



# COUNTY DURHAM ACTIVE SCHOOLS POLICY



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The purpose of this policy is to promote physical activity throughout the school day, supporting and contributing to the improved health and wellbeing of all pupils. The policy sets out to achieve a culture where an active curriculum is adopted and where opportunities to be active throughout the school day are encouraged and promoted. This includes active learning across the curriculum, activity at break and lunch times, high quality curricular and extra-curricular Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity (PESSPA).

Enactment of the policy will be in accordance with the guidance document endorsed by County Durham Sport.

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# POLICY INTRODUCTION

The following section of the policy covers key definitions, concepts and terminology, as well as outlining areas within the school day that pupils can move more and enjoy physical activity.

# DEFINITIONS, KEY CONCEPTS & TERMINOLOGY

"Physical literacy is our relationship with movement and physical activity throughout life"

*Sport England (2023)*

**Physical Literacy-Informed:** Physical Literacy is a holistic concept. It can be applied across all areas within the policy to inform behaviour and practice to nurture a more active school culture. Careful consideration needs to be given to the nature of the experience associated with physical activity at all stages of our development and throughout the life course. It is our experiences that shape our relationship with physical activity.

This policy suggests a physical literacy lens is applied to decisions about procedures, opportunity and activities. This will ensure that empathetic consideration is given to social, emotional and physical experience associated with an active curriculum and physical activity.

A Physical Literacy-Informed approach has been adopted to consider:

- The organisation's leadership, values, traditions and beliefs that lead to an active curriculum
- What constitutes an active curriculum and how this and improved PESSPA provision can make a significant contribution towards pupils' health and wellbeing
- A person-centred approach that leads to positive social, emotional and physical experiences associated with an active curriculum and PESSPA opportunities

# DEFINITIONS, KEY CONCEPTS & TERMINOLOGY

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**Child / person-centred approach:** Individuals view the world from their unique perspective based on their previous experience. Previous experiences and influences not only result in founding aptitudes but also colour how we see, interpret and understand the world in the future. Because individuals will each experience a unique range of situations it follows that no individual will be identical with another.

Successful implementation of an active curriculum policy (as outlined within this document) is dependent upon a person-centred approach. It is based on a **pupil's voluntary participation** and an empathetic consideration of past experiences and working closely through consultation with pupils to build trust. The introduction of new initiative, and the changing of behaviour around an active curriculum will be more successful when introduced gradually over time, with consideration given to individual needs and preferences.



# HELPING TO SHAPE ACTIVE SCHOOLS

This policy highlights opportunities to be active in the following areas:

- Active travel to and from school
- Active Curriculum
- Active break and lunch times
- Extra-curricular activities
- Activities and support provided by others

A Physical Literacy-Informed approach is holistic, inclusive and supports the needs of all pupils. Educational settings and practitioners should consider how experiences develop confidence, motivation, physical competence, knowledge and understanding. This will support pupils to lead healthy and active lifestyles which promote good physical health and wellbeing throughout the life course.



# HELPING TO SHAPE ACTIVE SCHOOLS

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## How can we motivate pupils to be physically active?

Motivation can be nurtured through encouraging and planning physical activities that:

- Provide pupils with a range of options, both in the type of activity and the level of challenge. This can lead to greater levels of enjoyment, engagement and effort.

**Example:** supporting pupils to select activities and equipment that meet their ability and stage of development.

- Are inclusive and provide appropriate levels of challenge allowing visible progress over time to be made. Experiencing success and developing a sense of competency can increase motivation.

**Example:** adopting established pedagogical practices such as sharing learning intentions and periodically evaluating against success criteria will make progress in learning visible to pupils, developing the likelihood of pupils investing effort.

- Make pupils feel that they are connected to their learning communities by sharing their experiences. Having a sense of belonging and being valued can support motivation.

**Example:** avoiding comparisons with others based on performance and celebrating effort over ability.

# HELPING TO SHAPE ACTIVE SCHOOLS

## How can we nurture pupils' confidence to be physically active?

Confidence can be nurtured through planning physical activities that:

- Satisfy the need of pupils to self-determine the level of challenge activities demand. This can increase the likelihood of engagement and investment of effort.

