

# SUPPORTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY NUTRITION

Guide for education colleagues

## The problem

- Millions of children and young people (CYP) in the UK are not meeting the recommended levels of physical activity, contributing to poor physical and mental health.
- CYP from deprived communities are the least likely to access healthy food or safe play opportunities, reinforcing inequalities.
- Many CYP are malnourished due to poor diets with high fat, sugar, and salt which negatively impacts development and education outcomes.

## What you can do as school staff

- **Adopt a whole-school approach to activity and nutrition**, integrating movement and healthy food into the daily culture, curriculum, and ethos.
- **Be intentional about planning the school day so that movement and exercise are built in**, e.g., ensuring that sedentary lessons are interspersed with PE and break/lunchtimes where movement is encouraged and facilitated.
- **Advocate for access to nutritious food** through universal breakfast clubs, healthy packed lunch guidance, and inclusive school meals.
- **Promote outdoor play and motor skill development**, especially for the most vulnerable children (e.g., those with movement difficulties or limited access to safe play spaces).
- **Engage with families and communities** to co-design locally-relevant initiatives to support food security.

## Evidence-based insights

Only **1.6%** of packed lunches meet Government School Food Standards and **2.2 million** children are physically inactive, achieving less than **30 minutes** of activity per day.

**4,000 hours** of P.E. have been lost from the curriculum in state-funded secondary schools in 2022/23.

## Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

### FUNMOVES

An assessment tool that enables a cost-effective, more equitable, and expedited pathway to support children with motor skills difficulties, not only improving physical activity outcomes, but also broader developmental outcomes.

### Creating Active Schools Framework

A framework used in 250+ schools, tailoring a whole-school physical activity model to place, offering professional development and schools support to build sustainable provisions using existing assets.

### Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme

The programme offers improved wrap-around services during school holidays including nutritional education, provision of a safe place to play and be physically active which improves community cohesiveness and reduces in anti-social behaviours.

### Keighley Schools Together

Developed resources to support families that needed support with food insecurity to find the right help at the right time. The initiative also promoted the national Healthy Start Programme, so that more families were able to access free food and vitamins..

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your school.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

**Please share this guide and start a discussion in your school about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.**