maintenance of good posture is one of the primary objects of physical training, and one of the chief purposes of this book is to show how correct positions of the body in sitting and standing and in the ordinary occupations of daily life may be made habitual. The outward expression of the results of such training, and the ultimate test by which every system of physical training should be judged, are to be found in the posture and general carriage of the children, not only during the gymnastic lesson but in the classroom and on the games field. If the class or the individual stands badly there has certainly been some failure in the teaching; no teacher can be regarded as successful unless his pupils assume good bodily positions naturally and as a matter of course without evidence of strain or stiffness.

Correct posture is necessary for good health and for complete physical development. It makes the body more useful, skilful and beautiful. It helps to produce self-respect and therefore self-confidence, and thus even from the narrow utilitarian point of view it has a definite value. The child who has learnt to stand straight and hold his head up has, other things being equal, a better chance of making his way in life than his stooping weak-kneed brother. Practically all children are born with the physical capacity for good posture in later life. If a favourable environment and if opportunities for natural development were available there might be little need for special training by means of formal or corrective exercises. But unfortunately for a large number of children there are numerous factors which hinder free normal development.

Observation by the teacher of good and bad posture

Without the ability to perceive defects, theoretical knowledge of good and bad posture will be of little avail to the teachers. The following notes are intended to give them a better appreciation of what
good posture involves, help them to understand the importance of correct teaching, and learn what to look out for. The teachers must convert this knowledge into practical application by training themselves to observe line and form in the human body, and to keep before them always a picture of a good standing position. If they stand well themselves they are better able to help a class to do so too. Once this is properly realised it is easy to run the eye over the children and decide whether the class as a whole is standing well or badly, or whether the general posture is good and the faulty positions limited to the few. If the class is at fault general exercises to correct the posture should be given, observing the effect on all the children. In the latter case, individual correction may be given to the children concerned. The important point is that the teacher should have particular and special regard to the posture of the class as such, whether the children are standing, doing an exercise, or playing a game.

It should be remembered that bad posture is far more common than good posture, and that in many schools as many as 75 per cent. of the children not only stand badly but have one or more of the minor deformities commonly associated with mal-positions. The child with the flat chest, round shoulders, poking head and prominent abdomen may be the rule rather than the exception, and in such a case we often find some degree of spinal curvature, flat feet, or a reduced expansion of the base of the chest. It is just because these defects are so common, because they are hidden by the clothes, and the teacher's eye is so accustomed to a poor carriage that there is often a complete failure to realise how extremely bad is the average posture of the class. Obvious deformities or marked departures from the normal are easy to detect, but these cases belong rather to the clinic than to the school. It is the incipient and minor defects, just those which the ordinary class work should help to prevent or remove, which are not so easy to discover. The aim should be above all to prevent defects. The difficulty of seeing the shape of the body both in rest and in movement is often accentuated by the clothing worn, and this may be more marked in girls than in boys. In particular, the line of the hips and waist is difficult to see. From the point of view of the teacher, therefore, as well as the child a suitable dress should be encouraged. It may be helpful to use a plumb line sometimes to test whether an apparently satisfactory position passes this test. A demonstration of good posture with a child clothed only in shorts is a valuable part of the training course or lecture dealing with this subject. (See Fig. 1, also pages 87 and 249.)

It is not the concern of this book to deal with the many and varied circumstances which act adversely on posture by causing fatigue and weakness of the muscles, by encouraging habitual mal-postures and so forth—such as lack of sleep and rest, and of right conditions for sleeping and resting, or lack of proper diet, of suitable clothing, of fresh air and so on. The fundamental principles of hygiene and right living are dealt with by the Board of Education in their Handbook of Suggestions on Health Education* but the close inter-relation

---

* Handbook of Suggestions on Health Education, 1933, H.M. Stationery Office, price 6d.
between nutrition and posture may be noted, and the common occurrence of bad posture in a child whose health is sub-normal.

Regular use of the body, of its joints and muscles and of its intricate mechanism for the co-ordination of mental and physical processes is essential to full development. Educationists realise that if growing children are to remain at school for five or six of the best hours of the day, most of the time sitting at a desk, regular periods for exercise must be provided. Much of the time given to the Physical Training which is part of the ordinary school curriculum should be spent in the natural and recreational activities of children—in games, swimming, athletics and dancing and in the preparation for these activities. And this exercise and training has a favourable effect on posture. In the first place exercise and play in the open air keeps the normal child strong, active and fit. The general tone of the muscles is maintained, breathing and circulation develop normally in the growing body. Open air recreative exercise also acts in another way. Its whole effect is exhilarating, it produces a feeling of happiness and good spirits. Children who perhaps already shoulder cares and responsibilities at home, who are over-burdened with the need to do well in school work, or who have a dull or dreary home, find enjoyment, relaxation and an added zest in life in their games and physical activity. And this, in its turn, re-acts favourably on their alertness, carriage and posture.