**Example:** pupils should be equipped to evaluate their own strengths and areas for improvement. If pupils have decided for themselves the focus of their effort to make further progress they are more likely to confidently engage with tasks.

- Provide pupils with suitable tasks and a level of challenge, which allow them to achieve success. A sense of accomplishment helps to build confidence in pupils.

**Example:** adopting a wide range of differentiation strategies to meet individual needs will lead to appropriate challenge. These differentiation strategies may include adapting the playing area and / or task (including rules, equipment and group size), as well as the intended outcome, language used to instruct and role of the performer, official and coach.

- Make success visible to the pupil by setting clear goals and targets. Being able to see the progress they are making will help pupils develop greater confidence.

**Example:** adopting established pedagogical practices such as sharing learning intentions and periodically evaluating against success criteria will make progress in learning visible to pupils, developing the belief (confidence) that further progress can be made with the investment of effort.



# HELPING TO SHAPE ACTIVE SCHOOLS

How can we encourage pupils to develop physical competence?

Physical competence refers to transferable physical skills and elements of fitness. There will be considerable variation in pupils' physical competence across all aspects of skills and physical fitness. Consideration needs to be given to pupils' needs and what is an appropriate range of challenge.

Physical competency can be nurtured by planning activities which develop:

- Locomotor skills such as running, hopping, skipping
- Body management skills such as balancing and core strength
- Manipulative skills such as rolling, throwing, catching and striking
- Physical fitness such as strength, endurance and flexibility

Physical competency can also be supported by activities taking place in a range of environments (individually, paired or group) and from a range of movement forms and activity areas.

Furthermore, opportunities that encourage play, exploration and experimentation will support pupils to achieve good physical competency. Challenges can be varied using strategies such as task difficulty, outcome, equipment, duration, intensity and recovery time.





## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE SCHOOL

The following section of the policy seeks to outline recommended roles and responsibilities of the school adopting it.

# GOVERNING BODY

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01

## Strategic Guidance

Regularly review the effectiveness of this policy, amending when necessary, whilst providing strategic guidance

02

## Resource

Ensure adequate resources to support all within the school to be active and active in learning, providing adequate facilities and equipment for staff & pupils

03

## Safeguarding

Take reasonable steps to ensure facilities, spaces and equipment are safe and that wider safeguarding procedures are in place

04

## Training and Supervision

Ensure that the school provides adequate training, information, instruction, induction and supervision to enable everyone in the school to meet the requirements of the policy and guidance

05

## Critical Friend

In their role as a 'critical friend', ensure opportunities to be active are reflective of the policy and guidance

# HEADTEACHER / SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Below are the responsibilities of the Headteacher and / or Senior Leadership Team for schools implementing the policy:

- Promote the policy to school staff and report regularly to Governors on progress
- Seek advice from other organisations or professionals (e.g. County Durham Sport, Education Durham, afPE, Ofsted, local SSPs) as and when necessary
- Engage with national and local pupil voice surveys that help support the development of an active curriculum (e.g. Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey)
- Access the County Durham Sport mapping tool to better understand challenges pupils may face to being active within their local community
- Monitor the performance of staff within the remit of the policy with the intention of: 1) setting clear expectations about effective practice and 2) enabling staff to reflect on their practice, individually and collectively, against nationally agreed standards of effective practice and affirm and celebrate their successes
- Support staff to identify areas for further professional development forming a backdrop to the performance management process
- Ensure staff, including lunchtime supervisors and other support staff, have access to appropriate professional learning opportunities (e.g. training, coaching and mentoring)
- \*Deal with any hazardous practices, equipment or building issues and report to the Durham County Council if they remain unresolved
- Carry out an induction for all staff and keep records of that induction
- Keep up to date with new developments in Physical Literacy-Informed practice and PESSPA opportunities

*\* Note: Academy and trust schools may have their own procedures*

# SCHOOL STAFF

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## All School Staff will:

