

Teacher behaviours that support physical activity



Description: Teacher/staff training to foster a school culture that promotes physical activity (e.g., ALL teachers' **role modelling physical activity** and **providing encouragement and enthusiasm for physical activity** – not just PE teachers). This also includes assigning a teacher as a school physical activity 'champion' to ensure that these changes continue after the initial training.

Will this change affect a lot of students within a school?

- If ALL teachers and staff within a school are trained, then **all students** are potentially exposed to these teachers on a daily basis.

Will this change affect all students equally?

- Some students might be more or less affected by teacher behaviours (for example, not all students might respond to changes in the teachers behaviours in the same way).
- Some teachers might put into practice the 'physical activity supportive' behaviours more consistently than others, therefore some classes might be exposed to a teacher who is a better role model for physical activity than others. For example, some teachers might start to travel to school by bike and also talk to their class about the benefits of being active more so than other teachers.

Will people like this change?

- Within our CASE advisory groups - the **importance of ALL teachers** (not just PE teachers) being role models for physical activity (and supporting a culture of activity and health) in a school was highlighted by students and teachers – they were all **very positive** about this approach.
- Students consistently reported that their teachers are a huge influence on their behaviour in general – let alone their physical activity behaviour.

How easy is it to make this change?

- An **initial workshop/training** would be required for the whole school staff, and then **ongoing support** (from a willing teacher who could 'champion' the scheme) to ensure that teacher behaviours that support physical activity are practiced (by all staff) throughout the school year.
- Studies show that teachers can be trained in leadership behaviours through a one day workshop (although this was just PE teachers, this could potentially be extended beyond PE).
- This could take time to become established – as changing the way teachers do things will not happen overnight.

- Putting into practice what staff learn in the training should not take up 'extra' time for teachers, but staff involvement in extra physical activity (e.g., changing their own physical activity levels – such as actively commuting to school- in order to be a role model for students) may take up extra time.

Will it work?

- There is evidence that teachers' **support for physical activity** (and not just from 'PE' teachers) is consistently associated with greater adolescent physical activity.
- There is consistent evidence about the important role of PE teachers in supporting and encouraging activity through the atmosphere they create in the class. For example, encouragement and enthusiasm for physical activity, and whether they allow students to have some choice in lessons is **associated with greater physical activity** (and other outcomes such as **enjoyment of PE, effort and positive attitudes** towards physical activity)
- There has only been one study in **secondary school** that has targeted ALL the teachers in a school. It involved engaging with teachers and students to get students to bring about change within their own school environment; with support from teachers. This approach **increased physical activity**.

How much will it cost?

- This will rely on **on-going support** for staff in the form of training.
- A full day's training for all staff would cost approx. **£2,000**.
- There would need to be teacher time allocated for one member of staff to occupy the 'school champion' role (potentially paid as an 'extra' to their salary). This would enable them to oversee the changes and to make sure all teachers are doing things to encourage more activity in their students. At 1 to 2 hours per week this would equate to approximately **£2000 per year**.
- Costs are likely to be **re-occurring**, as at least some (refresher) training is likely to be needed each year. There may be costs associated with any changes made as a result of this approach – for example – the school may decide to build better active travel facilities (such as a bike shed) to get more students AND teachers commuting by bike.