

Adapted Physical Education Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This FAQ answers questions that school staff may have about providing their students mandated for Adapted Physical Education (APE) with quality instruction aligned with New York State Education Department (NYSED) standards.

For questions not addressed here, or for guidance on the implementation of Physical Education (PE) and APE instructional programs, please contact:

Office of School Wellness Programs

Physical Education support: PEworks@schools.nyc.gov

Adapted Physical Education support: APE@schools.nyc.gov

QUICKLINKS

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APE DEFINITION

What is Adapted Physical Education?

Adapted Physical Education (APE) is specially designed instruction of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, abilities, and challenges of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully engage in unrestricted participation in the activities of the Physical Education program.

DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION

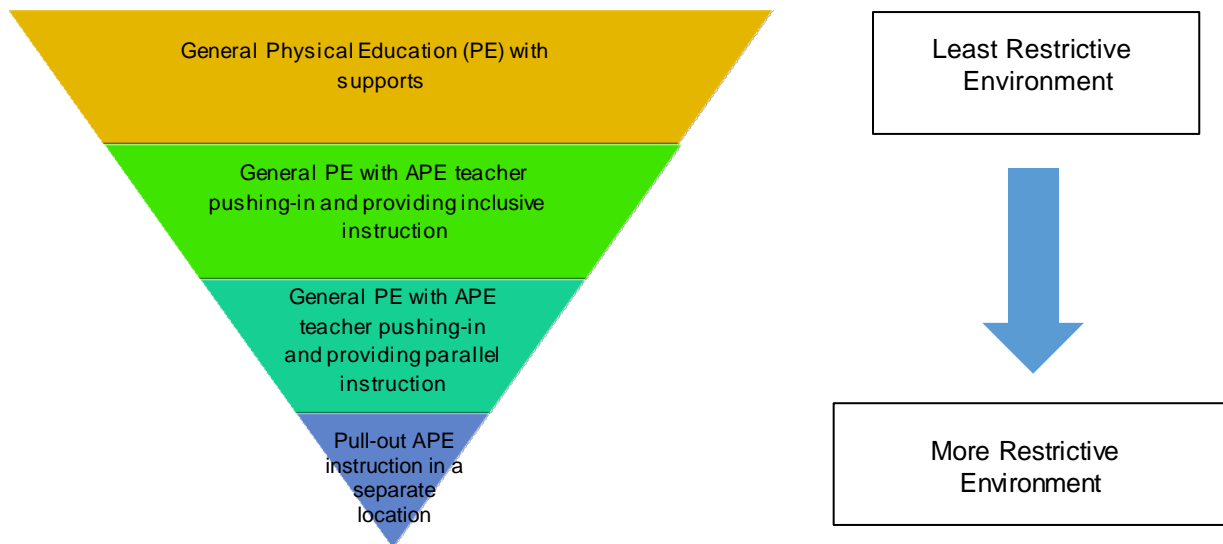
Who is qualified to teach APE in New York State?

According to NYS Commissioner's Regulation 135.4, APE instruction for students aged 5-21 must be provided by a certified Physical Education teacher. That is the only requirement for instructional staff.

Where does APE Instruction take place?

APE instruction should be delivered in the Least Restrictive Environment. In many cases, students can and should be provided with APE instruction in a general Physical Education class with their peers. Removing a student with disabilities from the general physical education environment should occur only if the nature or severity of the student's disability is such that instruction in the PE setting (gym), even with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be done safely.

What is the Least Restrictive Environment for APE?



Can a student be exempt from PE requirements?

There are no waivers or exemptions for students from PE requirements. All students in grades K-12 must take PE. Students with chronic or temporary medical conditions or disabilities must still participate in PE in the Least Restrictive Environment, with modified PE, or if necessary, APE instruction.

Is there a designated curriculum for APE?

Students who receive Adapted Physical Education should be engaging in activities designed to meet the same outcomes of the general Physical Education program to the greatest extent possible. APE teachers adapt, modify or change a PE curricular activity so that it is appropriate for the student with a disability. The goal is for ALL students to participate fully in an appropriate PE program. The New York State Education Department document, [Adapted Physical Education Regulations, Recommendations, and Resources](#), provides additional information on APE instruction.

APE AND THE IEP

How do PE/APE teachers inform an IEP?

PE/APE teachers should be active participants in the IEP evaluation process for students with physical/gross-motor disabilities. PE teachers conduct initial evaluations for APE, determine and write appropriate grade-specific goals, and monitor/assess progress frequently throughout the school year.

Is APE *only* for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

APE is for any student who has a physical restriction that prevents safe and successful participation in Physical Education instruction. Students with Section 504 plans that identify the need for modified PE may also be eligible to receive APE instruction.

When is the need for APE reviewed?

As part of their annual or triennial review process, all students with IEPs should be assessed to determine whether the present accommodations continue to be appropriate. Evaluation teams should include a Physical Education teacher to assess the appropriateness of the student's continued participation in APE.

What sections of an Individual Education Plan should reflect the need for APE?

Each IEP should be a fluid document that describes the student's needs, present performance and abilities, and the means by which the school will implement a plan to allow the student access to the general curriculum. PE/APE teachers should ensure that students who need APE have that need appropriately reflected throughout the IEP: Present Levels of Performance, Measureable Annual Goals written in alignment with grade appropriate student outcomes and the skills the student needs to master that school year, Recommended Special Education Programs/Services, and Participation with Students without Disabilities.

Is Adapted Physical Education (APE) considered a related service?

No, APE is not a related service.

Who should make a request for an APE evaluation?

Teachers, families, administrators or other school staff may request that a student be evaluated for APE at the school level. However, a school psychologist or administrator should submit a formal request for an APE evaluation to APE@schools.nyc.gov. The request should include the student's name, OSIS, and the DBN of the school the student attends. After the request is received and confirmed via email, the Office of School Wellness Programs will send an evaluator to the school to conduct the motor skill assessment. The evaluator will coordinate scheduling the evaluation with the school. This person should also be given a copy of the student's IEP, and provided with appropriate space for performing physical tasks. The student being evaluated should be dressed in comfortable attire and footwear. Teachers should not conduct evaluations for APE without the principal's approval.

What happens after an evaluation for APE?

All evaluation results should be sent to APE@schools.nyc.gov and entered into SESIS by the school. If APE is recommended, the Office of School Wellness Programs will determine the optimal means of providing APE instruction at the school.

SUMMARY OF PE REQUIREMENTS

What are the NYSED requirements for Physical Education?

Summary PE time and frequency requirements			
Grade Level	Which PE policies apply?	Minimum required PE time	Minimum required PE frequency
Grades K–3	Elementary school grades K–3	120 minutes per week	Daily, in all terms
Grades 4–5	Elementary school grades 4–6	120 minutes per week	No fewer than 3 times per week, in all terms
Grade 6 in a K–6, K–8, K–12 school	Elementary school grades 4–6	120 minutes per week	No fewer than 3 times per week, in all terms
Grade 6 in a 6–8 or 6–12 school	Middle school	90 minutes per week ²	In all terms
Grades 7–8	Middle school	90 minutes per week ²	In all terms
		90 minutes per week ³	In all terms
		180 minutes per week	Daily, in all but one term ⁴

For all Physical Education (PE) requirements and policies, please refer to the [Academic Policy Guides](#) (DOE login required) and this [Physical Education FAQ](#).

For more information:

Office of School Wellness Programs
APE@schools.nyc.gov

[Special Education Standard Operating Procedures Manual](#)