- Read the policy and sign it
- Comply with the policy in their work
- Provide high quality, regular (in keeping with guidance) opportunities for all pupils to be active and seek opportunities to provide active learning experiences (see accompanying guidance document)



## Professional Learning

Schools should acknowledge the importance of Physical Literacy-Informed practice and should support the professional learning of all teaching and support staff, including lunchtime supervisors, by providing opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skill in applying the nuances of Physical Literacy to inform behaviour and classroom practice through:

- Participation in professional learning communities
- Attendance at relevant training opportunities
- Access to mentoring and coaching where appropriate

# PE AND SCHOOL SPORT PREMIUM

Primary Schools in England receiving the PE and School Sport Premium should use this funding to address the five key indicators outlined below established by the UK Government:

1. Improve the engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity
2. Ensure the profile of PE and sport is raised across the school as a tool for whole-school improvement
3. Increased confidence, knowledge and skills of all staff in teaching PE and sport
4. Ensure a broader experience of a range of sports and activities is offered to all pupils
5. Increased participation in competitive sport

Annually, schools are required to provide on their website:

- A full breakdown of how their PE and Sport Premium has been spent (or will be spent)
- The impact the school has seen on pupils' PE and sport participation and attainment (using the Key Indicators above)
- How the improvements will be sustainable in the future
- Accurate swimming data for all Year 6 pupils (including the percentage of pupils that can swim 25m and perform safe self-rescue)





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## ETHOS AND ENVIRONMENT

For maximum impact on children and young people's physical activity levels, the whole-school ethos and environment need to reinforce and support the values of active learning and physical activity. Schools should provide adequate physical and social environments which promote safe and enjoyable active learning and physical activity. The following pages offer a range of suggestions that will support schools to improve their ethos and environment to encourage active learning and physical activity.

# EMBEDDING A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CULTURE IN SCHOOL

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It is important to note that the below list is extensive and it is not expected that schools will be able to work to embed all points in a short space of time.

## Schools should:

- Provide opportunities and resources to support and encourage active learning throughout the school day
- Provide facilities and resources to support and encourage PESSPA in a range of environments (e.g. indoor and outdoor, at height, in and around water, on and off site)
- Ensure all facilities and areas that support and encourage active learning and PESSPA are well maintained and safe
- Provide clean and adequate changing and showering facilities for children and young people and school staff
- Provide adequate levels of pupil supervision during active break times and extra-curricular provision, even if within the classroom environment
- Use correct movement terminology amongst staff and in front of pupils
- Include parents and guardians and encourage them to participate in physical activity with their children where possible
- Involve those who are enthusiastic about PESSPA to help motivate those who are less willing to participate (e.g. in primary schools as playground leaders and young ambassadors; in secondary schools as young ambassadors)
- Provide and highlight healthy options at lunch-times, break times and breakfast clubs. This should include healthier options in vending machines where available
- Ensure that water is readily available to all pupils and staff
- Ensure opportunities to be physically active are engaging and enjoyable for all



- ◆ Provide safe and stimulating areas in which children and young people can play and be active
- ◆ Provide playground markings and a broad range of equipment to meet individual needs
- ◆ Ensure a high profile for PESSPA, active learning and active play throughout the school with established cross-curricular links made visible to pupils
- ◆ Never use PESSPA opportunities (e.g. running laps or press-ups) or withhold opportunities for PESSPA (e.g. active break time or PE) as punishment for poor behaviour
- ◆ Provide attractive and up to date displays / noticeboards and information in the school newsletter and / or on the school website which highlight positive PESSPA messages, give information on available activities, clubs and achievements



- ◆ Provide and encourage participation in high-profile physical activity and sport events (either participatory or competitive)
- ◆ Where possible, invite appropriate role models from a range of backgrounds, activity areas and sports into school to inspire pupils Encourage staff to be
- ◆ active and provide positive role models (e.g. walking or cycling to school themselves, staff changing for PE lessons)
- ◆ Always ensure that opportunities and experiences in and around PESSPA comply with the ethos of SMILES (see accompanying guidance document)
- ◆ Work with County Durham Sport to complete Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey annually in order to generate a school-specific report on pupils' physical activity levels and behaviours

