

Teaching PE

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act has now been enacted, meaning that any **newly appointed** member of the workforce delivering curriculum provision during school hours **must** hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or, in the case of Physical Education, be working towards a recognised Level 5 PE specialist qualification.

For the **existing workforce**, it remains the **responsibility of the headteacher** to ensure that staff delivering the curriculum are appropriately qualified and possess the necessary knowledge, confidence and competence to fulfil their role effectively.

AfPE State the following...

afPE's recommendation is that the Primary Physical Education Specialism (Level 5) is the minimum expected qualification for anyone without QTS contributing to the delivery of Physical Education within a primary school setting.

Government has made clear its commitment to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the importance of high-quality teaching on outcomes for children. Legislation already requires teachers in maintained schools and all special schools to have QTS unless they meet one of the exemptions set out in regulations. Through the Children's Well-being and Schools Act (2026) government is extending this legislation to primary and secondary academies from 1 September 2027. As part of transition arrangements for academies, the QTS requirements will not affect their existing contractual arrangements with unqualified teachers when it comes into effect.

Currently, there are some coaches and teaching assistants involved in delivering Physical Education lessons in primary schools. In maintained schools and special schools these individuals should already be working under one of the exemptions set out in regulations. Where these individuals are employed by an academy prior to 1 September 2027, the transition arrangements will protect their existing contractual arrangements. From 1 September those who commence employment with an academy to lead or support PE lessons will need to have QTS or work under a valid exemption.

While not a legal requirement, afPE's position is that the Primary Physical Education Specialism (Level 5) is the minimum expected qualification for individuals working to support delivery of Physical Education in primary schools. This also includes anyone working alongside teachers to provide support, mentoring or professional development. This position is set out in our best practice guidance, which is also reflected within Safe Practice. afPE's view is that a Level 2 qualification does not meet the minimum expected standard for contributing to the delivery of high-quality Physical Education and that a coach who is supporting delivery of curriculum PE with a level 2 qualification is only qualified to deliver the activity in which their level 2 qualification is in.

September 2026