But even with daily lessons in physical training such general activity is not sufficient to prevent specific defects if adverse conditions are at work. Exercises definitely designed to encourage good posture are necessary. It will be found that the 20 minute physical exercise lessons advocated in the Syllabus are made up partly of developmental exercises, and partly of preparatory work for the other branches of Physical Training already mentioned; these special developmental and corrective exercises should form a substantial part of every lesson, and in addition several minutes devoted daily to similar exercises would, if well utilised, have an excellent effect on the posture of the children. It should be noted that the result is not likely to be fully satisfactory unless the Education Authority have the services of an expert Organiser of physical training who can occasionally examine the performance of the exercises and see that valuable time is not wasted. Curative exercises are not suggested. Curative or remedial exercises should be given only by persons having suitable training and qualification. They cannot safely be used by anyone else and are, therefore, not included in the scope of this book.

The erect position

What is meant by "good" posture and how is it maintained?

The fully erect position is a comparatively recent development in the history of man (the only member of the animal kingdom who has achieved it), and it is not easily acquired. Little children do not attain it until they are about three years old, and they need still longer to learn to balance themselves properly while raising or swinging the arms overhead. Even when the position can be assumed correctly, the structure of the body is such that constant muscular activity by opposing groups of muscles is needed to maintain it. The term
"postural tone" is used to denote the result of the constant action of the muscles concerned with maintaining the erect position in standing and sitting. If these muscles become weak or relaxed, or if their action becomes irregular or unbalanced, the proper position is lost. The natural tendency is to flex rather than to extend a joint, and it is only by definite effort that this instinctive tendency is overcome and the upright position maintained. The muscles must be trained, and must be kept fit through exercise, to resist this tendency to flexion, except when a relaxed position is intentionally assumed. Weak muscles and ligaments lead to bad posture, which in its turn causes added strain upon the muscles concerned.

The trunk is balanced on the hip girdle (pelvis) and legs. Its bony axis, the spine, is a flexible column which can be swayed in any direction. The spine, which consists of a number of small bones (vertebrae) placed one above the other, is neither rigid nor vertical, and has a double curve from before backwards. The spine and chest support the upper limbs (shoulder girdle and arms). The head is balanced on the spine. Any movement of the limbs or body affects the equilibrium of the structure and must give rise to compensatory movement in other joints.

**How the erect position is maintained**

The chief groups of muscles involved in the maintenance of the erect position are:—

(a) the muscles of the ankle and foot.  
   These muscles maintain the arches and flexibility of the foot and the mobility of the ankle joint.

(b) the straighteners or extensors of the knee.

(c) the extensors of the hip (the large muscles of the buttocks).

(d) the muscles attached to and lying close to the separate bones of the spine.

   These are the chief muscles concerned with the small muscular adjustments that are continually taking place to keep the different bones of the spine in position.

(e) the abdominal muscles (forming the wall of the abdomen).

   These muscles will be referred to again. Together with the hip muscles they maintain the steadiness of the spine and its correct position in regard to the hip girdle. In other words they hold the key to good posture by steadying and supporting the lower part of the spine.

(f) the neck muscles which maintain the erect position of the head.

   The shoulder muscles prevent the falling forward of the weight of the shoulder girdle and arms. They are not key muscles in the holding of the erect position.

**Good Posture**

In "good" posture the position is maintained with the least possible strain on the muscles and tissues which hold the bones and joints in their proper place. It, therefore, leads to a minimum of fatigue and strain, and the more perfect the poise the less the strain. Faulty posture throws added strain on muscles and joints.
The internal organs are contained within the bony cavities of the trunk, packed in with fat and connective tissue, and supported by the muscular wall of the abdomen. If the normal curves of the spine are altered, or if muscular walls are weak, the abdominal wall becomes relaxed and the organs may receive insufficient support and may become displaced or compressed. Any change in position or in the normal support will tend to hinder the proper physiological functioning of an organ.

The following description of the standing position fulfils the requirements of good posture as given above.

1. The body should be supported by both feet equally, with the feet turned practically straight forward. The importance of the "straight foot" in movement and also in standing when the feet are apart is emphasised in the Syllabus. When the heels are together a slight angle between the feet may be allowed. A short astride position should be permitted in knock-kneed children.

2. The knees should be braced but not unduly forced back.

3. The tilt (or angle) of the pelvis or hip girdle, regulated by the action of the hip and abdominal muscles, is most important. Faulty posture may be due to a greater or less degree of exaggeration in either direction. For example:

   (a) The position in which the hips are pushed back, the pelvis tilted so that the normal forward curve of the spine in the waist region is increased. The abdomen is prominent and the back is unduly hollowed. This is often accompanied by an exaggerated raising of the chest and forcing back of the shoulders. The position is sometimes described as the "bantam" position.

   (b) The reverse position. The thighs slant forward and the hips are pushed forward. The body falls into a long shallow curve, hanging back, as it were, on its base. The chest is generally compressed, the head drooping. This is the slack or tired position.

   Adjustment of the hips and the right muscular contraction of abdominal and other muscles will help to correct the faults in both cases.

4. The normal curves of the spine should be maintained, neither increased nor lessened. Increased curves which take away from the height, such as round back and poking head, are by far the most common type of fault. Lifting the head has an immediate effect not only on the neck and shoulders, but on the general position of the whole body, and the much-used injunctions to "make yourself tall," to "grow," to "stretch your full height," make excellent correctives for most of the poor positions seen in school classes. Over-exercise and over-correction which tend to flatten the curves in the growing child must be avoided. This condition is unusual in the schools.

5. The shoulders should be allowed to drop so that the arms hang loosely. There should be no rigidity in the shoulder joint. If the chest is well held and the shoulder muscles at the back are