# FAMILIES & THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

County Durham Sport and partners recognise the importance that positive physical activity habits are reinforced outside of school by parents and carers. To ensure this can happen, the school will:

- Regularly consult with and update parents and carers on opportunities for physical activity, active play and school sport including opportunities to link classroom activities with active learning at home (e.g. explore a local woodland to survey wildlife and the changing seasons)
- Raise awareness of opportunities to be active, beyond sport clubs, in the local community (e.g. Parkrun or ParkPlay)
- Inform parents of the benefits of good health and wellbeing and the importance of leading active lifestyles through physical activity and active play






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## ACTIVE TRAVEL

Pupils should be encouraged to actively travel to school by walking, cycling, or scooting for several compelling reasons. These active modes of transportation help children establish healthy habits early in life, promotes physical fitness and enhances overall wellbeing. By choosing eco-friendly ways of getting to school, pupils also reduce their carbon footprint, contributing to a cleaner environment. Encouraging active travel not only sets the foundation for a healthier lifestyle but also helps pupils foster a deeper connection to their community and the world around them.



# ACTIVE TRAVEL

Active travel to and from school offers pupils and parents an opportunity to raise their physical activity levels during the school day. Schools can encourage active travel to school by:

- Identifying (with support from the Durham County Council) safe active travel routes to and from the school
- Working with parents and carers to encourage active travel to school and to promote positive active travel messaging
- Provide safe facilities for the storage of bikes and scooters for pupils
- Promote safe active travel to school using local and national initiatives (e.g. Asthma and Lung UK's clean air champion scheme, Living Streets 'walk to school week' and other road safety awareness and bike safety campaigns)





## ACTIVE BREAKFASTS, BREAKS AND LUNCH TIMES

Incorporating active breakfasts, breaks, and lunch times into the school day offers a host of benefits that positively impact pupils' health and wellbeing. Active breakfasts, such as quick morning stretches or a short walk, awaken the body and mind, boosting metabolism and alertness. These activities can kickstart the day and set a positive tone for learning. Frequent active breaks throughout the day help to combat the sedentary nature of traditional classroom settings. These breaks rejuvenate pupils, enhancing concentration and reducing stress.

Active lunch times, featuring opportunities for physical activity before or after eating, contribute to a healthier lifestyle. It encourages pupils to be more active and engage in play, improving digestion, and preventing post-meal sluggishness. Regular exercise during lunch breaks can also promote social interaction that is important for personal development.

# ACTIVE BREAKFASTS, BREAKS AND LUNCH TIMES

The school can encourage physical activity in the above settings by:

- Providing regular training for all school staff, including lunchtime supervisors (e.g. through the OPAL programme)
- Ensuring open spaces are accessible by all and are marked for a range of activities and are well maintained
- Managing open spaces and encouraging participation in a wide range of break time activities
- Providing a range of developmentally appropriate equipment to inspire and encourage activity during break times
- Allowing access to water during break times
- Planning for active break time during inclement weather, including hot weather (e.g. short, more frequent breaks)






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## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Participation in extra-curricular activities is invaluable for school pupils, offering a plethora of benefits that extend beyond the regular academic curriculum. Engaging in these activities, whether it's sports, arts, clubs, or other interests, provides pupils with a well-rounded education and contributes significantly to their personal development.



# EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

With regards to extra-curricular activities, the school can:

- Provide inclusive and equitable opportunities for all to engage in extra-curricular physical activities, active play and school sport
- Adopt a squad rotation policy to ensure fairness in opportunity to all pupils irrespective of ability level
- Participate in both participatory and competitive organised events, tournaments and fixtures
- Participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- Where possible, facilitate residential experiences for pupils
- Provide opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular physical activities and sports during breakfast clubs, break times, lunch times and after school clubs








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## PARTNERS, INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

By working with local and national partners, schools can harness their expertise, resources, and experience to enhance the quality and breadth of its activities and support for pupils. Such collaboration ensures that the school remains in sync with the broader educational landscape, tapping into specialised knowledge and fostering a well-rounded educational experience for its pupils.



