

Teacher Behaviours that Support Physical Activity



Description: Teacher/staff development intervention to foster a school-wide **ethos and culture that supports physical activity** (e.g., ALL teachers being role models for physical activity and providing encouragement and enthusiasm for physical activity). This also includes assigning a school physical activity ‘champion’ to ensure that these changes to the wider **social** environment continue beyond the initial training.

Reach

- If ALL teachers and staff within a school are trained, then **all students** are potentially exposed to the new school ethos regarding physical activity on a daily basis.

Equality

- Some students might be more or less affected (and influenced) by leadership/teacher behaviours (that promote physical activity) than others.
- Some teachers might implement physical activity supportive behaviours more consistently than others. This might result in some classes being exposed to more consistent teacher behaviour.

Acceptability

- This intervention was consistently supported in our CASE advisory groups by both **students and teachers**. For example, the importance of ALL teachers (not just PE teachers) being positive role models for physical activity and supporting a wider school culture of physical activity was highlighted as important for creating active school environments.
- Evidence from qualitative studies (and teachers within our CASE advisory group) highlights the importance of **effective leadership** within a school to bring about change and to help schools prioritise physical activity.

Feasibility

- An initial **workshop/training** would be required for the whole school staff, and then **follow-on support** to ensure that teacher behaviours that support physical activity at a whole-school level are implemented throughout the school year. The initial training could be delivered as part of the teachers’ ongoing professional development.
- PE-based studies have demonstrated that it is **possible to train teachers in leadership** through a one day workshop.

- This intervention would require a member of staff (non-PE) to ‘champion’ this intervention. This staff member could be allocated protected time for this role.
- The success of this intervention will **depend on support from senior management** to ensure that the learning from the initial training workshop is continued and put into practice (e.g., physical activity is made a priority).
- Putting into practice what staff learn in the training should not take up extra time. However, staff involvement in extra physical activity may take up extra time. This could involve taking up walking/cycling to work in order to “put into practice” being a role model for students.

Effectiveness

- There is evidence that teachers’ **support for physical activity** (not just from PE teachers) is consistently associated with greater **adolescent physical activity**.
- Research in PE settings consistently demonstrates the important role of **PE teachers** in supporting and encouraging activity through the ‘climate’ they create in class. This includes the use of positive reinforcement and provision of choice. Other positive outcomes include enjoyment of PE, effort and positive attitudes towards physical activity.
- There is consistent support for the importance of school teacher behaviours (beyond PE) and effective leadership (i.e., supportive senior management) for creating a **culture of physical activity** within a school.
- There has only been one (whole-school) intervention study that has focussed on **adult leaders** within schools. This involved school site coordinators and focused on **engaging teachers and students to bring about change within their own school environment**. This project had a positive effect on students’ physical activity.

1. ‘Cost’

This intervention will rely on **on-going support** for staff in the form of training and the identification of a ‘school champion’. Costs involved would be:

- For a full day’s training for all staff would cost approx. **£2,000** to bring in a professional trainer to deliver the programme to the school.
- There would need to be teacher time allocated for one member of staff to act as the ‘school champion’. This could be paid to them in addition to their salary. At 1-2 hours per week this would equate approximately **£2,000** per year.
- There may also be costs associated with dissemination such as information leaflets, training booklets, etc.

Costs are likely to be **recurrent**, 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 intervention.