# PARTNERS, INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

In accordance with this policy, the school may choose to work in partnership with several of the following:

- School Sport Partnerships (SSPs)
- School Games Organisers (SGOs)
- Local sport clubs and community groups
- National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs)
- Representatives of the outdoor sector (e.g. Forest School or Beach School programmes)
- Sector specific advisors and consultants (both internal and external of DCC)
- Local authority staff and development officers

*With the direct intention of:*

- Providing opportunities and experiences in PESSPA
- Supporting the professional learning of all school staff
- Signposting to further opportunities in sport and physical activity for pupils of all abilities





# THE ACTIVE CURRICULUM

Physical Literacy-Informed approaches support the balanced development of confidence, motivation, physical competency, knowledge and understanding in relation to physical activity. Physical Literacy-Informed practice and pedagogy are inclusive and holistic. Individuals of all ages thrive when practice and pedagogy are person centred and not activity or sport centred. Practice and pedagogy that support personal growth and achievement through meaningful experiences will lead to a healthy relationship with physical activity and sport throughout the life course. Indeed, an understanding of this is central to developing an active curriculum within school settings.

# THE ACTIVE CURRICULUM

## Physical Education

*The school will provide a minimum of two hours Physical Literacy informed PE a week.*

A pupil-centred approach to learning and teaching in PE can be demonstrated in a number of ways, including regular consultation with pupils and consideration of:

- Sport England's Active Lives CYP Survey, Local data on health, wealth and access to services (available via County Durham Sport's Insight Hub)
- Advice of external partners (e.g. SSPs / SGOs)
- School councils' physical activity sub panel (if appropriate)

Consideration of the above will help to ensure that the curriculum reflects the needs, interests and voice of pupils and result in the co-construction of a positive PESSPA offer. The school can also demonstrate a pupil-centred approach through:

- Acknowledgment that the physical, emotional, and social experience is more important than the activity
- Opportunities for pupils to experience different roles (e.g. participant, leader and official)
- The school ensuring that pupils and experiences are safe (positive emotional and physical environment), there is maximum participation, all pupils feel included and the experience is 'learning focused', enjoyable and success orientated (SMILES)
- The school ensuring a positive motivational climate is maintained through the adoption of the TARGET\* approach (see guidance document)
- The school possibly adopting STTEP\* (see guidance document) as an approach to ensure differentiated and inclusive learning intentions, success criteria and teaching and learning activities

# THE ACTIVE CURRICULUM



- ◆ The school ensuring that teaching and learning activities are developmentally appropriate and where necessary interventions will target areas that require additional support (e.g. acquisition of transferable skills such as throwing and catching, confidence and motivation – see guidance document)
- ◆ The school focusing on developmentally appropriate progression in learning with PESSPA acting as a facilitator of conceptual transferable learning
- ◆ The school ensuring that teaching and learning activities are success orientated by making progression in learning visible
- ◆ The school not viewing curricular PE as an opportunity to develop competitive school teams (see signposts and exit routes and extra-curricular provision)
- ◆ The school providing broad and varied opportunities to enjoy positive experiences within all of the following movement forms selecting a meaningful range of activity areas (see following page)

# PHYSICAL LITERACY- INFORMED ACTIVITIES

Table adapted from *Physical literacy: Throughout the life course* (pp. 182–183) by E. Murdoch and M. F. Whitehead, 2010, London, UK: Routledge.

Adventure	Activities in the adventure form have a main focus on meeting risk and managing challenge within natural or unpredictable environments. Adventure activities may include climbing, abseiling, rambling, orienteering, skiing, skating, and swimming and include informal Active Play.
Aesthetic	Activities in the aesthetic form have a main focus on the embodied dimension being used as an expressive instrument within a creative, aesthetic, or artistic context. Aesthetic and expressive activities may include all forms of dance and aspects of gymnastics.
Athletic	Activities in the athletic form have a main focus on the performer reaching personal maximum/optimal power, distance, speed, and accuracy within a competitive and controlled environment. Athletic activities may include athletics, swimming, cross country, and powerlifting.
Aquatic	Aquatic activities are performed in, on, or around water and may include competitive or recreational activities. Aquatic activities may include, swimming, diving (free/scuba), snorkeling, life-saving, water polo, wakeboarding, surfing, paddle boarding, windsurfing, kayaking and sailing.
Competitive	Activities in the competitive form have a main focus on the achievement of predetermined goals through the outwitting of opponents, while managing a variety of implements and objects in challenging and changing contexts. Competitive activities may include football, hockey, cricket, bowls, volleyball, rugby, and archery.
Fitness & Health	Activities in the fitness and health form have a main focus on gradually improving the function of the body, both qualitatively and quantitatively, through regular, repetitive participation. Fitness and health activities may include aerobics, pilates, yoga, circuits and Zumba.
Interpersonal / Relational	Activities in the interactional/relational form are characterized by a main focus on sharing experiences and the development of empathy between people and groups as they move together in a social context. Interactive/relational activities may include line and folk dancing, synchronized swimming, diving, and trampolining.

# CHANGING, KIT AND EQUIPMENT

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The school can provide facilities for pupils to change and (where possible) wash / shower and dry following participation in PESSPA opportunities. Pupils should be encouraged to develop their own routines to maintain personal care and hygiene. However, pupils will be expected to make such decisions for themselves.

## **To maintain the safety of pupils they will be required to:**

- Remove all non-religious items of jewellery
- Cover new ear piercings (less than six weeks) with adequate medical tape
- Tie back long hair and remove rigid headbands

## **Pupils should also be encouraged to:**

- Change to clothing appropriate for the physical activity undertaken
- Choose clothing from several gender-neutral options to suit individual preference
- Choose equipment that is developmentally appropriate and meets individual needs
- Pupils will also be taught how to lift and carry any apparatus related to the activity into position under adult supervision

# SCHOOL KIT FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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*At Thornhill children need to wear appropriate footwear for lessons and comfortable clothing. At this point in time children can wear school uniform for PE lessons. PE kit is provided for trips to leagues, competitions and festivals.*

Tracksuit

Tracksuit Bottoms

Leggings / Running Tights

Shorts

Polo Shirt / T-Shirt

Rugby Shirt

Sweatshirt

Socks

Boots / Trainers



# ACTIVE LEARNING

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Children and young people spend up to eight hours at school each day and many classroom learning environments encourage prolonged periods of sedentary behaviour (e.g. sitting at desks). Inactivity throughout the school day reinforces messages around the ‘normalising’ of sedentary behaviour. It is imperative that this is challenged.

The school should plan for and provide opportunities that seek to reduce sedentary behaviour in all year groups, both within the classroom and across the school day, as well as increasing pupil awareness on the potential negative impacts of prolonged sitting / screen time on health and wellbeing.

In this regard, schools should:

- Provide opportunities for pupils to have classroom movement breaks where prolonged periods of sedentary behaviour are experienced (e.g. double lessons)
- Encourage active discussion time and ‘walking classrooms’
- Provide opportunities for off-site learning through active field trips and residential experiences where possible
- Plan opportunities for outdoor learning
- Integrate physical activity into learning and teaching activities across all subject areas
- The school should plan and map opportunities for active learning across the subject areas, signposting pupils to active learning opportunities where appropriate.

# SIGNPOSTING & EXIT ROUTES

To help pupils continue to embed regular physical activity into their lifestyles outside of school, the school will:

- Provide information on how pupils can access opportunities to experience physical activity and sport in their communities (see ethos and environment)
- Provide opportunities for local clubs, charities and organisations to encourage community-based activity through outreach and taster days
- Develop and maintain strong relationships and links with local clubs and county/regional events where talent can flourish and develop



**END OF POLICY**